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Targeted Professional Learning to Implement a Biliteracy Model: A Change Leadership Plan

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TARGETED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TO IMPLEMENT A BILITERACY

MODEL: A CHANGE LEADERSHIP PLAN

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This document was created as *one* part of the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Document

For the **Program Evaluation** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The "program" can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership Plan** candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement, and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy Document** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

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ABSTRACT

With the achievement gap for students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and their

non-LEP peers widening rather than closing in Brighton School District 32 (pseudonyms

are used throughout this change plan), it became clear that a change of the bilingual

program model was necessary. This change plan examines the need for change in the

current traditional Transitional Bilingual Education program to an extended

Developmental Bilingual Education model with an emphasis on teaching for biliteracy.

Because altering the bilingual program model requires a significant change in teaching

practices and beliefs, this plan focuses on implementing a targeted professional learning

plan to facilitate the change. Wagner's (2006) 4 C's model was used to examine the

current program and to develop a clear vision for the future. After a thorough analysis of

the quantitative and qualitative data, strategies and actions required to fully implement

the desired change were developed.

PREFACE

As a monolingual English-speaking educator with no background in bilingual education, I was apprehensive about taking on the challenge of changing the bilingual program in Brighton School District 32. However, with the encouragement of a few colleagues, as well as a strong internal desire to improve conditions for the English Learners in my school, I began the process of learning as much as I could about bilingual education and biliteracy. Through this journey of reading, researching, interviewing, and developing a change plan, I have learned much more than I ever thought possible.

The obvious impact this change plan has had on me is a greater understanding of the world of bilingual education. I have become more knowledgeable in an area that was previously outside my expertise. I can now confidently enter a bilingual classroom and know what I want to see from the environment, the teachers, and the children. I can better help the bilingual teachers in my school grow and develop as educators since I now have a better understanding of biliteracy instruction and the impact of second language acquisition on children. With the number of English Learners (commonly referred to as ELs) increasing in the public schools in Illinois, this knowledge will make me a better leader.

In addition to gaining knowledge and skills from an in-depth review of bilingual program models and best practices in bilingual education, this change plan reinforced my belief that high quality professional learning is the key to any school improvement plan. Through the analysis of the electronic survey results, as well as the group interview and classroom observations, I was constantly reminded that to make this programmatic change, a detailed and comprehensive professional learning plan must take center stage.

Furthermore, I learned that professional learning for adults must be differentiated. Just as we consider student readiness and learning style when planning a lesson, we must do the same when developing a professional development plan. This learning will impact my leadership and shape my decisions for many years to come.

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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Brighton School District 32 has an early-exit Spanish Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program at the elementary level. Students who speak a language other than English at home are assessed on their English proficiency upon registering for school in the district. If their assessment results indicate that they are not proficient in English, they enter the bilingual program. The district has Spanish bilingual classrooms at each grade level from pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2. In these classrooms, Spanish literacy has been the primary focus, using a traditional model of bilingual education that emphasizes strengthening the native language before transitioning into English.

Teachers in Grades pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and Grade 1 teach all academic content in Spanish. They may, on occasion, read books aloud in English or they may use English to reinforce behavioral expectations, but nearly all instruction is in Spanish. In Grade 2, students begin a slow transition to English instruction that increases rapidly around February, once student growth assessments of Spanish literacy have been completed.

However, beginning in Grade 3, students are expected to be ready for 100% English instruction. While one section of Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) is available for students who continue to struggle with their English development, the majority of the students are placed into a general education monolingual English Grade 3 classroom. This abrupt transition to all-English instruction has proven to be difficult both academically and emotionally for many students, their parents, and the teachers in Grade

3. Thus, the purpose of this change plan will be to move from a traditional early-exit bilingual model to a late-exit biliteracy approach.

Because the district has recently hired a new Director for English Language Learning and because the concerns with this transition from bilingual education to the general education classrooms have persisted over the years, the district leadership has determined it is time to make a change in the bilingual program. Currently, the plan for improving the program is in the developmental stage, but professional learning opportunities have already been planned for bilingual educators to begin the shift from a Spanish-only philosophy to one of true biliteracy beginning in pre-Kindergarten. Research has shown that teachers who use biliteracy strategies increase learners' social and academic vocabulary in both languages so that learners will be fully literate in all domains of both languages. Teaching for biliteracy, "enables bilingual learners to use reading, writing, listening, and speaking for a wide range of purposes in two languages" (Beeman & Urow, 2013, p. 2).

Escamilla et al. (2014) assert that teaching for biliteracy, through the use of both languages from the start benefits *simultaneous bilinguals*, learners who do not enter school dominant in one language, but rather are developing both English and Spanish at the same time. Over the past several years, the majority of students entering the bilingual program in Brighton School District 32 are considered simultaneous bilinguals. Thus, they may not benefit from Spanish-only instruction, which has been the traditional model for bilingual education in the district. Escamilla et al. state that for simultaneous bilinguals, instruction in both English and Spanish from the very beginning of their

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schooling experiences has proven to increase bilingualism as well as lead to higher levels of literacy in English in later years (2014, p. 5).

The district has decided to begin to address this problem through the implementation of a targeted professional learning plan. This plan includes book studies, workshops for teachers led by experts in the field of bilingual education, biliteracy unit development, and peer observations. By focusing on professional learning for teachers as a beginning step, it is expected that the bilingual program will shift from all-Spanish instruction to a more effective biliteracy approach. In addition, by providing these bilingual teachers who have felt ignored in the past with opportunities to learn with and from each other, the climate and culture in this department is likely to improve.

A successful change in the bilingual program will lead to several positive outcomes. First, teachers will understand and adopt a new goal for biliteracy among their students beginning in the primary grades. Second, both Spanish and English literacy data will be tracked on students beginning in Kindergarten in order to evaluate the program's effectiveness. Finally, bilingual teachers will be fully integrated into the professional learning plan for *all* teachers within the district. They will be valued as experts in their field with knowledge to share with the rest of the staff, thus increasing the likelihood that bilingual teachers will want to remain in the district.

<div align="center">Rationale</div>

As the principal overseeing Grades 3 – 5 in Taft School for the last five years, I came to realize the great challenge that this abrupt transition to English instruction has become for our students coming out of the bilingual program. Year after year, I have seen students from the bilingual program struggle to learn English and continue to lag behind

their monolingual peers academically as they moved through the K – 8 system. For example, the most recent Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) scores from 2014 show an overall achievement gap of more than 50% between students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and their non-LEP peers. I have also seen an increase in referrals for special education case studies for students coming from the bilingual program and wondered if, given more time and support in the transition to English, they may have responded better to intensive interventions in later years.

I also began to wonder about the student growth assessments that had been developed for the bilingual classrooms and whether their Spanish-only focus had created an environment where teachers are discouraged from instructing in English even when children are ready for it because their evaluations are based in part on only their students' Spanish literacy. For each of these reasons, I found it important to become involved when the new director began to outline a plan for improvement of the bilingual program.

Because most of the students who enter Taft School have a language other than English spoken in the home, it is imperative that we have a strong bilingual program that will support students throughout their educational careers. Having a program that emphasizes biliteracy is important particularly in the Brighton community because we need a program that is effective for the simultaneous bilingual students that dominate our district's EL population. Additionally, we want to ensure students maintain their connection with home and their community through a strong foundation in their native language, while at the same time we give students the foundation in English they need to be successful members of the American society.

Goals

The overall goal of this change plan is to improve Brighton School District 32's bilingual program through a focus on professional learning for all teachers and administrators. Several related goals are as follows:

- To enhance teachers' and administrators' knowledge of effective biliteracy strategies

- To ensure all staff in the bilingual program have a common understanding of the skills and knowledge a successful student transitioning to the general education program should possess

- To improve the culture in the bilingual program so that teachers stay in the district and feel valued for their contributions

- To improve teachers' competency in teaching English literacy

- To improve teachers' ability to use cross-linguistic connections to bridge content from Spanish to English.

Reeves (2009) states that in planning for any system-wide change, leaders must focus on the factors that can be directly influenced and will have the greatest impact. Getting the right teachers in place and providing high-quality professional learning opportunities for them are two elements that will make a lasting impact on the bilingual program (p. 61-63). By focusing our efforts on a professional learning plan that increases bilingual teachers' efficacy in teaching both English and Spanish literacy, in addition to improving morale among the bilingual staff, we can make strides toward improving the program to prepare students for success in the monolingual English classroom before they reach middle school.

Demographics

Brighton School District 32 is a small school district in the western suburbs of Chicago. The district includes three schools: two elementary schools (one PK – 5 and one K – 5) and one middle school serving students in Grades 6 – 8. Together, these schools serve nearly 2,200 students. Across the district, 35% of students are English Learners (ELs), with the largest EL population housed at Taft Elementary School, the school in which I serve as principal. Sixty-four percent of students in the district are low-income students and 13% of students across the district receive special education services. Brighton School District's racial/ethnic demographics are 66.1% Hispanic, 24.1% White, 3.6% Asian, 3.4% Black, and 2.9% Multi-Racial.

On the 2014 Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), 57% of Brighton students in Grades 3 – 8 met or exceeded standards in reading, and 60% met or exceeded standards in mathematics. The overall achievement gap on the ISAT between students with Limited English Proficiency and those without has increased over time from a 33% gap in 2010 to a 53% gap in 2014. This data point alone is indicative of the need for a change in the bilingual program across the district. Brighton School District 32 has used this information as a call to action to improve outcomes for our students in the bilingual program. If we are to be true to the district's mission to help all students become college and career-ready, our ELs cannot continue to be so significantly left behind their monolingual peers.

SECTION TWO: ASSESSING THE 4 Cs

The bilingual program in Brighton School District 32 will be assessed using Wagner's 4 C's model. Wagner et al. (2006) assert that successful change agents must think systemically about an issue while also keeping in mind each related element. This systems thinking allows the leader to "form a more holistic picture" of the change process and emphasizes the interrelationships among each part of the whole (p. 97). By focusing on each of the four C's—context, competencies, conditions, and culture—I will outline the current state of the bilingual program, with particular emphasis on teacher efficacy and professional learning needs.

Context

The bilingual program in District 32 follows an early-exit Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) model, where students are expected to be ready for full-day English instruction beginning in Grade 3. Students who qualify for bilingual services enter the program in Kindergarten, are taught in Spanish for the majority of the day, and receive English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction for an average of 30 minutes each day. By Grade 2, students receive instruction in Spanish for 70% of their day, moving toward about 50% by the end of the year. When they enter Grade 3, students receive instruction in English for 100% of their day. This early-exit program has not proven to be beneficial for all students, as evidenced by their poor performance on ISAT and other local assessments, and since the district's new ELL Director has established a goal of biliteracy—meaning that students will exit the program literate in both English and Spanish—in the bilingual program, this model must be changed if the goal is to be achieved.

Competencies

When Wagner et al. (2006) discuss competencies in the context of school reform, they are referring to the "skills and knowledge that influences student learning" (p. 99). The bilingual teachers in Brighton School District 32 have many strengths in this arena. They have deep knowledge of their content and they understand how to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of their students. The bilingual teachers collaborate well together and have done a terrific job of writing their own units of study for language arts incorporating science and social studies concepts, as well as mathematics. They have done the best they can to incorporate culturally relevant topics into their units when allowed, and they continue to advocate for cultural relevance in the curriculum as much as possible.

There are some areas for growth that will benefit this team of teachers if they are to reach the goal of biliteracy for students. For example, bilingual teachers must become proficient in teaching in both English and Spanish, something that has not been expected before. Currently, teachers struggle to teach foundational English literacy, including English phonemic awareness and phonics, to students. Bilingual teachers are well versed in using the Spanish Language Arts standards to plan their lessons, but are less familiar with English Language Arts standards that will now be required.

Additionally, teachers are not effectively bridging content to English throughout their units of study. They have begun to learn about bridging, but they are still in the beginning stages of understanding about how best to develop units and lessons with these elements included. Similarly, they have not been consistent in planning for the analysis of similarities and differences between the two languages, or making cross-linguistic

connections. Bilingual teachers will be expected to improve in these areas in order to reach the goal of biliteracy.

Finally, district administrators must increase their competencies in using data to assess the effectiveness of the bilingual program over time as well as their ability to recognize effective instructional practices in the bilingual classrooms. Without the support of knowledgeable administrators, improvements in the program may be unsustainable.

<div align="center">Conditions</div>

Conditions are defined as "the external architecture surrounding student learning, the tangible arrangements of time, space, and resources" (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 101). In BSD32, the teachers are blessed with resources. When they request resources or supplies that are directly related to student needs, they are almost never denied. In fact, the directive given from the Superintendent in regards to requests for instructional supplies for teachers and students is to "default to yes," meaning that it is the job of the Chief Financial Officer in the district to find the money needed to grant all relevant requests. The bilingual classroom libraries are stocked with authentic literature in both English and Spanish so that students can read books that appeal to them in either language. Another condition that is ideal is the low-class size, ranging from 14 to 18 students, in the bilingual classrooms. With low class sizes, teachers can more effectively differentiate instruction to meet the needs of each student individually.

However, many conditions exist that need to be addressed for improvements in the program to take place. The first factor is that most of the bilingual educators in Brighton School District 32 are inexperienced. Of the 15 bilingual educators at the

elementary level in the district, 12 (80%) are in their first, second, or third year in the district. This large percentage of inexperienced teachers, paired with insufficient supports given to new teachers in the bilingual program, must be addressed if improvements are to be made in the program. Additionally, class time allotted for English instruction is currently very low in the bilingual classrooms. The time distribution for English instruction must be revisited to ensure more time is given to instructing students in English. Time allotments must be made to gradually increase the amount of English instruction in each grade level until students are ready for 100% English when they exit the bilingual program.

<div align="center">Culture</div>

It is essential that the culture be improved in the bilingual program to have a positive impact the other three arenas. Wagner et al. (2006) refer to culture as "the invisible but powerful meanings and mindsets held individually and collectively throughout the system" (p. 102). Without shifts in the mindset of the teachers in BSD32's bilingual program, changes in other arenas may not be lasting or may not positively impact student achievement. Currently, many bilingual teachers in the system feel ignored and separate from the general education teachers. Much of the professional development offered for teachers over the past five years has not been geared toward them. Teachers feel that their expertise is not valued in the district and that school and district administrators do not understand the needs of their students or their own professional learning needs.

Furthermore, since their evaluations are in part based on their students' growth only in Spanish, bilingual teachers have developed the belief that they are only

responsible for teaching Spanish literacy. Currently, bilingual and ESL teachers are evaluated only on the Spanish literacy improvements their students make over the course of the school year, discouraging them from spending much time on English instruction. These culture shifts are important for the overall improvement in the bilingual program that will improve student outcomes.

SECTION THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Design Overview

This change plan focuses on making improvements in the school district's bilingual program through the implementation of a targeted professional learning plan. A mixed-methods approach was used to determine the need for change as well as to track the effectiveness of the change over time. Wagner et al. (2006) suggest that change leaders must find a few key points of data that will establish an understanding of and urgency for the change (p. 139). The quantitative data reviewed serves as the data for urgency and sets the purpose for a change in the bilingual program. ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) scores were examined first. The ACCESS assessment is administered to every public school student in the state of Illinois who has been identified as in need of English Language services. Since the current bilingual program model in the district is an early-exit model where students are placed into all-English classrooms in third grade, ACCESS scores of students in Grade 2 were analyzed to determine their readiness for English. Additionally, student growth in English from year to year was tracked to determine if the bilingual program has been effective in helping children grow in their English language development each year.

Next, an electronic survey was administered to all teachers in the elementary bilingual program (See Appendix D). This survey gathered information on the teachers' areas of competency and areas for growth, as well as their perceived professional learning needs.

After reviewing the results of the survey, a group interview was conducted with volunteer bilingual teachers. The group interview consisted of five teachers in the elementary bilingual department. The interview questions focused on the teachers' perception of the current bilingual program model, their professional learning needs, and their level of efficacy and confidence in using biliteracy strategies in the classroom (See Appendix E). The questions were developed to probe further in responses identified in the electronic survey as areas in need of development.

Finally, focused observations were conducted in a bilingual teacher's classroom. Using the Literacy Squared Observation Protocol (Escamilla et al., 2014, pp. 187-188), the teacher's use of biliteracy strategies were observed, particularly in relation to the cross-linguistic connections within a given lesson. This observation gave the opportunity for the level of effectiveness of biliteracy strategies in one teacher's classroom to be more closely examined. The post-observation debriefing meeting with the teacher also gave insight into teachers' feelings of efficacy in delivering this new instructional model.

Participants

Two individuals/groups of stakeholders served as participants in the study: the ELL Director and the bilingual teachers. The ELL Director has been consulted throughout the study, as she is directly responsible for implementing a professional learning plan for teachers. Her expertise is instrumental in reviewing student data, determining focus questions for teachers, and analyzing the responses for use in future planning. Next, the teachers in the bilingual department also participated in the study. Of the 186 teachers in Brighton School District 32, there are 18 (10 %) in the bilingual department at the elementary level. The electronic survey was sent to all 18 teachers in

the bilingual department. After that, five of the bilingual teachers participated in group interviews to gauge their perceptions of the current program model and the support they may need to make changes in their instructional practice. Teachers with a wide range of experience in the district were able to participate in the group interview, which allowed for multiple perspectives to be shared. Finally, student data was reviewed. There are 450 students in Grades K – 5 who receive ESL services in the district, 208 of whom are currently enrolled in bilingual classrooms. The ACCESS scores of these 208 students were analyzed for growth over time.

Data Gathering Techniques

Data were gathered in multiple ways. Quantitative data were collected through a review of student achievement data as well as an electronic survey administered to teachers. Qualitative data were gathered through group interviews as well as through a classroom observation.

Achievement Data

To support the need for a change in the bilingual program, student performance on the ACCESS for ELLs assessment was analyzed. ACCESS scores of all students enrolled in bilingual classrooms in the district between 2013 and 2015 were collected. Specifically, growth in English proficiency of these students was gathered to determine if the current model of instruction in the bilingual program is producing the desired results.

Electronic Survey

An electronic survey was administered to all 18 teachers in the elementary bilingual department. This 15-question survey asked teachers to rate their perceptions of

their competencies in several areas related to teaching for biliteracy. Results of this survey were used to plan questions for the group interview.

These quantitative data on their own do not tell the full story of the English acquisition of the students in the bilingual program, nor do they explain how or why the students are struggling in monolingual English classrooms beginning in Grade 3. They do not provide detail about the teachers' perceptions of efficacy around the use of biliteracy strategies in the classroom. To provide further clarity on the professional learning needs of the teachers that will help improve daily instruction in the classroom, qualitative data was also collected. James, Milenkiewicz, and Bucknam (2008) affirm that qualitative data provide a context and meaning behind the quantitative data that can be useful in understanding complex situations, like in this study (pp. 67-68).

Group Interviews

Since this change plan is focused on improving the bilingual program through targeted professional learning opportunities, interviews of the teachers in the bilingual department were conducted. Volunteers were solicited from the 18 elementary bilingual teachers in the district. Questions were developed to gather teachers' perceptions on student progress in English with the current program model, their confidence in developing biliteracy units and teaching biliteracy strategies, and their feelings of value from building and district administration.

Classroom Observations

Two goals of the bilingual program improvement plan are to improve teachers' ability to teach English literacy and their ability to effectively use biliteracy strategies. There is no way to determine if these goals are being met without conducting

observations in the classroom. Teacher volunteers were solicited to allow the observation of a lesson that had been developed around cross-linguistic connections. One teacher invited the researcher into her classroom to observe two lessons focused on cross-linguistic connections. This teacher was given the opportunity to review Escamilla's Literacy Squared Observation Protocol (2014, pp. 187-188) prior to the observations. The tool was then used to record cross-linguistic connections, student involvement, and lesson delivery techniques. After the observations, the teacher debriefed the two lessons and shared her reflections on her use of biliteracy strategies.

Data Analysis Techniques

ACCESS for ELLs scores, specifically the growth students make in English from year to year, were analyzed with assistance from the ELL Director. In addition, the team looked more closely at the students' ACCESS scores in January of their second-grade year. If the goal of the BSD32 bilingual program is to prepare students for full-day English instruction in Grade 3, then the majority of students should be scoring near proficiency in English by the end of Grade 2. Patton (2008, p. 473-474) recommends having the team determine "standards of desirability" prior to viewing results to reduce the biased interpretations that sometimes come from people who are fully invested and emotionally attached to a particular program. Therefore, the ELL Director determined standards of desirability for growth in a single year as well as overall English proficiency by the end of Grade 2 prior to reviewing the scores.

Next, the results of the electronic survey were analyzed, looking for the areas of greatest strength of the bilingual teachers as well as the lowest rated areas that will need further development. The ELL Director and the team will use these results to plan future

professional development opportunities. In addition, teachers' areas of weakness were probed further during the group interview.

Next, the qualitative data from group interviews and the lesson observations were analyzed. In this study, it was essential to gather qualitative data, as these data give the context behind the numbers and help us understand the teachers' and students' struggles more clearly. The group interview was recorded and transcribed. The transcription was thoroughly reviewed, searching for themes and patterns in the responses that are related to the goals of the study. These themes were then shared with the ELL Director, and data were interpreted by the team.

Once all quantitative and qualitative data were presented, an attempt to triangulate the data was made, in order to interpret the results and refine the improvement plan. A report of findings and interpretations will be made available to the wider group of stakeholders who are all affected by the changes in the bilingual program, including the district administrative team, building principals, and the bilingual teachers.

SECTION FOUR: RELEVANT LITERATURE

Introduction

One look at the growing achievement gap between Limited English Proficiency

(LEP) students and their non-LEP peers demonstrates the need for a programmatic

change in the bilingual department in Brighton School District 32. The most recent

Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) scores from 2014 show an overall

achievement gap of more than 50% between students with Limited English Proficiency

(LEP) and their non-LEP peers. These data, as well as other local data, indicate that the

current Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program is not meeting the needs of the

students. Moving from this traditional early-exit TBE program to an extended, or

Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE), program that emphasizes biliteracy is a

process that will take time. The astute educational leader understands that he or she

cannot merely wave a magic wand and enact this massive shift in bilingual education

overnight; however, a thoughtful review of the bilingual program models, a deep

understanding of the benefits of and strategies involved with biliteracy, and a review of

best practices will lead to a demonstrable change in the program over time.

Bilingual Program Models

Factors to Consider When Selecting a Bilingual Program Model

Finding the appropriate program model for educating bilingual students is a

complex task. Because bilingual students, even if they speak the same language, have

diverse backgrounds and varied needs, it can be nearly impossible to develop and

implement a model for bilingual education that works best for all English Learners (ELs).

Soltero (2011) asserts that there are multiple internal and external factors that affect

second language development. Those educational leaders responsible for developing school districts' bilingual program must keep in mind these factors when developing a program. Soltero (2011) lists internal factors or individual characteristics of the learner, such as personality, age, motivation, and level of proficiency in the native language that must be taken into account. For example, ELs who have a strong foundation of literacy in their native language have the background and skills that aid in the transfer to English, whereas those who do not demonstrate literacy in the native language will most likely struggle to learn English (pp. 6-7).

In addition, there are external factors, such as education policies affecting ELs, societal attitudes toward bilingualism, and quality of native language and English language instruction that impact a bilingual program. For instance, some schools and districts maintain a negative attitude toward the maintenance of the home language that is different from English. In these environments, ELs are discouraged from using their native language to help make connections to English, thus inhibiting the transfer to the new language. Additionally, the quality of education ELs receive certainly impacts their growth. Schools that struggle to hire effective, high quality bilingual teachers will negatively impact student growth in both languages (Soltero, 2011, pp. 6-8).

Beeman and Urow (2013) discuss the origins of the traditional bilingual program model. Many bilingual programs were put into place 30-40 years ago, when most bilingual students were categorized as *sequential bilinguals* (p. 8). Sequential bilinguals are those students who were exposed to one language in their native country and then begin to learn a new language – in this case, English – after having some foundation in

the first language. For these sequential bilinguals, an early-exit program ending after Grade 2, such as the one found in BSD32, was sufficient.

Today, sequential bilinguals are not prevalent in bilingual classrooms. Most ELs serviced in bilingual programs in public schools have been born in the United States. These children, who have learned both their native language and English from birth, are referred to as *simultaneous bilinguals*. Because simultaneous bilinguals bring with them some foundation in both languages, it makes sense to begin instructing them in both languages from the beginning of their schooling experience. Further, Beeman and Urow (2013) explain that educators must stop looking for a dominant language in which to instruct these learners and instead build a program that draws upon the strengths ELs have in both languages (p. 9).

Bilingual Program Alternatives

Garcia and Wei (2015) discuss at length the importance of selecting the appropriate bilingual education model. Some of the first discussion around bilingual program alternatives in the 20th century led to the coining of two classic models for bilingual education by Wallace Lambert: *subtractive bilingualism* and *additive bilingualism* (as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2015, p. 223). Subtractive models of bilingualism are those models whose aim is to take away the native language and replace it with the language prevalent in the schools and society in which the ELs were living. By contrast, additive models viewed the role of the bilingual program to build upon both the native language as well as the second language, with the ultimate goal to produce students who are fully bilingual and biliterate (p. 223).

There are several bilingual program models that have been developed over time that fall within the subtractive and additive categories. Genesee (1999) lists six bilingual program alternatives and gives a rationale for the use of each model. The six models and their primary goals are listed in the table below (p. 3).

Table 1

Bilingual Program Models

	Language Goals	Cultural Goals	Program Length
Sheltered English Instruction	Academic English proficiency	Understanding of and integration into mainstream American culture	1 – 3 years
Newcomer Program	English Proficiency	Understanding of and integration into mainstream American culture	1 – 3 semesters
Transitional Bilingual Education	Transition to all-English instruction	Understanding of and integration into mainstream American culture	2 – 4 years
Developmental Bilingual Education	Bilingualism	Integration into mainstream American culture and maintenance of home/heritage language	Usually 6 years, preferably 12 years
Foreign/Second Language Immersion	Bilingualism	Understanding of and appreciation of second language culture and maintenance of home/mainstream American culture	Usually 6 years, preferably 12 years
Two-Way Immersion	Bilingualism	Maintenance/integration into mainstream American culture and appreciation of other culture	Usually 6 years, preferably 12 years

Using the table above to narrow focus on just a few bilingual program models can be helpful. For example, Sheltered English Instruction is a program model used when the goal for students is to develop English proficiency as quickly as possible. Students are not instructed in their native language, but rather receive instruction in English with modifications and supports as needed. When a school district's goals are to quickly

acclimate ELs to the mainstream American culture, and the goal is not to maintain the native language, this model is an appropriate choice.

Another program model called Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) is the most common model of bilingual education for ELs in the United States (Genesee, 1999, p. 18). A TBE program is the program model previously implemented in Brighton School District 32 (BSD32) before the transition to a biliteracy program was adopted. A TBE program can also be referred to as an early-exit program, where ELs are expected to transition to full English instruction within the first three years of schooling. The TBE model does not aim for full bilingualism; instead, the goal is to move students to English proficiency as quickly as possible. The TBE model is the model that has been used with sequential bilingual learners whose dominant language is determined to be their native language rather than English (Beeman & Urow, 2013, p. 8).

In contrast, a third bilingual education model, Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) is a late-exit model with the goal to produce fully biliterate students. The DBE model takes an enrichment approach and the philosophy behind the model is that development of two languages is the desired outcome (Genesee, 1999, p. 25). The DBE program model outlined in this report is most closely aligned with the biliteracy goals for the new BSD32 bilingual program. Simultaneous bilinguals may benefit the most from this model, since it allows children to access content and knowledge in both languages (Beeman & Urow, 2013, p. 9).

Beeman and Urow claim, "The ability to transfer knowledge and skills between languages is the theoretical underpinning of bilingual education" (2013, p. 133). The traditional view of bilingual education purports that this transfer is one-way, from the

students' native language to English, and that the transfer is a one-time event. This traditional model minimizes the maintenance of the students' native language and infers that once children are proficient in English, there is no need to use the native language again. New thinking in the field suggests that this transfer is a continual process and that this transfer goes both ways, from the native language to English and from English back to the native language. Teaching for biliteracy is a model that respects both languages and legitimizes the bilingual learner's need to move between two languages to maximize understanding of a concept or skill (Beeman & Urow, 2013, pp. 133-134).

Benefits of Biliteracy Instruction

Many years of research in the field of bilingual education demonstrate successful outcomes in teaching for biliteracy (Beeman & Urow, 2013; Escamilla et al., 2014; Lopez, McEneaney, & Nieswandt, 2015; Reyes, 2012; Soto Huerta, 2012; Thomas & Collier, 2003). However, this model can be considered quite controversial, as there are many people who believe the emphasis in American public schools should be placed on moving children to English as quickly as possible. A deeper analysis of the longitudinal research regarding biliteracy instruction may help these skeptics understand that if English proficiency is the ultimate goal for English Learners in American public schools, teaching for biliteracy is considered a very effective practice to reach that goal.

A longitudinal study conducted by Thomas and Collier (2003) found that graduates of Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) programs were the only ELs to reach the 50th percentile in both languages on a standardized reading assessment by the end of their high school years. By contrast, graduates of a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), or early-exit program, were found to reach only the 24th percentile by

the end of their high school years. In this study, researchers analyzed standardized reading assessment scores of ELs over a 15-year period in 23 school districts across 15 states. The results clearly demonstrate that extended bilingual education, with a goal of biliteracy, benefits ELs over the course of their entire public school career and increases their proficiency in English over the long-term.

Lopez, McEneaney, and Nieswandt (2015) conducted a review of the language instruction educational programs (LIEPs) in the United States. They compared the Grade 4 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores in reading, math, and science of all ELs across the United States to determine which LIEPs were most successful in producing English-literate fourth grade students. After accounting for variances in socio-economics, special education services, and other factors influencing scores on a standardized assessment, this team of researchers found that the states that had LIEPs with more emphasis on developing true bilingualism, or literacy in both languages, fared highest on the NAEP in English in Grade 4. For example, Latino ELs living in New Mexico, where teaching for biliteracy is emphasized, scored at least one-half standard deviation better than Latino ELs in Arizona, where bilingual education is prohibited (Lopez, McEneaney, & Nieswandt, 2015, p. 436). This study, and others with results like it, provides state and local education leaders the impetus to ensure that rigorous biliteracy programs are implemented in school districts across the United States.

Other researchers have studied smaller populations of ELs with similar results. Reyes (2012) studied ELs in a small school district in Colorado. In following the bilingual instruction of two Latino students, Humberto and Iliana, Reyes determined that the more opportunities these students had to access both languages during instruction, the

better they fared on literacy activities in English. By allowing students to share their knowledge in both languages, teachers were demonstrating a respect for students' native language. In addition, and more importantly in the educational context, students were able to access their knowledge in both languages, rather than relying on just one. Reyes suggests that all, "21st-century schools should have (at minimum) the goal of graduating all students as biliterate with interest and appreciation for multilingualism and multiliteracies" (2012, p. 254).

Many ELs in the United States are living in poverty. At Taft School, where I serve as principal, more than 90% of EL students qualify as low-income families. Not only do these students enter schools with low levels of literacy in English, they also tend to have low levels of literacy in their native language as well, consistent with research about the impacts of poverty on literacy, school readiness, and education (Payne, 2005; Jensen, 2009). Lindholm-Leary (2014) studied the impacts of biliteracy instruction on Spanish-speaking ELs with low-socio-economic status (SES). In her review of 254 Kindergarten through second grade low-SES ELs, Lindholm-Leary found evidence that bilingual education beginning in preschool is beneficial to the overall English proficiency of students by second grade. For example, students whose Spanish proficiency was higher in Kindergarten and first grade scored higher on English proficiency assessments by second grade.

Since students with low-SES often arrive to school with limited proficiency in both languages, it seems that developing both languages from the start benefits these students in the long run. As a result, Lindholm-Leary advocates for universal preschool in the students' native language. Lopez, McEneaney, and Nieswandt (2015) found that

Illinois was the first state in the nation to extend the bilingual instruction mandate to public preschools (p. 433), making our state a leader in early childhood bilingual education.

Soto Huerta (2012) studied the English literacy development of 45 Latino ELs in a public school in Texas. Soto Huerta set out to determine the kinds of comprehension strategies ELs use when reading a passage in English and whether their knowledge of Spanish impacted their comprehension. The team of researchers found that the most successful readers – those who were able to show comprehension of the fourth-grade passage in English – used their knowledge of Spanish to aid in comprehension. For instance, one student, Alex, explained that he used his knowledge of cognates and relationships between words in English and Spanish to help him understand the text. Students with lower levels of Spanish literacy demonstrated less comprehension after reading the English passage. Thus, Soto Huerta asserts that biliterate students depend on both languages to attain comprehension in the second language (2012, p. 193). Teaching for biliteracy, where educators plan meaningful lessons that include cross-linguistic connections with the goal of grade level literacy in both languages, has shown to be an effective strategy for ELs in the United States.

<center>Teaching for Biliteracy</center>

Teaching for biliteracy is the goal for the bilingual department in Brighton School District 32. Before teachers can be expected to move to this new model, they must first understand what biliteracy instruction is and how it is different from the traditional TBE program instruction they have implemented in the past. Escamilla et al. (2014), who refer to biliteracy instruction as "Literacy Squared," have developed a chart to highlight the

differences between the two models. An adapted version of this chart is below (Escamilla et al., 2014, p. 4).

Table 2

Comparison between Biliteracy Instruction and Traditional Bilingual Program Instruction

Literacy Squared (biliteracy)	Traditional Bilingual Programs
Paired literacy instruction (both languages) beginning in kindergarten	Sequential literacy instruction beginning in L1 (dominant language) followed by L2 (secondary language)
Spanish literacy instruction and literacy-based English Language Development (ELD) continue through Grade 5	Children transition out of Spanish literacy and ESL/ELD
Spanish and English literacy environments are connected in concrete ways to facilitate cross-language learning	Spanish and English literacy have separate themes and topics
Includes a robust approach to the teaching of biliteracy including oracy, reading, writing, and meta-language	Emphasizes reading and writing
Explicit teaching of cross-language connections	Strict separation of languages

Important differences exist between the traditional approach to bilingual education and teaching for biliteracy. For example, to move toward biliteracy, bilingual teachers must learn how to develop units and lessons that include meaningful interactions between the two languages, rather than teaching separate lessons in each language. Additionally, teachers who have traditionally taught only Spanish literacy (e.g. bilingual kindergarten teachers) must learn to incorporate English literacy into their daily or weekly instruction. This new model mandates new approaches and strategies for teaching.

Bilingual teachers must also know that authentic Spanish instruction must be thoroughly planned. They cannot merely translate the English curriculum into Spanish, as

has been done in BSD32 in the past. Escamilla et al. (2014) share an example that teaching foundational reading skills in Spanish is much different than teaching foundational reading skills in English. In Spanish, vowels are introduced before consonants, and then syllables are introduced; however, in English, teachers begin by introducing the consonants and their sounds (p. 7). If bilingual teachers are unaware of the differences between language and literacy development in both languages, they can confuse the learners. Additionally, biliteracy program models give equal attention to oracy, reading, writing, and meta-language. Meta-language is the ability to understand and talk about language and to compare the two languages. Before most students can learn to read and write in any language, they must become proficient in the oral language. These components are not generally emphasized in traditional bilingual programs, where the focus is placed solely on reading and writing (p. 8).

Finally, teachers must explicitly teach students to make connections between the two languages. Escamilla et al. (2014) refer to this strategy as making cross-linguistic connections; Creese and Blackledge (2010) as well as Garcia and Wei (2015) refer to it as translanguaging; and Beeman and Urow (2013) have coined this process as bridging between the two languages (p. 1). Whatever the name given this element of instruction, it is an essential component of the biliteracy program, and cannot be done "on the fly." Escamilla et al. state, "Cross-linguistic connections are purposefully planned opportunities to compare languages" (2014, p. 68).

Garcia and Wei (2015) emphasize the importance of making connections across both languages as they describe translanguaging, an essential piece of every successful bilingual program. Translanguaging, according to the authors, "refers to using one

language to reinforce the other in order to increase understanding and in order to augment the pupil's activity in both languages (p. 224). Creese and Blackledge (2010) clarify that translanguaging is different than code switching, which is often looked down upon as a strategy used by individuals who have low levels of proficiency in one of more languages. Translanguaging, rather, is a flexible strategy used by bilingual students and teachers to access knowledge that has been developed in two (or more) languages. Moreover, Creese and Blackledge warn against the traditional practice in bilingual classrooms to adhere to a strict separation of languages, where, for instance, math is only taught in English and social studies is only taught in Spanish. In their opinion, this approach applies monolingual assumptions onto the bilingual student and inhibits full comprehension (2010, p. 106).

The flexible use of two languages in the bilingual classroom has been celebrated for several years; however, bilingual teachers struggle to understand how to consistently and purposefully implement these practices into their daily lessons. An example of a teaching strategy designed to enhance cross-linguistic connection is cognate instruction. Cognates are words in Spanish and English that originate, "from the same root and have similar meanings, spellings, and pronunciations," such as "electricity and *electricidad…* or education and *educación"* (Beeman & Urow, 2013, p. 10-11).

Dressler, Carlo, Snow, August, and White (2011) explain that there are estimated to be between 10,000 and 15,000 Spanish and English cognates. These cognates also appear to be present in nearly one-third of all academic texts. Dressler et al. studied the reading comprehension of a group of eight English Learners and four monolingual English students in fifth grade. Using a think-aloud strategy, the researchers measured the

comprehension of each student after reading six short passages in English. Results of this study demonstrated that use of cognates helped the ELs gain even *greater* comprehension of the passages than their monolingual English peers. However, only the ELs who have been explicitly taught to look for cognates to aid in comprehension had the positive impact on English comprehension (p. 253).

A study conducted by Jimenez, Garcia, and Pearson (1996) also supports the idea that ELs who use their knowledge of cognates while reading become more proficient readers in English than those who do not. These researchers studied fourteen ELs in two school districts in order to determine the metalinguistic strategies they used to make meaning while reading English passages. Results of the study demonstrated that the most successful readers of English used their knowledge of Spanish to aid in comprehension *and* could describe the benefits of this transfer. These researchers thus concluded that ELs who *strategically* use cross-linguistic transfer while reading in the second language are most successful (p. 107).

The studies conducted by Dressler et al. (2010) and Jimenez, Garcia, and Pearson (1996) demonstrate that if ELs can identify cognates, they will be able to draw upon the knowledge and skills they have attained in both languages to aid in comprehension. According to Montelongo, Hernandez, and Herter (2011), not all ELs naturally identify cognates or relationships between the two languages. These authors recommend that teachers explicitly teach children to find them in order to enhance their understanding of both languages (p. 162). In a bilingual program that emphasizes teaching for biliteracy, cognate instruction is meaningfully embedded into the curriculum.

Summary

Bilingual teachers who wish to fully implement biliteracy instruction through a Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) model have many challenges, including advocating for biliteracy to those educators and policymakers who do not understand the importance of teaching languages other than English and finding the time in the short school day to teach lessons in both languages. However, the benefits far outweigh these challenges. Not only does decades of research demonstrate clear benefits in English literacy for children who have strong foundations in both languages, but teaching for biliteracy also allows English Learners (ELs) to access their funds of knowledge in both languages. Escamilla et al. (2014) describe funds of knowledge as, "those skills, concepts, bodies of knowledge, and ways of knowing that students acquire" in both languages. If bilingual educators maintain a strict separation of the languages, they reduce students' ability to access all they know about a given topic or concept, particularly for simultaneous bilinguals who have learned both languages from birth. Given the fact that most ELs in the district are considered simultaneous bilinguals, effective biliteracy instruction is essential to the enhancement of the BSD32 bilingual program.

SECTION FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed-methods study is twofold: first, student achievement data was reviewed for students in the current bilingual program to determine if there is a need for a change in the program model; second, professional learning experiences that would be beneficial for teachers to effectively implement the biliteracy model were explored. Achievement data from the ACCESS for ELLs assessment given to all English Learners (ELs) in Brighton School District 32 were reviewed in two ways. First, an analysis of the overall score of ELs at the end of their second-grade year was conducted. Second, the growth in English proficiency from year to year on the ACCESS assessment over a three-year period was examined. These data were analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the current early-exit bilingual program model, which would answer the question whether the majority of EL students in BSD32 are ready for full-time English instruction by the end of Grade 2.

To gain information about the teachers' competencies and needs for professional development, an electronic survey was developed and sent to the elementary bilingual teachers. Additionally, a group interview was conducted with five bilingual teachers, and one classroom observation of the use of cross-linguistic connections was conducted.

In this section, I will first discuss achievement and survey data collected and review significant findings that came from a thorough analysis of the results. Next, qualitative data from the group interviews and classroom observations, broken down into themes, are presented and interpreted.

Quantitative Data Analysis and Interpretation

Achievement Data

A comprehensive review of achievement data for English Learners (ELs) was the impetus for making a change in the bilingual program in Brighton School District 32. When the 2014 ISAT (Illinois Standards Achievement Test) results indicated a growing gap between students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and their non-LEP peers, it became evident that the early-exit Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program may not be servicing students in the best way if the goal was to prepare them for success in English classrooms. To triangulate this data and confirm whether these suspicions were true, student ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) scores were reviewed for the past three school years, from 2013 – 2015. The ACCESS assessment is administered to every public school student in the state of Illinois that has been identified as in need of English Language services.

Since the current bilingual program model in the district ends after second grade, all ELs are expected to be ready to learn in all-English classrooms in third grade. To determine their readiness levels, ACCESS scores for all students in Grade 2 were analyzed. ACCESS scores range from Level 1 (entering) to Level 6 (reaching). Currently the state of Illinois cut score for students to exit the EL program in a school district is 5.0 (bridging). A score of 5.0 or higher indicates that an English Learner has good command of the English language and will need little or no support learning academic content in English classrooms. A review of the percentage of students in BSD32 who have reached this level of English proficiency by the end of Grade 2 is listed in Table 3.

Table 3

BSD32 Students in Grade 2 with Level 5 or higher on ACCESS for ELLs

Assessment

Year	Number of Students with Composite Score of 5.0 or Higher	Total Number of Students Tested	Percentage of Students with Composite Score of 5.0 or Higher
2013	12	121	10%
2014	13	131	10%
2015	12	141	8.5%

The data above clearly demonstrate that very few ELs in the district have a strong command of the English language by the end of Grade 2. These data show that, in the past three school years, 90% or more of the ELs who enter general education English-only classrooms in Grade 3 are not yet proficient in English, increasing the likelihood that they will struggle to understand instruction and to keep the pace with their monolingual peers.

In addition to reviewing the Grade 2 overall ACCESS scores, student growth in English from year to year was tracked to determine if the bilingual program in Brighton School District 32 has been effective in helping children grow in their English language development each year. ACCESS for ELLs Growth Reports from 2012 to 2013, 2013 to 2014, and 2014 to 2015 were analyzed. The ACCESS Growth Reports suggest that growth at or above the 40th percentile is considered adequate growth. The results by grade level of students who reached adequate growth over the three-year term are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4

Percentage of Students with Growth At or Above the 40th Percentile, By Grade

Level

	2012 – 2013	2013 – 2014	2014 – 2015
Kindergarten to Grade 1	43%	57%	63%
Grade 1 to Grade 2	49%	58%	46%
Grade 2 to Grade 3	93%	92%	**92%**
Grade 3 to Grade 4	82%	68%	**78%**
Grade 4 to Grade 5	44%	67%	56%
Overall	59%	67%	**67%**

There are a few significant trends apparent in these data. First, the overall

percentage of students making adequate growth on ACCESS from one year to the next

increased from the 2012-2013 report to the 2014-2015 report. On the most recent

ACCESS growth report, two-thirds (67%) of all ELs in BSD32 are reported to be making

growth at or above the 40th percentile, with the highest percentage of growth occurring

from Grade 2 to 3 (92%) and Grade 3 to 4 (78%). Because the BSD32 bilingual program

ends after Grade 2, it can be inferred that the most growth in English occurs after children

are exited from the bilingual program and placed into monolingual English classrooms.

Adequate growth of only about half the ELs occurs between Kindergarten and

Grade 2, when the children are in the bilingual classrooms. These results make sense

because the program model has not been a biliteracy model, and thus teachers have been

focused most on improving students' native language in the lower grades rather than their

English acquisition. Since the biliteracy model was formally introduced during the 2015-

16 school year, it will be interesting to follow the ACCESS growth reports to see if there

is more growth in English in the younger grades as a result of the new model.

Electronic Survey

An electronic survey consisting of 18 structured statements was designed to determine the level of competency of the bilingual teachers in BSD32 as related to biliteracy instruction and implementation of the biliteracy units and lessons. All eighteen elementary bilingual teachers were sent the electronic survey, and 16 of the 18 (89%) teachers completed all or part of the survey. The structured statements were organized into four categories: Spanish Literacy, English Literacy, Student Characteristics, and Standards and Unit Development. The teachers were given the opportunity to leave comments at the end of each section to explain their responses. Answers were weighted, with the "strongly disagree" response earning one point and the "strongly agree" response earning four points. An overall score of 3.25 or higher out of 4.0 was set as an adequate response rating prior to the review of results. An analysis and interpretation of the survey results follows.

Spanish Literacy Section.

Table 5

Statement 1: I know and understand the research that supports initial literacy instruction in Spanish for Spanish speakers in the United States.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	0.00%	53.33%	46.67%	15	3.47

One hundred percent of the teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the first statement. All teachers feel they have a solid understanding of literacy instruction in Spanish for Spanish speakers in the United States, which is certainly reassuring since all of these teachers are responsible for the task of teaching Spanish literacy to students

every day in the bilingual program. The average rating of 3.47 is above the threshold of 3.25.

Table 6

Statement 2: I have been trained in best practices for teaching literacy in Spanish for Spanish speakers in the United States.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	12.50%	50.00%	37.50%	16	3.25

This statement focuses on the level of training bilingual teachers have had in best practices for Spanish literacy instruction to determine if more professional opportunities are necessary. On this question, 87.5% of respondents indicated that they have received this training in the past. Two teachers disagreed with the statement, indicating that further professional development in Spanish literacy might be appropriate for them. One teacher replied, "…I have not done any formal training or instruction [courses] on Spanish literacy. I have read and done professional development on teaching Spanish literacy, but it has not been as formal and structured like my learning of English literacy." This statement is consistent with the views of Beeman and Urow (2013), who point out that bilingual teachers are rarely, if ever, given formal instruction in Spanish about teaching Spanish literacy. Because the average rating for this response is 3.25, right at the threshold, an opportunity for professional learning on this topic may be prudent for all bilingual teachers in the district.

Table 7

Statement 3: I am an effective teacher of literacy in Spanish for Spanish speakers in the United States.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	0.00%	56.25%	43.75%	16	3.44

This statement attempts to elicit teachers' feelings of efficacy about their Spanish

literacy instruction. None of the 16 respondents disagreed with the statement, meaning

that all bilingual teachers who were surveyed believe they teach Spanish literacy

effectively. One teacher elaborated on his/her response, "Growing up bilingual and

bicultural, I learned two languages in both academic and social settings. Also, through

my undergraduate major of bilingual education, as well as my other bilingual/ESL

coursework and experiences, I feel that I know best practices in my daily instruction."

Table 8

Statement 4: I have the materials I need to teach literacy in Spanish for Spanish

speakers in the United States.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
6.25%	18.75%	56.25%	18.75%	16	2.88

This statement focuses on materials and resources needed to teach Spanish

literacy. This statement had the lowest average rating of 2.88 out of 4.0. Four of the 16

respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that there may

be a need to order more materials or resources for Spanish literacy instruction. This

information is not surprising because the bilingual teachers often refer to the dearth of

high-quality materials available in Spanish. One teacher responded, "In order to provide

AUTHENTIC Spanish language instruction, our books should be 100% authentic, not

just translations. These materials can be hard to find at times." Also, the bilingual

teachers recently have been given a new writing curriculum in English that was not available in Spanish. A teacher commented, "The writing curriculum is in English. We need the mentor texts in Spanish in order to teach the writing workshop effectively."

Table 9

Statement 5: I am orally fluent and literate in Spanish.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	16	3.75

Beeman and Urow (2013) discuss the need for bilingual teachers to be fluent in both languages in order to be effective role models for children in their classrooms. This statement was an important one to include on the survey, as there are some non-native Spanish teachers in the district who learned Spanish as their second language in high school and/or college. The district has struggled to retain teachers in the past who have solid command of both English and Spanish. The results are promising, as there are no teachers who disagreed with the statement, meaning all teachers feel they are fully literate in Spanish.

Table 10

Statement 6: I have the Spanish academic language required to teach the grades and subject matter for which I am currently responsible.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	6.25%	56.25%	37.50%	16	3.31

The final statement in the Spanish literacy section is related to the above statement about fluency in Spanish, but takes it one step further. A teacher can be

completely fluent in the language but not have the academic Spanish language needed to teach their grade level or content. Though the results, an average rating of 3.31, indicate that this is not a problem in need of addressing, it is important to note that one bilingual teacher disagreed with this statement. This teacher responded,

> I selected "disagree" for academic language because Spanish is a very diverse language. There are lists of academic words to use based on Mexican vocabulary. However, these are not written directly into our units, so I need to translate from the English teaching guide and take extra time to search for the correct translation of the word so that it is consistent across the grade levels.

This teacher brings up an important point about ensuring consistency of academic language when there are multiple translations for a given word in English. This is certainly a factor to consider when developing new biliteracy units.

English Literacy Section.

Table 11

> Statement 7: I have been trained in best practices for teaching English to English Learners.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	60.00%	15	3.60

In a biliteracy program, bilingual classroom teachers must teach both English and Spanish literacy. Some of the bilingual teachers in BSD32 have had little or no experience teaching English literacy to students since the program has had a heavy emphasis on Spanish instruction. This statement received an average rating of 3.60 and all teachers responded, "agree" or "strongly agree." The results are favorable since they

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indicate that the transition to including more English literacy instruction beginning in Kindergarten may be smooth if the teachers have a solid foundation in this area.

Table 12

Statement 8: I an effective teacher of literacy in English to English Learners.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	0.00%	53.33%	46.67%	15	3.47

This statement seeks to determine the bilingual teachers' efficacy in English literacy instruction. Similar to the results of the previous statement, these results indicate that all bilingual teachers believe they are effective teachers of English literacy. One teacher commented, "I have been trained to teach English Language Learners. I consistently apply ESL strategies that will help my students develop proficiency in English." Again, although most bilingual classroom teachers in the district have not previously been responsible for teaching English, the fact they feel confident in beginning this task is a positive first step toward implementing more English instruction into the classrooms.

Table 13

Statement 9: I have the materials I need to teach literacy in English to English Learners.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	6.67%	26.67%	66.67%	15	3.20

Statement 9 received the lowest rating in the English literacy section, 3.20 out of 4.0, consistent with the results of the same statement in the Spanish literacy section.

While the majority of teachers agreed with this statement, there is one teacher who believes he/she needs more resources in English. As the bilingual teachers continue to increase their English instruction, more materials and resources may be necessary.

Table 14

Statement 10: I have been trained in strategies for developing academic vocabulary in English for English Learners.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	6.67%	26.67%	66.67%	15	3.60

One teacher of the 15 respondents disagreed with the statement above, indicating that most teachers in the district have been trained in strategies for teaching English vocabulary for ELs. This response rate is not surprising since these strategies are often taught in the English as a Second Language (ESL) courses that are a requirement for the position. There is one teacher in the bilingual department who has not yet obtained her ESL endorsement and is currently taking courses to become certified. This may be the teacher who selected "disagree" for this statement.

Table 15

Statement 11: I have the English academic language required to teach the grades and subject matter for which I am currently responsible.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	66.67%	15	3.67

The final statement in the English literacy section of the survey focuses on English academic language. All 15 teachers agreed with this statement, giving it an average rating of 3.67. These results are not surprising since all bilingual teachers in the

district were educated in U.S. schools and received their teaching certificates through universities in the U.S. It would be difficult to graduate from a teacher education program without a high level of English academic vocabulary. An interesting perspective was shared by one teacher, who replied, "There are currently no English Language Arts units written for the grade level I teach. While I use all the standards and I know it is important to help the students grow in both languages, the (teacher) evaluations are solely based on Spanish…literacy." This teacher brings up one of the concerns identified in the BSD32 bilingual program, where the student growth data for teacher evaluations, which is solely based on Spanish literacy, has been a disincentive for incorporating more English into daily instruction. This concern must be addressed in the change plan.

English Learner Characteristics Section.

Table 16

Statement 12: I understand how oral language development affects literacy development.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	13.33%	33.33%	53.33%	15	3.40

In a biliteracy program model, there is a greater emphasis on oral language development than in a traditional bilingual education (TBE) program. Escamilla et al. (2014) maintain that oral language is rehearsal for writing and explain that teachers who emphasize oral language better ensure that children are developing critical thinking skills than those who do not. Therefore, it is essential that the BSD32 bilingual teachers understand the connection between oral language and literacy development. The results indicate that all but two bilingual teachers understand this connection. This statement

received the lowest average rating in the English Learner Characteristics section. A rating of 3.40 is above the threshold set at 3.25; however, since the oral component is such an important element of the biliteracy model, a review of this information may be wise.

Table 17

Statement 13: I understand how differences in student cultural backgrounds affect literacy development.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	66.67%	15	3.67

No two ELs are similar and the differences in their backgrounds, cultures, and life experiences impact their literacy development. All bilingual teachers agreed that they understand these differences and how they impact literacy development. An average rating of 3.67 would indicate no need to review this information with the group. One teacher mentioned the need for the entire school community to receive more training in this area. The teacher replied, "I feel that we, as a school community, need a better understanding and more training of the other cultural backgrounds in our school. …With our newcomers, we need to educate our staff that they are not all illiterate. Some of them have previous education, just no English literacy."

Table 18

Statement 14: I understand how differences in student socio-economic backgrounds affect literacy development.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	0.00%	26.67%	73.33%	15	3.73

Socio-economic backgrounds also vary from student to student. These variances

impact student achievement and literacy development in many ways. Results indicate a

strong level of understanding among the bilingual teachers in BSD32. None of the 15

teachers disagreed with the statement and the average rating was 3.73, well above the

3.25 rating set as the threshold. Beeman and Urow (2013) point to the relationship

between the family's socio-economic status and level of education of the parents and the

academic achievement of English Learners. These authors suggest that bilingual teachers

must collect this kind of information about the students they teach in order to provide the

necessary resources to their students and their families. Children in poverty may not be

able to reach their academic potential if their families are struggling to find food, shelter,

and clothing.

Table 19

Statement 15: I understand how children develop biliteracy through cross-

linguistic connections.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	60.00%	15	3.60

The final statement in this section focuses on cross-linguistic connections as the

cornerstone of the biliteracy model. Escamilla et al. (2014) highlight the significance of

the *strategic* planning of cross-linguistic lessons to help children understand the

similarities and differences between the two languages, as well as to assist children with

connecting what they know in one language to what they know in the second language.

All 15 teachers agreed that they understand how children develop biliteracy through

cross-linguistic connections. An average rating of 3.60 indicates a strong understanding

of this information. One teacher indicated an interest in learning more. He/she

commented, "I would love to learn even more about biliteracy and how I can further

support my students to become biliterate through these connections between the

languages."

Standards and Unit Development Section.

Table 20

Statement 16: I understand how the Common Core State Standards align with the

WIDA English Language Development Standards.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	13.33%	60.00%	26.67%	15	3.13

Bilingual teachers are asked to use multiple sets of standards when planning their

lessons and units. They must minimally align their units with the Common Core State

Standards and the WIDA English Language Development standards. Results of this

statement indicate that the alignment between these two sets of standards should be an

area of focus for the future. Only about one-quarter of the bilingual teachers (26.67%)

strongly agreed with this statement and the average rating of 3.13 is below the threshold

indicating adequate knowledge. Future professional learning opportunities to compare the

two sets of standards should be considered.

Table 21

Statement 17: I know how to develop lessons and units that include cross-

linguistic connections to help children acquire biliteracy.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	13.33%	46.67%	40.00%	15	3.27

The bilingual teachers in BSD32 are all currently responsible for writing new units that include elements of biliteracy. The results of this survey question are important for the leadership in the bilingual department so they know whether or not they need to provide more support immediately. The average rating for this statement is 3.27, slightly above the threshold of 3.25. Two teachers disagreed with the statement and feel they are not knowledgeable about developing biliteracy lessons and units. While this may seem somewhat insignificant, two teachers out of this very small group of 15 can cause concern for unit development. Moving forward, more emphasis may need to be placed on the elements of biliteracy lessons and units so that all teachers feel comfortable creating them.

Table 22

Statement 18: I have access to the resources necessary to create the biliteracy units for the grades and subject matter for which I am currently responsible.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Average Rating
0.00%	6.67%	80.00%	13.33%	15	3.07

The bilingual teachers were certainly consistent when it comes to the statements about materials and resources. In each of the three sections containing a question about resources, that statement had the lowest rating. This statement, with an average rating of 3.07 received the second lowest rating in the entire survey. Though the district rarely denies teachers what they need to teach, the bilingual teachers feel less than confident that they have what they need to teach biliteracy units. One teacher commented, "Although the district does a good job in providing us resources, authentic texts in the

native language seem to be hard to find." Another mentioned, "I feel that we generally have the resources we need, just not a plethora like the monolingual teachers have." These teachers touch on the difficulty in finding materials and a discrepancy between the resources provided to the English general education teachers and the bilingual teachers. Due to the low ratings on resources across three sections of the survey, this is worth a conversation with the bilingual teachers about how they can go about getting the resources they need to effectively teach their students.

Summary of Survey Results.

Overall, the results of the Bilingual Teacher Needs Assessment Survey were positive. No questions received a rating lower that 2.88 and only four of 18 (22%) of all statements received a rating of less than 3.25 out of 4.0, which indicated a possible concern. Some information that came out of the survey that may need action include reviewing the amount of resources and materials with the bilingual teachers as well as ensuring the teachers understand the different sets of standards they must incorporate, as well as their level of comfort in biliteracy unit development. The bilingual teachers seem to be confident in their command of both Spanish and English. They feel comfortable with their understanding of how student characteristics affect language development. The areas for focus for future development appear to be in unit planning and implementing biliteracy strategies into the classroom.

<div align="center">Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretation</div>

Introduction

Qualitative data were collected through two means: a group interview and classroom observations. After reviewing the results of the Bilingual Teacher Needs

Assessment survey, volunteers were solicited to participate in a group interview. Five bilingual teachers agreed to participate in a group interview. The participants included the following teachers (pseudonyms used):

Elizabeth – Elizabeth is a second grade bilingual teacher with four and a half years of teaching experience.

Lindsay – Lindsay is a first-year teacher who completed her student teaching in BSD32. She teaches in a first grade bilingual classroom.

Diana – Diana has ten years of experience in the district in several roles. She has been an ESL teacher, a bilingual Kindergarten teacher, a bilingual first grade teacher, and most recently, she has taken on the role of bilingual reading interventionist, working with struggling readers in the bilingual program, as well as supporting teachers in literacy instruction in Spanish.

Hannah – Hannah has three years of experience in the district teaching in a bilingual Kindergarten classroom.

Erin – Erin is in her fourth year of teaching bilingual second grade in the district.

Questions posed to the group centered around teachers' feelings about working as a bilingual educator in Brighton School District 32, their level of understanding of biliteracy as a program model, and their professional learning needs. The transcripts were reviewed and coded for themes and patterns that emerged during the interview. Subsequently, classroom observations were conducted to determine the current level of implementation of biliteracy teaching practices in the classroom. Elizabeth, a bilingual second grade teacher who also participated in the group interview, allowed an observation twice during her teaching of cross-linguistic connections. During the first

observation, she taught a lesson on the /s/ sound in English and Spanish. In the second observation, Elizabeth reviewed the differences between forming past tense verbs in both English and Spanish.

After reviewing the transcripts of the group interviews and considering the information gained through the classroom observations, three themes were determined to be significant factors impacting teachers' attitudes, efficacy, and competence in moving to a biliteracy model. Teachers referred to inconsistent leadership for bilingual teachers, frequent teacher turnover, and limited professional learning opportunities as barriers standing in their way. Each theme is discussed in detail below.

Theme One: Inconsistent Leadership for Bilingual Teachers

One factor mentioned several times during the group interview was the lack of consistency in leadership for bilingual teachers. First, the program has had three Directors of English Language Learning in the past six years. This inconsistent leadership of the program has led to many changes in the overall philosophy of the program as well as the expectations for instruction. For example, one previous Director mandated that no English instruction take place in Kindergarten or Grade 1. Even ESL teachers were encouraged to teach children in Spanish for the most part. During this Director's two-year tenure, the student assessments for teacher evaluation were written. These assessments only assess students' Spanish literacy, which has proven to be a barrier in the way of moving toward a biliteracy model. If teachers are only evaluated on their students' Spanish growth, they have little incentive to spend time developing their English growth.

After this Director left the role, a new Director came to the district and made several changes to the program. Two years later, a new Director came in and started

discussion around implementing biliteracy. With all of these changes, teachers have struggled to understand what they are expected to teach. Additionally, each time there has been a change, the bilingual teachers have been asked to rewrite curriculum to align to the new model or philosophy. Teachers have become frustrated by the constant writing and revising of units. One teacher, Elizabeth, discussed this concern at length.

> There has been a new ESL coordinator every two years forever. That's another struggle. Definitely it has been a humungous, humungous struggle. One person tells you to focus on one thing, so because I want to do my best, I go and read and learn all about that. Then a couple years later, the new person comes in and they don't agree with that. So you throw out everything you learned and all those lessons you planned and you have to start over. Then the minute you think you can breathe again… that person leaves and a new one comes. It's so hard. You almost get to the point where you don't want to hear about the changes because it's like, "How long will this person be here? Maybe I can just ignore it for a minute and they'll leave too." But I can't do that either, because I want to learn, and grow, and be a better teacher every day.

Elizabeth highlights the importance of leadership in determining and sustaining the focus for the bilingual program. When the Directors change frequently and the emphasis of the program changes with the leadership, teachers can easily become confused. Rather than start over from scratch, some teachers will give less effort to the program or may even leave the district. Wagner et al. (2006) maintain that developing a shared vision for success is essential for any organizational change. Educational leaders and teachers must develop agreed-upon criteria for effective classroom instruction as well as student results.

With the constant change in leadership and direction in the BSD32 bilingual program, this shared vision has not been developed and teachers are uncertain about the direction of the program.

In addition to the change in ELL Directors, the bilingual teachers discussed the impacts that new teacher evaluators have had on their performance over the years. Some of the teachers mentioned that they find it difficult to be evaluated by an administrator with no background in bilingual education. Erin explains the experience she had during her first year in the district.

> My first year, my first evaluator had no idea what was going on [in my classroom]. I could be cursing her out in front of the kids and she would have just had no idea [because she did not speak Spanish]. Sometimes, as a teacher, as someone who wants to grow, you feel like, you know, you're getting slighted. Did I really deserve that excellent [rating] or is it just because I'm nice and I can, you know, *hablo español*?

Erin, as a teacher who wants to improve and challenge herself to grow, struggled in the past when her evaluator did not understand the language or best practices in instruction in the bilingual program. She wants to feel that she has earned a positive rating by someone who really understands what bilingual education should be.

Another negative impact for evaluations of the bilingual teachers is that they have had many different evaluators over the years. Four of the five teachers who participated in the group interview who have been with the district more than one year have had two or more different evaluators. Erin, a Grade 2 bilingual teacher with three years in the district, and Diana, a ten-year veteran in the district, had the following exchange:

Erin: I have had a different evaluator every year! I've had two of the [bilingual] coordinators who knew Spanish and I've had a principal who did not. It's about this inconsistency of evaluators. I would just like to have somebody who knows me and has been working with me for multiple years. Consistency would help; that way they could see how I'm growing.

Diana: Yeah, it's the evaluator lottery. Who am I going to get this year? It's so difficult to figure out the new person and their style. You spend so much time second-guessing yourself because you have no consistent message from anyone.

Clearly, the lack of consistent leadership in the Director role as well as the evaluators who work with the bilingual teachers is a source of frustration for this group of teachers.

Theme Two: Frequent Bilingual Teacher Turnover

Fourteen out of 18 (78%) of the elementary bilingual teachers have fewer than four years of teaching experience in the district. Last school year alone, seven of the 18 elementary bilingual teachers left the district through retirement, unsatisfactory performance, relocation, or other personal reasons. The bilingual teachers in the group interview cited this rapid turnover as a barrier standing in the way of effective implementation of the biliteracy model. Elizabeth hypothesized the reason so many bilingual teachers leave the district:

[It] is a combination of a lot of things. There is a level of rigor that the district expects that maybe comes into it. When you're a new teacher here and you have no previous knowledge about what Brighton District 32 does or is about…. Those new teachers come here and they're like "Whoa!" It's so much. We are writing curriculum, we're doing biliteracy, everything all on our own. Maybe they

haven't been exposed to any of that before and they are like, "Well, what I was doing in my old place was working great and now I have to come learn all these new things." On top of translating, on top of all the other things, it's just a lot. We expect a lot here.

Another teacher, Hannah, a bilingual Kindergarten teacher, explains that the demands placed on new teachers in the district are stressful.

I just know that there were a lot [of demands]. I almost didn't come back after my first year. There was a lot of anxiety. For me, I came in and I didn't know anything. I had to learn everything on the spot. The workload was so much. Even as a first year full-time teacher, I had all these other responsibilities. …[T]hey told me, "You're in charge of writing curriculum." and I was like, "I don't even know what I'm doing and you think I should write curriculum?" That part was so stressful. I couldn't believe I was expected to write curriculum when I had no idea what I was teaching.

Diana, a veteran teacher, concurs with Hannah. Even as a ten-year veteran, she believes she is expected to be the bilingual "expert" in the district when she does not feel worthy of the title.

That's why I hate being called an expert by administrators. Just because I was thrown into something and I did it [developed curricular units] does NOT mean I am an expert. It doesn't even mean I'm good at it. But they don't know what 'good' is because they aren't trained in this field. So, they just assume I'm an expert because I know more than them. It's very stressful to have those kinds of

expectations put on you when you are not necessarily prepared for it. That's

probably another reason people leave.

Another potential reason for turnover in the district was not directly mentioned by the

five teachers in the group interview; however, the above statements by Hannah and

Diana, as well as the following statement by Erin, can be interpreted as a lack of support

for new teachers in the bilingual program.

> My first year, I didn't have the bilingual background. I didn't go to school to be a
>
> bilingual teacher. I had my endorsement in English Language Arts, not Spanish. I
>
> had no idea. I came in and I didn't have a partner teacher. I was the only one
>
> [bilingual teacher at my grade level] and I felt all alone…and then they were like,
>
> 'Oh, well now you…have to write curriculum,' and all this other stuff. As a first-
>
> year teacher, I just don't know if you should be expected to write curriculum.
>
> Come on! You have no idea [how to write curriculum as a first-year teacher]. I
>
> learned as I was going, I'm still learning, but that was really stressful.

Erin, and the other teachers, could have benefitted from the support of a consulting

teacher, like the general education teachers in Brighton School District 32 have during

their first year. Consulting teachers serve as mentors in every sense of the word during a

new teacher's first year, giving individualized professional development throughout the

year based on each new teacher's unique areas of strength and of concern. They observe

and give feedback, model instruction, give assistance in lesson planning, supporting

during all formal and informal observations, and much more.

> Drago-Severson (2011) lists mentoring as one of the four pillar practices to

support adult learning. "…[M]entoring supports the *process* of growth. Mentoring creates

a context… that enables adults to examine, learn from, and broaden their own and other people's perspectives" (p. 220). Because there are no bilingual consulting teachers, the new teachers in this program do not have this valuable support. Rather, they believe they are expected to behave like experts in bilingual teaching and curriculum development from their first day on the job. This level of expectation, combined with the lack of consistent leadership in the program, seems to be a recipe for high turnover in the bilingual program. Without experienced teachers to lead this programmatic change in the buildings, it may be difficult to see effective and consistent implementation of biliteracy teaching practices.

Theme Three: Limited Professional Learning on Biliteracy

When discussing their professional development needs, this group of teachers made it clear that they did not feel the district had provided the entire bilingual teaching staff with the kinds of professional learning experiences they need to successfully implement the new biliteracy model. They explained that they have sufficient understanding of the theory and background and now what they need to improve their instruction is to see biliteracy in action. Elizabeth mentioned the need to make sure all teachers are clear about what biliteracy instruction looks like in the classroom.

> …[W]e can't just say we're implementing these biliteracy units and slap some English in there at the end of the nine weeks and say, "Yep, we did it." Our kids should know both languages now. We actually have to figure out how to do that all the time, like every day. And we have to know how it looks in Kindergarten, and first grade, and second grade…we all have to be on the same page. And I really don't think we all are right now.

Elizabeth and the other more experienced teachers in the group interview agreed that it is their job to share their experiences with the new teachers. Diana suggested that the experienced teachers should take the lead in ensuring that new teachers develop the background in biliteracy that will help them succeed. She commented, "I think it's important that we [teachers who have been in district for a few years] communicate what we already know [about biliteracy] to those new teachers. There is a lot on their plate, but it is our responsibility to make sure they read the books, to try to understand, to get caught up to speed."

Elizabeth explained that the kind of professional learning opportunities given to her in the district have not been sufficient for her own learning.

So, um, a book is not enough for me, because I need to learn hands-on. I haven't had enough of...SHOW ME, SHOW ME! When [one of the consultants] came out, we were getting deep and it was great. She was helping me with writing a unit and really showed me how to do this. She helped me plan out some cross-linguistic connections for a particular unit and it was so helpful. That's what I want…. We need more concrete examples and experiences.

Elizabeth points out that her learning style is more hands-on. She wants more experiences where she can see and hear exactly how to plan and teach effective biliteracy lessons. Drago-Severson (2011) mentions that adults have different learning styles, preferences, and "ways of knowing" that must be addressed in a comprehensive professional learning plan. The author asserts that school leaders must, "be mindful of the qualitatively different ways in which we, as adults, make sense of our life experiences.

…[B]ecause we take in and experience our realities in very different ways, we need different types of supports and challenges to grow" (p. 8).

This limitation was observed during the two observations in Elizabeth's classroom. Though she planned thoughtful and engaging lessons for the students that were successful in meeting the learning objectives both times, Elizabeth mentioned during the debriefing meetings that these lessons took a very long time for her to develop. She indicated that she knew of very few resources to assist her in the planning of the cross-linguistic connection lessons. Elizabeth also mentioned that some of the experts in the field differ on their approaches to the biliteracy component, so it can be confusing at times to truly know what to do. However, she has seen a marked increase in her students' use of both languages as a result of including these language lessons regularly and she has found the value in these lessons. She explains:

> Bottom line – once the kids are taught to make these connections, they will begin to look for them on their own. They are amazing at finding them in their reading or when we are doing LEA (Language Experience Approach) and then applying them when they're writing. But, it has to be modeled, modeled, modeled! Unless I take the time to do my homework, find the patterns, and plan out these lessons, it won't work. This is why we need more development on this. I want to see other teachers do it. I want to find books that point out the patterns. I need more help!

It would benefit the bilingual teachers for the Director of ELL to provide more individualized or differentiated professional learning experiences. New teachers may need to be given more background information on biliteracy, while the more experienced

teachers are looking to see biliteracy in action. High-quality professional learning opportunities must be planned to move to an effective biliteracy program model.

Summary

      The bilingual teachers who participated in the group interview shed light on several barriers they believe are standing in their way of fully and effectively developing biliteracy units and implementing biliteracy instruction into their classrooms. The teachers painted a picture of a revolving door both in the leadership and the teaching ranks. This lack of consistency affects the momentum for change and makes it difficult to provide effective professional learning experiences for the entire department. In addition to the lack of consistency, it is important to note that some of the teachers in the group interview mentioned anxiety or stress related to the level of expectation placed on them by administration as well as the perception of a large workload. Furthermore, teachers who are actively implementing biliteracy lessons point out how time-consuming and difficult the plans are due to a lack of knowledge. They are requesting more models of biliteracy in action as well as time for collaboration with teachers who have successfully implemented biliteracy units. These factors must be addressed when developing the plan for change in the program.

SECTION SIX: A VISION FOR SUCCESS (TO BE)

After conducting and analyzing achievement data on student performance on the ACCESS for ELLs assessment, as well as interpreting a teacher needs assessment, group interview, and classroom observations, a clear picture of the current context of the bilingual program in Brighton School District 32 has been developed. To improve outcomes for English Learners in the district, it is essential that improvements be made. However, before improvements can be made, a clear vision for success must be outlined in detail. Boyatzis and McKee (2005) discuss their intentional change theory, which begins with an analysis of the ideal self, comparison to the real self, and finally the development of strategies and experiments to reach the ideal self. This process to begin with the end goal in mind, key to transforming individuals, can also be used to transform an organization. To fully describe the ideal situation, or the vision for success, for the BSD32 bilingual program, I return to Wagner's (2006) 4 C's model for change and outline the four components: context, competencies, conditions, and culture.

Context: Extending the Bilingual Program

As discussed in Section Two above, Brighton School District 32 currently has an early-exit Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program. Students who qualify for bilingual services enter the program in Kindergarten and are exited to general education English-only classrooms by Grade 3. Analysis of ACCESS for ELLs assessment data in Section Five above indicates that fewer than 10% of students are proficient in English by the end of the second grade year, meaning that the expectation for children to be ready to learn in in English by Grade 3 is not realistic for most. These children with limited English proficiency enter the classrooms with general education teachers who do not

60

fully understand their language acquisition needs. When the children struggle and begin to lag behind their monolingual peers, they are viewed as having deficiencies rather than lauded for their ability to navigate the world with two languages and two cultures.

The ideal context for ELs in BSD32, instead, is a late-exit bilingual program with an emphasis on teaching for biliteracy, where children have more time to develop both their Spanish and English skills before transferring to general education English classrooms. A Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) program, extending bilingual education through Grade 5, gives children three additional years to become fully literate in both languages. This late-exit program reduces the pressure on the bilingual teachers to force students to be ready for English too soon. It also extends the formal Spanish education for these bilingual students and increases the likelihood that children will maintain their native language as well as become proficient in English before transferring to the general education English classrooms. Decades of research demonstrate that a DBE program provides better outcomes for ELs in English literacy in later years than a TBE program (Thomas & Collier, 2003).

Competencies: Increasing Teacher Efficacy

The majority of the bilingual teachers in Brighton School District 32 are skilled bilingual educators. However, to effectively move from a more traditional TBE program to a DBE program that focuses on developing biliteracy from the start, the teachers have much to learn. As discussed in the group interview analysis in Section Five, the teachers have different levels of understanding about biliteracy. Some of the veteran staff have read articles and texts, as well as attended professional development opportunities with consultants on biliteracy, whereas newer staff members have very little background in

biliteracy. A differentiated plan for professional development that meets the unique needs of each of the bilingual teachers must be implemented.

In the ideal context, all bilingual teachers are well versed in the theory and philosophy behind teaching for biliteracy. They know and implement best practices in English and Spanish literacy, and they understand how best to make cross-linguistic connections with children every day. Bilingual teachers have the ability to plan and deliver effective biliteracy units that lead to strong gains in both English and Spanish literacy for all of their students. Furthermore, they have the ability to administer assessments in both languages to effectively track student growth over time. With these competencies, the bilingual teachers are able to effectively move to a DBE program with a goal of teaching for biliteracy.

Conditions: Providing Adequate Support for Bilingual Teachers

The group interview with bilingual teachers highlighted the lack of support for teachers in the bilingual program. Conditions in the program have been such that turnover is rampant and veteran, experienced teachers are few. Without teacher leaders and mentors for the new staff in the bilingual department, the momentum for change will be stalled. The bilingual teachers deserve the kind of supports given to general education teachers in BSD32, who have individualized support and guidance from a consulting teacher, whose job it is to model instruction, give assistance in planning and preparing lessons, and provide immediate feedback on instructional practice. Given ideal conditions in the bilingual department, bilingual teachers have access to this level of support, and with it, they and the program flourish. With the appropriate amount of support and collaboration from mentors and consulting teachers, more bilingual educators remain in

the district each year and the collective expertise of the bilingual group grows immensely each year.

<center>Culture: Recognizing and Appreciating Bilingual Teachers</center>

In order to attract and retain the high quality teachers that the English Learners in Brighton School District 32 deserve, the culture must be improved. During the group interview, it became clear that current conditions and context affects the feelings and mindset of the bilingual teachers in the district. For instance, the lack of consistent leadership and frequently changing program model has led the teachers to be frustrated and, at times, want to give up.

The ideal culture in the bilingual department gives the bilingual teachers the respect and recognition they deserve. Teachers are asked to share their expertise with other teachers and administrators and they are given a voice in determining the vision for program. They have a sense of pride about their work and feel appreciated by all staff across the district. Moreover, the bilingual teachers are interested in collaborating with colleagues both within and outside their department. They strongly believe that it is their role to develop biliterate students, and this belief leads them to want to learn and develop as much expertise about biliteracy strategies and English language development as possible.

SECTION SEVEN: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS FOR CHANGE

Introduction

For Brighton School District 32 to reach the vision for success outlined in Section Six, there are many strategies that must be put into place. Many of the strategies are focused on providing professional learning opportunities, including collaboration, peer observations, book studies, and teacher leadership experiences, for the bilingual teachers and administrators in the district. There is no question that professional development for teachers is needed in a transition such as this; changing the program model will never be successful unless teachers understand how best to implement new strategies and develop new units of study. However, the professional learning opportunities must be differentiated to meet the needs of all bilingual educators.

As discussed in Section Five, teachers interviewed mentioned the need for different kinds of experiences for new teachers and for those who have been in the district for a number of years. Drago-Severson (2009) states, "Just as we adapt our instruction to care for the differences among children, we must differentiate our leadership practices to attend to differences in how adults learn and what they need to grow" (p. x). This perspective has been taken as strategies and actions for change have been developed. Additionally, because professional learning for teachers is most effective when it is, "intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice," as well as job-embedded and collaborative in nature, these strategies were emphasized over other, less effective professional learning opportunities (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009, p. 5). The table below describes the strategies and actions necessary to move to a biliteracy program in BSD32.

Table 23

Strategies and Actions for Improvement of the Bilingual Program

Strategies	Actions
Expand bilingual program through Grade 5.	- Gradually expand program one grade level at a time, beginning with Grade 3. - Develop curriculum for each additional grade level prior to adding the section.
Hire and retain quality bilingual educators.	- Aggressively recruit high-quality experienced bilingual teachers. - Establish relationships with universities that have excellent bilingual education programs. - Provide hiring incentives to attract teachers to the district. - Give individualized support to all pre-tenure teachers.
Develop bilingual teachers as effective teachers for biliteracy.	- Differentiate professional learning opportunities for new and veteran teachers. - Conduct book studies on *Teaching for Biliteracy* (Beeman and Urow, 2013) and *Biliteracy from the Start* (Escamilla et al., 2014). - Revise current units using the biliteracy unit framework. - Introduce English Language Development (ELD) standards into daily lesson plans. - Organize lesson study or demonstration classroom professional learning opportunities focusing on biliteracy strategies. - Hire retired bilingual educators to provide ongoing individualized mentoring support to bilingual teachers. - Provide opportunities for bilingual teachers to observe classrooms in other districts where biliteracy has been established.
Increase efficacy of bilingual teachers.	Provide opportunities for bilingual and ESL teachers to lead professional development for general education teachers and administrators.

	• Allow time for collaboration between general education teachers and bilingual/ESL teachers. • Create a district leadership role for the elementary bilingual department to give bilingual teachers a voice in district level decision-making process.
Use data to evaluate the effectiveness of the bilingual program.	• Adopt a data management system to allow data to be tracked and accessed easily by teachers and administrators. • Track students' Spanish and English proficiency over time. • Organize a team of teachers and administrators to analyze data annually and develop plans for program improvement.

Strategies and Actions

Expand the Bilingual Program

The first strategy for improvement of the bilingual program in BSD32 is to expand the program from an early-exit program ending at second grade to a late-exit model, ending in Grade 5. This strategy is best implemented over time, however, given the limitation of finding high-quality bilingual teachers. The most effective method for the expansion would be to add one grade level at a time, ensuring that the bilingual curriculum and assessments for the grade level has been developed prior to the addition of the bilingual section, and allowing time to hire and train proper staff. This gradual implementation will also reduce the need to cut staff in order to hire new bilingual teachers. By adding on only one or two additional bilingual teachers each year, the district can take advantage of retirements and resignations rather than eliminating established monolingual English teaching positions.

Hire and Retain Quality Teachers

The next strategy for change in the bilingual program, closely related to the above strategy, is to hire and retain quality bilingual educators. This has proven difficult for the district in past years. Teacher turnover was discussed in Section Five as one of the most impactful barriers of success in the program. To meet this challenge, the district must become more aggressive in hiring techniques. For example, the district should consider recruiting from all over the country, particularly in areas such as Texas and California, where large numbers of bilingual teaching candidates may reside. Incentives must be offered, including reimbursement for moving expenses, assistance in finding a residence near the district, and competitive salary and benefits.

Another action that would benefit the district in hiring bilingual teachers would be to establish relationships with local universities that have excellent bilingual education programs. If the district can form a relationship with those in the bilingual department, they can offer student teaching placement for pre-service teachers; this in turn will familiarize potential teacher candidates with the district and hopefully increase the chances of future employment upon graduation.

Recruiting new bilingual teacher candidates is not enough; these teachers, once hired and trained in BSD32 must want to be loyal to the district and its bilingual department. Teachers who are adequately supported and who feel a connection with their colleagues will be more willing to stay with the district. Thus, providing bilingual teachers with support from retired bilingual staff or from the services of a bilingual consulting teacher would benefit the district greatly. Furthermore, district leadership must

provide opportunities for collaboration among the bilingual staff so that bilingual

teachers feel a sense of community and belonging.

Develop Teachers into Effective Teachers for Biliteracy

Once bilingual teachers are hired and given incentives to stay within the district, it

is essential that they, along with existing teachers, are given multiple professional

learning opportunities focused on biliteracy instruction. These experiences must be

differentiated to meet the unique needs of each of the bilingual teachers. For example, the

new teachers should participate in a book study on the two texts that have been used as a

basis for development of the district's biliteracy program model. These texts outline the

philosophy and theory behind teaching for biliteracy and they also introduce effective

teaching strategies. Teachers who already have this foundation in biliteracy should be

given opportunities to observe teachers in other districts who have well-established

biliteracy programs. Additionally, the bilingual teachers need to be given the opportunity

to observe each other and give feedback through a lesson study model or demonstration

classroom opportunity. Finally, bilingual teachers must feel confident in their ability to

write curriculum. They must be able to work with experts in the field and learn from each

other as they develop new units emphasizing biliteracy instruction.

Increase Efficacy of Bilingual Teachers

Another strategy that is essential for making a change in the bilingual program in

Brighton School District 32 is to increase teachers' feelings of efficacy about their work.

Through the group interviews and classroom observations, teachers were observed to

have hesitation about their ability to teach effectively. They need opportunities to

showcase their skills, present their expertise to others outside of their bilingual

department, and to be seen as leaders in the district. To that end, bilingual teachers must be provided opportunities to lead professional development to the monolingual teachers as well as be given leadership opportunities where their voice can be heard in the decision-making process at the school and district level.

Use Data Effectively

With a change in the bilingual program to include teaching for biliteracy, different assessments will need to be implemented to track the program's effectiveness. Whereas teachers are currently responsible only for assessing and monitoring their students' Spanish literacy, a move to a biliteracy program model will necessitate the tracking of Spanish and English literacy. The district will need to adopt a data management system to house this student data. This data warehouse must be easily accessible by teachers as well as by school and district administration. The data must be monitored to ensure the effectiveness of the bilingual program. This task is best done by a team of teachers and administration whose job it is to analyze this data and develop plans to address areas of deficiency and build upon areas of strength. Teachers may need some professional development in the area of data analysis and effective data-driven decision-making.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

A successful change plan begins with the evaluation of the current model, development of a clear vision for success, and a comprehensive review of the strategies and actions needed to move toward that vision. In this change plan, professional learning opportunities are at the center of all strategies needed to improve the bilingual program. Bilingual teachers must be given differentiated learning experiences that will enable them to truly understand the purpose and rationale behind moving to a biliteracy program

model, the understanding of best practices in biliteracy instruction, and the ability to serve as leaders in the bilingual department as well as throughout the entire school district. With the expansion of the program to Grade 5, a targeted professional learning plan for teachers, as well as increased efforts to hire and retain quality bilingual teachers, the Brighton School District 32 bilingual program will become an outstanding program that improves outcomes for English Learners in the district.

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Context

- 800 students overall; 175 English Learners (ELs) in PK-2 bilingual/SEI classrooms
- Early exit (PK-2) Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program
- 70% low-income in district (90+% of ELs are designated as low-income)
- 40% ELs in district

Culture

- Bilingual teachers feel ignored and separate from the rest of the district.
- Professional development opportunities often do not directly apply to these teachers.
- Bilingual teachers are asked to translate the monolingual curriculum into Spanish.
- Bilingual teachers have difficulty trusting building and district administration to have the best interests of ELs in mind.
- Bilingual teachers believe their primary focus is to instruct in Spanish.
- Bilingual teachers believe they should be accountable for increasing students' Spanish literacy.

Conditions

- Bilingual class sizes are relatively low and allow for personalization of instruction
- High numbers of inexperienced teachers in the bilingual/ESL department
- Fewer supports for new bilingual/ESL teachers (mentoring/PAR program)
- Insufficient class time allotted for bridging/ English instruction
- Focus on Spanish literacy only
- Teachers use and are evaluated by measures that only address Spanish literacy (*Tejas Lee*, SGAs in Spanish).

Bilingual teachers in grades K-2 are not implementing biliteracy strategies with fidelity.

Competencies

- Bilingual teachers do not feel confident teaching foundational English literacy.
- Bilingual teachers do not know how to effectively bridge to English or how to plan lessons/units with bridging.
- Bilingual teachers do not use English Language Development Standards in daily lessons.
- Data of students exiting the bilingual program has not been tracked effectively.
- Evaluators are not trained in bilingual education and have limited ability to help teachers improve their practice.

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APPENDIX B: 4 C's Analysis for Bilingual Program (TO-BE)

Context

- 800 students overall; 250+ English Learners (ELs) in PK-5 bilingual/SEI classrooms
- Late-exit (PK-5) Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) program
- 70% low-income in district (90+% of ELs are designated as low-income).
- 40% ELs in district

Culture

- Bilingual teachers are recognized as experts and given the opportunity to share their knowledge in professional development experiences.
- Professional development opportunities provide bilingual and ESL teachers with new learning that is applicable to their settings.
- Bilingual teachers create curriculum that is culturally relevant.
- Bilingual teachers and administrators have respectful and professional relationships.
- Bilingual teachers believe that they are responsible for teaching students foundational literacy skills in both languages.

Conditions

- Bilingual class sizes are relatively low and allow for personalization of instruction.
- High-quality experienced teachers remain in the bilingual/ESL department.
- New bilingual teachers are given multiple supports to increase efficacy beginning in year one. (mentoring/PAR)
- Curriculum pacing is adjusted to allow adequate time for bridging/ English instruction.
- Focus on Spanish and English literacy beginning in Pre-Kindergarten
- Teachers use and are evaluated on multiple measures to track students' Spanish and English proficiency.

Bilingual teachers in grades K-5 effectively implement biliteracy strategies to build academic language in both English and Spanish.

Competencies

- Bilingual teachers are confident in teaching foundational Spanish and English literacy.
- Bilingual teachers know how to effectively bridge to English and learn to plan effective lessons/units with bridging.
- Bilingual teachers teach to English Language Development Standards and learn to differentiate for linguistic proficiency.
- Student data is tracked effectively to assist administrators in making decisions about the bilingual program.
- Evaluators are well versed in bilingual education and have the ability to help teachers improve their practice.

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Bilingual Program Improvement Strategies and Action Plan

Strategies	Action
Expand bilingual program through Grade 5.	- Gradually expand program one grade level at a time, beginning with grade 3. - Develop curriculum for each additional grade level prior to adding the section.
Hire and retain quality bilingual educators.	- Aggressively recruit high-quality experienced bilingual teachers. - Establish relationships with universities that have excellent bilingual education programs. - Provide hiring incentives to attract teachers to the district. - Give individualized support to all pre-tenure teachers.
Develop bilingual teachers as effective teachers for biliteracy.	- Conduct book studies on *Teaching for Biliteracy* (Beeman and Urow, 2013) and *Biliteracy from the Start* (Escamilla et al., 2014). - Revise current units using the biliteracy unit framework. - Introduce English Language Development (ELD) standards into daily lesson plans. - Organize lesson study or demonstration classroom professional learning opportunities focusing on biliteracy strategies. - Hire retired bilingual educators to provide ongoing individualized mentoring support to bilingual teachers. - Provide opportunities for bilingual teachers to observe classrooms in other districts where biliteracy has been established.
Increase efficacy of bilingual teachers.	- Provide opportunities for bilingual and ESL teachers to lead professional development for general education teachers and administrators. - Allow time for collaboration between general education teachers and bilingual/ESL teachers. - Create a district leadership role for the

	elementary bilingual department to give bilingual teachers a voice in district level decision-making process.
Collect appropriate data and use it to evaluate the effectiveness of the bilingual program.	• Adopt a data management system to allow data to be tracked and accessed easily by teachers and administrators. • Track students' Spanish and English proficiency over time. Use this information as part of the student growth metrics for teacher evaluation. • Organize a team of teachers and administrators to analyze data annually and develop plans for program improvement.

APPENDIX D: Bilingual Teacher Needs Assessment Survey Questions

Directions for the survey: Mark the response that **_best_** describes your perceptions of your

level of competence for each of the following statements.

Spanish Literacy Section

Reflect on your professional learning background, experiences, and needs related to biliteracy instruction before responding to the following statements.	*Rating Scale:* *SD = Strongly Disagree* *D = Disagree* *A = Agree* *SA = Strongly Agree*			
1. I know and understand the research that supports initial literacy instruction in Spanish for Spanish speakers in the United States.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4
2. I have been trained in best practices for teaching literacy in Spanish.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4
3. I am an effective teacher of literacy in Spanish.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4
4. I have the materials I need to teach literacy in Spanish.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4
5. I am orally fluent and literate in Spanish.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4
6. I have the Spanish academic language required to teach the grades and subject matter for which I am currently responsible.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4

English Literacy Section

Reflect on your professional learning background, experiences, and needs related to biliteracy instruction before responding to the following statements.	*Rating Scale:* *SD = Strongly Disagree* *D = Disagree* *A = Agree* *SA = Strongly Agree*			
7. I have been trained in best practices for teaching literacy in English to English Learners.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4
8. I am an effective teacher of literacy in English to English Learners.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4
9. I have the materials I need to teach literacy in English to English Learners.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4

10. I have been trained in strategies for developing academic vocabulary in English for English Learners.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4
11. I have the English academic language required to teach the grades and subject matter for which I am currently responsible.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4

English Learner Characteristics Section

Reflect on your professional learning background, experiences, and needs related to biliteracy instruction before responding to the following statements.	*Rating Scale:* *SD = Strongly Disagree* *D = Disagree* *A = Agree* *SA = Strongly Agree*			
12. I understand how oral language development affects literacy development.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4
13. I understand how differences in student cultural backgrounds affect literacy development.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4
14. I understand how differences in student socio-economic backgrounds affect literacy development.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4
15. I understand how children develop biliteracy through cross-linguistic connections.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4

Standards and Unit Development Section

Reflect on your professional learning background, experiences, and needs related to biliteracy instruction before responding to the following statements.	*Rating Scale:* *SD = Strongly Disagree* *D = Disagree* *A = Agree* *SA = Strongly Agree*			
16. I understand how the Common Core State Standards align with the WIDA Standards.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4
17. I know how to develop lessons and units that include cross-linguistic connections to help children acquire biliteracy.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4

18. I have access to the resources necessary to create the biliteracy units for the grades and subject matter for which I am currently responsible.	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SA 4

APPENDIX E: Group Interview Questions

1. Tell me about being a bilingual educator in District 32. What do you like most? What could be better?

2. Do you use English during instruction on a daily basis? If so, how much and why?

3. What is your understanding about biliteracy instruction?

4. How comfortable are you in using biliteracy strategies to increase Spanish and English literacy among your students? Tell me more.

5. What kind of professional learning opportunities have you participated in to increase your understanding of biliteracy?

6. Which opportunities have been beneficial to your growth? Why?

7. Which opportunities have not been so beneficial? Why not?

8. What more would you like to learn about biliteracy?

These questions are used as a guide during group interviews. Depending upon the flow of conversation, some questions may be skipped or others added.