Teacher Evaluation in an Urban Setting: A View from the Trenches

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TEACHER EVALUATION IN THE URBAN SETTING: A VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

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ABSTRACT

This study utilizes a mixed-methods methodology to examine how a teacher evaluation system is influencing the instructional practices of bilingual teachers in a large urban district. An on-line survey was administered to examine the bilingual teachers’ perceptions of the evaluation system. A focus group of bilingual teachers was later conducted to further investigate the data gathered through the survey. The combined results of this study’s findings show that the bilingual teachers believe that the evaluation system is making a positive difference in improving their instructional practices, particularly in the areas of Planning and Preparation and Questioning. The study also revealed that there are some challenges associated with the evaluation system, namely its lack of specific reference to bilingual education and the need for more focused professional development in the areas of best teaching practices for English Language Learners, to help both bilingual teachers and administrators better serve this student population.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The evaluation of teachers has been an integral part of the history of education in this country since its inception. Though the approach and the ideologies behind how teacher evaluation should be conducted have changed over the years, the essential question of whether it is an effective tool for promoting professional growth and improving instructional practices is still being posed today. This is perhaps not surprising, if we consider that teacher evaluation has been the principal medium for: testing a teacher’s knowledge, observing instructional practices, hiring, dismissal, tenure decisions and, more recently, also a measurement of student learning gains. Teacher quality assessment is indeed a complex and multi-faceted matter and, as such, merits analysis and careful consideration, not only in terms of a specific district or a microcosmic reality, but also in terms of public perception, national policy, history and research findings.

At the center of it all, resides the teacher, whose background, skills set and philosophy of education must also be taken into consideration when ascertaining the effectiveness of a given evaluation system. The successful application of any such system is, in fact, intrinsically inseparable from the teachers’ experience with it. No conclusions or assumptions can unequivocally be made without factoring in the perceptions, beliefs and reactions of the very parties that are most closely involved and affected by it. This research study takes an in-depth look at the experiences of a specific teacher population to examine their perceptions and insights about how a new
evaluation system is influencing and changing their teaching practices for the purpose of improving student learning outcomes.

**Background**

In the spring of 2012 the large Midwestern district where this research study was conducted unveiled a new comprehensive teacher evaluation system based on newly established criteria. This system, designed in collaboration between administration and the local teachers’ union, was developed in response to state law signed in 2010. The new law mandated that school districts around the state adopt a comprehensive teacher evaluation system that was inclusive of both teacher practice and student growth. To comply with these requirements, the district started phasing the new system in its elementary schools starting the fall of 2012 with the expectation that full implementation would take place over the next five years.

The day of its unveiling, the district presented the new evaluation system by emphasizing that its foundation relied on the thoughts, suggestions and ideas from thousands of its teachers. It was also stressed that each one of its components was grounded in the feedback from its educators, as well as on research and experiences from districts across the country. The new evaluation system was said to provide teachers with unprecedented tools and support to improve their practice and better drive student learning. Teachers were hailed as being the single most critical lever for boosting student learning, and the district affirmed that it was its responsibility to do everything possible to support and empower teachers through their journey of putting every student on the path to success in college and career.
The district seems indeed to have made a concerted effort to seek the direct feedback from teachers about what they wanted and needed from an effective evaluation system. In fact, as a first step in designing the new evaluation system, district representatives conducted numerous focus groups, reporting that they received feedback from over 2,000 teachers representing all grades and subjects from across the city. From the way the new system was unveiled and promoted by the district, it is clear that it wanted to make the point that revamping its teacher evaluation practices was not purely a “top-down” decision, but one made in collaboration with the teachers to more accurately address their needs. It is also clear that the old evaluation system was definitely outdated and not reflective of the new changes in teacher practice and student learning. In place since the early 1970s, the old evaluation system was rooted in a single measure for evaluating teacher performance in the form of a checklist, which contained many subjective and surface level details such as references to clothing, administrative tasks and bulletin boards. According to the district, the teachers consulted were in overwhelming agreement that the old evaluation system was not beneficial to them when it came to helping improve their professional practice. In fact, the district reported that the majority of the teachers polled wanted a system that more actively engaged them in the process and provided them with the kind of feedback that could help them do precisely that.

Therefore, to improve its evaluative processes, the district piloted several evaluation systems during the 2010 and 2011 school year. One pilot evaluation system, which the district said emerged and was generally recommended by teachers as being effective, was the *Excellence in Teaching Project* which built on the Danielson
Framework for Teaching, and was implemented in over 100 public schools in the district. The Danielson Framework for Teaching is based on a coaching tool that has been proven through empirical studies and theoretical research as promoting improved student learning outcomes (Danielson, 2011). The Framework highlights several components of instruction, aligned to the Interstate Teacher and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards. These standards outline the common principles and foundations of teaching practice that cut across all subject areas and grade levels to highlight what every K-12 teacher should know and be able to do in order to enable all students to enter college or the workforce. Grounded in a constructivist view of learning and teaching, the Danielson Framework for Teaching divides the complex activity of teaching into 22 components (and 76 smaller elements) clustered into four domains of teaching responsibility. These domains are: Planning and Preparation; Classroom Environment; Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities. Each domain is then subdivided into components or distinct aspects, containing two to five specific elements. Rubrics, or levels of teaching performance, describe each component and provide a guide for the improvement of teaching (Danielson, 2007). The Framework is intended to be a generic instrument that applies to all disciplines. According to its author, it can be used for many purposes, but its full-potential is realized as the foundation for professional conversations among practitioners as they seek to enhance their skills in the complex task of teaching (Danielson, 2011).

In order to ratify this enhanced system, the local Teachers' Union and the district established two separate committees, which started their negotiations in November 2011. Between November 2011 and April 2012, the two committees held over 35
meetings and met for a total of over 90 hours to discuss all elements of the new system. The committees included teachers, former principals, Union officials (including the Union President), and central office representatives. In order to inform the plan’s development and implementation, these two committees furthermore relied upon input from experts in the field of teacher evaluation. The new evaluation system was the end result of the collective work by these two committees, which established a new teacher evaluation framework that includes three components: Teacher Practice, Student Learning and Student Feedback. The recommendation for this new teacher evaluation system was based on research from educational experts and districts across the country which showed that using a combination of teacher practice and student learning data provides a more accurate picture of teachers’ performance than using either measure on its own (Sartain, Stoelinga & Krone, 2010) as well as on a Gates Foundation MET (Measure of Effective Teaching) study which also found that adding student input as a third measure to that combination produced even more accurate results. The end goal of the new evaluation system is therefore to start weighing teacher practice more heavily and slowly increasing the weight for both student growth and student feedback over time.

Research Problem Addressed by the Study

At the time this study was conducted, the district was well over two years into the utilization process of its new teacher evaluation system which is now being used by principals, assistant principals and other district administrators to rate teachers’ performance and to ascertain teachers’ effectiveness. In essence, the system is now
the measure for determining the educators’ professional strengths and areas for growth and also the basis for decisions related to teacher retention.

As the district moves forward with the use and adaptation of the framework, it is important to investigate whether the new evaluation system is indeed living up to the district’s promise of supporting and empowering the teachers in their journey of putting every student on the path to success in college and career. This is of particular importance as the original Charlotte Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*, which was piloted in the district’s schools as the basis for the new evaluation system, was never designed or intended to be used as an evaluation tool, but rather as a coaching tool (Danielson, 2007). Although Danielson worked with the district to develop an evaluation tool aligned with the *Framework*, and we now have evidence of a positive correlation between teachers’ high ratings on observations conducted using the Danielson Framework and the greatest growth in students’ test scores (Sartain, Stoelinga & Krone, 2010), at the time this study was conducted, there was no research to establish that this tool is effective in improving teachers’ instructional practices when used in an evaluative manner. There was, however, a research study conducted by a local, well-reputed university whose results were released in September 2013, which looked into the first-year of the implementation of the new evaluation system in order to provide formative feedback to the district. The results from this study showed that the majority of teachers and principals surveyed provided positive feedback on the evaluation process in its first year of implementation. For example, the majority of teachers (87%) indicated that their evaluator provided fair and unbiased assessments of their instruction, while 94% of administrators reported that the observation process has improved the quality of
conversations with teachers about instruction. It is perhaps worth noting at this point that the institution that conducted the study is the very same one whose research established the positive correlation between the teachers’ high ratings in using the Danielson Framework and the greatest growth in students’ test scores. It is also important to highlight that the results of the first year of implementation of the new evaluation system were extracted from a large sample population mostly by means of an on-line survey. While this is certainly helpful when making general assumptions about the implementation process on a large-scale, what appeared to be missing was research at a more granular level on the teachers’ perception of the effectiveness of the Framework in improving their own instructional practices and also on the general buy-in and use of the Framework by the teaching workforce as a tool for professional growth and self-improvement.

At the beginning of the journey that led to the adaption of the new evaluation system, teacher representatives were brought in to be a part of the decision-making process to help validate the adoption of the Framework. Their opinions and perceptions were crucial then, during the adoption process, and should be important still, as we assess the strengths and the challenges of the new evaluation system. The purpose of this research study is, therefore, to get a closer view not only into what the new evaluation system was presented to be and to be able to do for the teaching workforce, but how it is actually being perceived and utilized by the teachers themselves. This study is intended to provide some insight into what is happening throughout the district in terms of teacher evaluation from the teachers’ perspective, or as seen from the “trenches”. Due to the large Hispanic student demographics of the district, it was of
particular interest to investigate how and in what areas the new evaluation system was helping bilingual teachers reframe their teaching practices in order to improve learning outcomes for students. For this purpose, a detailed survey and focus group was conducted with bilingual teachers K-12 from a variety of school settings across the district to gain both an in-depth and a systemic view of how and whether the new evaluation system was changing their teaching practices by investigating the following research questions, “How do bilingual teachers perceive the new evaluation system as it relates to their practices?” and more specifically, ”What changes in teaching practices do bilingual teachers attribute to the new evaluation system?” Additionally, this study asked, “Are there any differences in the way bilingual teachers and non-bilingual teachers perceive the evaluation system?”

Purpose and Professional Significance of the Study

This study’s intent was to provide some considerations and suggestions which can be utilized to examine and perhaps improve the district’s current evaluation system. The special focus on bilingual teachers was maintained because of the researcher’s background as a bilingual instructional coach and further because of her specific research interest in this field. It is the researcher’s experience and belief that given the right supports and coaching, teachers can indeed grow in their professional practice. This is particularly true when teachers are invited to become actively involved in assessing and improving their educational aims and practices. An effective evaluation system can undoubtedly be a powerful instrument toward achieving this aim. Therefore, examining how the new system is being utilized in regards to its bilingual teachers and how the process has influenced their instruction is important, especially because no
prior research has been conducted by the district in this particular area. Yet there are more than 1,800 bilingual teachers currently being evaluated under this new system in the district, serving over 65,000 students. It is to be noted that in the context of this research, bilingual teachers are defined as teachers currently instructing English Language Learners (ELLs) in their native language and/or in English as a Second Language, depending on the particular school setting.

More specifically, in the district where this study was conducted, bilingual teachers may work in a variety of instructional programs. These programs consist of the Dual Language model, the Transitional Bilingual Education model (or TBE), and the Transitional Program of Instruction model (or TPI). The Dual Language model is a long-term bilingual program that consistently and strategically uses two languages (English and Spanish in the district studied) for instruction, learning and communication. Its major goals are to develop full biliteracy and bilingualism, high academic achievement and multicultural flexibility. The Transitional Bilingual Education model, on the other hand, only temporarily supports English learners’ academic development by providing native language instruction as they acquire English for a period ranging from one to eight years. The Transitional Program of Instruction model provides specialized instruction in English as a Second Language to students who are not yet proficient in this language. This program is offered in schools with students from multiple language backgrounds. The two most common forms of English as a Second Language instruction in the district studied, were the traditional and the content-based approaches, delivered either as pull-out (English language learners are pulled out of their classroom
for a few periods a week in small groups) or push-in (the ESL teacher provides instruction within the classroom).

It is important to note in this context that because the Framework for Teaching does not directly address pedagogical elements specific to instructing bilingual students, the district found it necessary to draft an English Language Learner Companion Guide to be used in conjunction with the Framework to guide teachers and administrators in identifying best teaching practices that effectively support the academic and linguistic growth of bilingual students. However, once again, to date there has not been any research or inquiry directed toward ascertaining whether this additional resource is currently being utilized in the field, and how useful it is perceived to be by teachers.

By investigating these particular aspects of the new assessment system, this research study seeks to shed light unto real-life professional circumstances and scenarios to inform educators about its impact on teaching practices as it regards to this specific teacher population. A collateral result of this study could indeed be that it may provide an inside glimpse into the teachers’ reality to those who are far removed from the everyday experience of the urban classroom. Furthermore, this data may help administrators identify the kind of support bilingual teachers perceive they need to improve their practice. Finally, offering bilingual teachers an opportunity to share their experiences with the new evaluation system, may serve to give them a voice and a platform to reach a larger audience. This study should help them connect teacher evaluation to their practice so that they are better equipped to understand its complexities. The study should also help them gain an understanding of their role, voice and power, not as isolated individuals, but as the most valuable and essential part of the
system which is ultimately responsible for moving students forward on the path to success in college, career and life.

It must be premised that although there is a single evaluation system in the district, the existing structures in place in every school to support teacher growth do differ greatly. Such structures may include a supportive and knowledgeable administration, in-house instructional coaching, partnerships with local universities, quality, accessibility and frequency of pertinent professional development, etc. Such variables are to be considered in framing the teachers’ perceptions of how the new evaluation system has helped them identify and improve particular areas of their teaching. For this purpose, the study also explores how uniquely different elements indigenous to each school are influencing teaching practices in the district.

The day the new teacher evaluation system was introduced, the district proclaimed that for the first time, it had clearly outlined expectations for every teacher across the district to create a roadmap for good teaching and the tools to drive student achievement. This research study is an attempt to document the experiences of some of the teachers as they use the proposed roadmap to navigate the change of vision of what constitutes effective teaching according to the new evaluation system, while offering a method of probing whether they perceive it to be a valuable and suitable tool for advancing in their professional paths. A praxis-oriented critical lens was applied throughout this study to explore the perceptions related to the evaluation experience, and to examine a range of issues associated with the pedagogical process and the existing school structures (Fay, 1977; Gitlin & Smyth, 1989; Habermas, 1989). By studying the relationship between the teachers’ experiences with the new system and
any resulting changes in instructional practices, this study wishes to shift the dialogue beyond individual teachers within their disparate school settings, to a larger professional learning community. The study’s most aspiring intent is to be able to connect “knowledge to power” by informing the field about what is actually happening in the district regarding the new evaluation system, so that constructive action can be taken to empower both teachers and administrators with the knowledge necessary to improve in their work and common mission to help students gain access to the best quality of education possible.
CHAPTER 2

The Review of the Literature

The area of teacher evaluation is a complex and controversial one. A systematic exploration of its history in this country reveals that there are two concurrent and widespread philosophical stances on its purported goals and purpose. Gitlin and Smyth (1989) define these stances as the *dominant* (or *impositional*) mode of teacher evaluation, and the *educative* mode. In the *dominant* mode, the concept of evaluation is closely linked to accountability and the evaluation of an individual or group is completed to make sure that those being evaluated are accountable to the established standards of what are considered acceptable practices. The *educative* teacher evaluation approach, on the other hand, takes into account the relationship between teacher ideology and practice, and attempts to shift the dialogue beyond individual teachers to as many members of the professional learning community as possible. The main intent of the *educative* mode is for teachers to become actively involved in assessing and improving their educational aims and practices.

These two approaches are highly discordant in the way they view the role of clinical supervision in general, and that of the teacher as a professional in particular. The *educative* model of teacher evaluation has a *critical* perspective of supervision, in that it gives teachers more control over their work and allows them to examine a whole range of issues associated with the pedagogical process and the existing school structures (Fay, 1977; Gitlin & Smyth, 1989; Habermas, 1989). Conversely, the *dominant* mode of teacher evaluation has a view of teacher competency based on technical rationality which is used as a way of reproducing existing social relations and
cultural capital, as opposed to empowering the teaching professionals with the knowledge necessary to improve in their practices (Gitlin & Smyth, 1989).

When determining the effectiveness of any teacher evaluation system, it is therefore important to identify which one of these opposing stances lays at its ideological center and also to examine the history behind its creation. If teaching, as a profession, is to continue to improve, then educators, as professionals, must bear the responsibility to continue its forward movement (Johnson, Dupuis, Musial, Hall & Gollnick, 1996). This starts, of course, by critically examining and evaluating the goals, practices and results of instruction. Essential to this process is remaining informed on the latest research development in the field of education and also thinking critically about how this information is applicable to the profession. An informed workforce is an empowered one (Lawler, 1986; Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Empowerment and efficacy often operate on the same continuum (Bandura, 1982). We cannot hope for our educational system to engender efficient, critical-thinking students, if we do not nurture and encourage these very skills within the educators charged with this essential task. Teacher evaluation systems are at the heart of what defines the standards of excellence and what is desirable in the execution of the profession. Because these systems are used to evaluate not only educational programs, but also the impact of instruction and learning to inform all school-based decisions, it is crucial for educators and also for the public at large to understand the underlying assumptions behind them. This is not only important as a social justice issue, since teachers must know the measurement tool by which they are judged, but also because their input and perceptions are essential components of the process of assessing the actual validity of the tool. The intent of this
chapter is to retrace and critically explore the history of teacher evaluation systems in this country through a review of the existing literature examining its origins and its evolution through the *dominant* and *educative* lenses. Specifically, a *Critical Theory* perspective will be applied to delve into the area of teacher evaluation to draw pertinent conclusions which may serve to inform the field, in an effort to better understand and improve the teachers’ reality.

Although trends and changes will be examined at the national level, an emphasis will be placed on the specific state and district where the research study was conducted, with particular reference to the teacher population studied. This literature review is intended to be the first step of a journey of discovery, spurred by the belief that we must know how we arrived to where we presently are, if we are to better understand and improve our current reality. The study of history has been defined as an attempt to understand the “unending dialogue between the present and the past” (Carr, 1961, p. 8). It is important to take a critical look at the flow of historical events, when it comes to teacher evaluation in our country, because the current status quo cannot be understood only in terms of the present situation. Cassirer (1953) once wrote that the present, the past and the future form an “Undifferentiated unity and an indiscriminate whole” (p. 219). If we want to clearly chart our path toward the future, we must understand our legacy and be conscious of the interdependence between the past and the present, because as Kummel explains, “There cannot be any progress without a retreat into the past in search of a deeper foundation” (p. 50).
A Historical View of Teacher Evaluation in the United States

**Inspection and enforcement (1600s-1900s).**

A review of the history of teacher evaluation systems in the United States reveals that the concept of administrative inspection dates back to the mid-to-late 17th century. During this time, school committees at first, and then ministers and selectmen, were charged with the inspection of facilities, equipment, and also of pupil achievement (Hazi & Arredondo-Rucinski, 2009). An historical 1642 document labeled *Records of the Governor & Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England* (Kyte, 1930) defines the concept of supervision in the following terms:

> This Cort, taking into consideration the great neglect of many parents and masters in the training of their children in learning and labor, and other imployments which may be profitable to the common wealth, do hereupon order and decree, that in every town ye chosen men appointed for managing prudentiall affajres of the same shal henceforth stand charged with the care of the redress of this evil,…and for this end, they, or the greater number of them, shall have the power to take account from time to time of all parents and masters, and of their children, concerning their calling and imployment of their children, especially of their ability to read and understand the principles of religion and the capitall laws of this country. (p. 4)

As highlighted above, the role of administrative supervision exemplifies what Gitlin and Smith (1989) define as the *dominant or impositional* mode of supervision, in that, site visits were conducted to ensure that the individuals (i.e. the school masters, teachers) and the group (i.e. parents and society in general) were accountable to the
established standards which required pupils to read in order to understand the principles of religion and the laws of the country so that they would be “profitable to the common wealth” and also in “learning and labor”. Implicit in the language of this document is the belief that, in general, neither the school masters nor the parents were thought to have the inherent capacity to carry out their responsibilities on their own. In fact, it is due to “the great neglect of many parents and masters in the training of their children”, that the Court found it necessary to issue an “order and decree” to have selected men “appointed” in each town for the purpose of “managing prudentiall affaires” and who would be in charge of rectifying the “evil” practices of parents and teachers. Though such language would surely be unacceptable today, one has to take into consideration the historical context of 17th century Colonial America where early Protestant and Puritan ethics highly valued organization and compliance in the pursuit of laying the foundation for a new nation and a better social order. In fact, the early period of school supervision, from the colonization of America to the first half of the 19th century, as Spears (1953) explains, “was based on the idea of maintaining the existing standards of instruction, rather than on the idea of improving them” (p. 14).

Already in the early 1700s, however, a subtle shift from regarding teacher evaluations as a part of the administrative inspection process, to a more distinctive personnel function was emerging. This shift is evident in a 1709 Report of the Record Commission of the City of Boston (Kyte, 1930):

Be therehereby established a committee of inspectors to visit ye School from time to time....To Enform themselves of the methods used in teaching of ye Schollars and Inquire of their proficiency, and be present at the performance of
some of their Exercizes …To consult and Advise of further Methods for ye
Advancement of Learning and the good government of the Schoole. (pp. 8-9)

The above quote is the first recorded example of a concerted effort made by the early school supervisors to try to identify, observe and question the teaching methods used in schools to improve the quality of education. While we are not certain about the frequency or the exact protocol that was followed during such visits, we have evidence from the same document (Kyte, 1930) that school masters were notified in advance of site visits and that there were customary consultations afterward, where both positive and negative findings were shared. For the first time in history we see during this period a new interest in observing teaching practices for the purpose of ascertaining the validity of the instructional methods and for advising on how to improve them. Separating the role of the teacher and of teaching from the general inspection of facilities was indeed a novel and emerging notion at this time, and a precursor to perceiving administrative supervision as a function of improving the actual instruction.

This same notion is apparent in a treatise written in 1835 by Theodore Dwight titled The School Master’s Friend with the Committeeman’s Guide (Kyte, 1930). In this document it is stated that, “Careful Visitations (sic) and examinations are necessary to discover the teacher’s merits in teaching and governing the attention…and improvement of the children” (p.32). Also stated in the document is that the school visits should serve to “Render a teacher…disposed to improve and…to convince him that he can “(p.32). Though we do not have much information regarding the procedures involved in ascertaining the “merits” of the teachers, nor of the methods used by the supervisors to “render a teacher disposed to improve”, it does appear that the conception of
supervision starts to take on some of the vestiges that will distinguish it later when it comes to assessing the teacher’s capabilities and informing their practices. The role of the supervisor here is undoubtedly still dominant or impositional. The verbiage “to render a teacher” and “to convince him”, carries a paternalistic connotation of sorts, and an implication that the supervisor is implicitly the most knowledgeable other by virtue of his status and standing in the community.

A similar sentiment is to be found in a manual on school administration written by William Harold Payne in 1865. In this document, the author states that, “The theory of supervision requires the superintendent to work upon the school through the teachers” (p. 23). It goes on to further explain that the superintendent is to prepare plans for instruction and discipline, which teachers must carry into effect. He warns the readers, however, that “the successful working out of such scheme requires constant oversight and constant readjustments” (p. 23). Payne also affirms that conferences, instruction in methods and the corrections of errors are a necessary part of the process and that “teachers of a graded school should be under continual normal instruction” (p. 23).

Though, clearly, the spirit and intent of the endeavor are still impositional, there is an affirmation here that providing teachers with on-going counsel is an important part of supervision for the improvement of teaching. It is also worth noting that school administrators in Payne’s time had few other competing demands and job-related responsibilities which allowed them to devote a significant portion of their time toward counseling teachers with the intent of improving instruction. Still, teacher input and a consideration of the teacher ideology and practice in providing such guidance and feedback, seemed to have been very limited, if not completely absent, as it is also
expressed later on by Payne, in an 1875 document: “…in an extended system of instruction there should be a responsible head…vested with sufficient authority to keep all subordinates in their proper places, and their assigned tasks” (p. 17). And again, “It is thus seen that the work of instruction…as in a complicated process of manufacture…each workman is held responsible for the general result” (p. 17). It is obvious, from the tone and the assertions of these historical documents that teachers are looked at as subservient individuals, who are to “be kept in their proper places” and that their role is likened to that of a manufacturer or production worker, who must be told what to do by “a responsible head vested with sufficient authority.” This marked separation between the role of the “supervisor” and that of the “worker” is perhaps still visible in some work settings today, in particular if we think of factory work. It is no longer, however, the predominant thinking in contemporary, successful workplaces that value creativity and foster collaboration, such as it is the case for influential corporations like Apple and Google (Schaffers, Brodt, Pallot & Prinz, 2006). It would be many years yet, however, until we see the emergence of a more widespread cooperative and inclusive dynamic in the workplace between supervisors and those who are being supervised.

Scientific and bureaucratic supervision (1900s-1930s).

It is indeed not until later, during the first decade of the 1900s, that the discourse about the function of supervision starts to take on a more modern tenor. In 1919, William Gray writes, “The function of supervision is the improvement of instruction, the encouragement of good work, and the constructive elimination of ineffective efforts and misapplied energy” (p. 263). Wording such as “encouragement” and “constructive” in
this context, constitutes a shift in perception of the role of the supervisor when imparting feedback and also shows more consideration of the teacher’s position and standing in the process. Additionally, in the same article, Gray also writes that expert supervision should lead teachers to gain a broader vision of teaching problems and a wider range of experiences. The goal, he explains, is for them not to see their work in isolation, but to gain a more complete and systemic understanding of why the revisions are necessary, so they can continue to grow as professionals and achieve better instructional outcomes.

The emerging notion that effective supervision entails and requires teacher collaboration, is also evident in Wilburt Nutt’s writing (1920) on the supervision of instruction. Nutt is insistent that the improvement of teaching can only result from a common agreement between the teacher and the supervisor that the role of supervision is for the teacher to attain new insight and skills “for the efficient education of the children” (p. 81). It is undeniable, however, that the improvement of the quality of teaching is still the intended focus here and that teachers are not yet seen as autonomous thinkers, but as necessary agents in carrying out the mission of educating the students. The idea, however, that teachers must partake in an agreement regarding the purported role of supervision, is in fact a new and considerable development. The perceived necessity of establishing a dialogue or transactional exchange between the supervisor and the teachers, as opposed to expecting them to just do what they are told, is indeed innovative for the time.

A few years later, in Fannie Dunn’s 1923 article on the role of supervision, we also start to see a new interest and focus on improving the quality of instruction by
means of “Primarily promoting the professional growth of all teachers” (p. 763). The idea of professional development, though not entirely formalized, started to emerge in the arena at this time and the supervisory functions started to include educating the teaching workforce in instructional methods, classroom management techniques and other matters that were considered to be of importance in guiding teachers in their practice. This included the evaluation of the effectiveness of the teacher’s methods and the “criticizing and advising concerning teaching” (Barr, Burton, & Brueckner, 1938, p. 3) in a more structured and organized manner which involved a formal teacher and supervisor meeting, pre-and-post classroom observations, and a discussion of instructional outcomes. By Gitlin and Smyth’s (1989) definition, these first models of supervision were certainly still impositional models, as their purpose was closely linked to accountability and the evaluations were completed to make sure that teachers were adhering to the established standards. According to Nutt (1920), these first models emerged because of the public perception that the teaching workforce (largely female at this time) was not sufficiently trained and needed “an agency that will most adequately direct the work of all the teachers in the system” (p. 4). The underlying assumption was that most teachers did not possess the professional qualifications inherently necessary to effectively carry out the job, and that if they were properly trained before entering active service, “there would be little need for any provision for such thoroughgoing supervision” (p. 5).

This impositional model of supervision was still prevalent from the early 1900s through the 1930s, when classroom visits typically involved the teacher being “corrected in her detailed techniques through handing out ready-made procedures” (Barr et al.,
It is during this period that the “single visit” as a procedure of observation, judgment and prescription as we know it today, came to be (Garman, 1986, p. 150). Most teacher observations involved the administrator, as the expert party, sitting in the back as inconspicuously as possible, observing and taking notes. The observation was then followed by a conference, in which the teacher was first commended and then presented with a list of faults that needed to be remedied. According to Spears (1953), the common praxis during a typical teacher conference was for the supervisor to first praise the teacher for a specific aspect that he or she was doing well, trying to avoid obvious flattery so that the individual would be in a position to accept any criticism that was to follow. Next, once the teacher was made sufficiently at ease, the administrator would enumerate the items that needed to be fixed (p. 74). In this scripted process, the teacher was still seen as a passive participant not as an active stakeholder in the reflective process.

It is also in the 1930s, under the influence of Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915) and the Efficiency Movement (1890–1932), that rating scales came to be used to determine teacher effectiveness. Utilizing scales was based on the assumption that effective teaching could be measured and, therefore, good practices could be scientifically studied and replicated. The belief was that, if scientists could study the most effective teachers, they would then be able to isolate certain behavioral descriptors which could in turn be used to rate and then transform ineffective teachers into efficient ones (Glanz, 1998; Nolan & Hoover, 2004). Supervision at this time was primarily conceived as “an expert technical service primarily concerned with studying and improving the conditions that surround learning and pupil growth” (Barr et al., 1938,
Teacher rating instruments such as check sheets, score cards, etc., became very popular among administrators at this time because they improved efficiency and saved considerable supervisory time (Spears, 1953, p. 66). These instruments were used widely, despite the lack of consensus on what constituted effective teaching amongst educators and administrators alike. Though they held the promise of being objective and straightforward, in actuality such instruments varied greatly in nature and in their ability of weighing the importance of different aspects relevant to teaching. For example, some instruments focused primarily on the physical attributes of the room, while others hinged heavily upon observing and cataloguing the behaviors of students and teachers (Spears, 1953).

The general emphasis of rating scales was undoubtedly on what could be observed and changed. These tools in fact were mostly used for accountability and to make sure teachers adhered to the established standards of what constituted good teaching as measured by the rating scale (Gitlin & Smyth, 1989). It reflected the theoretical perspective, prevalent at the time, that conclusions about human development should be based on observation of overt behavior rather than speculation about underlying motives or latent cognitive processes (Shaffer, 2000). This theory stemmed from the influential work of John B. Watson (1878-1958) and B. F. Skinner (1904-1990) who asserted that the only behaviors worthy of study were those that could be directly observed as actions, rather than thoughts (Baum, 1994). Speculations about motivation and thoughts were not considered scientific because they could not be observed or measured. This approach also posited that only behaviors, and not cognitive processes, could be changed (Skinner, 1957). There was therefore little
interest in examining the relationship between teachers’ ideology and classroom practice, and even less investment in inviting teachers to become actively involved in self-reflection to improve their educational outcomes. Such dominant practices, however, came to be detested and resented by many teaching professionals. In the late 1930s, the latent discontent that had been simmering for decades right below the surface about the way administrative supervision was exercised during classroom observations and beyond, started to become more apparent (Hazi & Arredondo-Rucinski, 2009). The dissatisfaction was indeed such that at this time the term supervision was “shunned” and “deleted” from the title of many staff positions in school systems across the nation. Articles in educational journals likewise revealed this “professional boycott” (Spears, 1953, p. 78) and writers started to acknowledge and expose these practices as being “coercive” (Barr et al., 1938) and even “evil” (Spears, 1953, p. 75).

Cooperative supervision and supervision as curriculum development (1930s-1960s).

In response to the professional outcry about supervisory practices, the field started to become more democratic and more inclusive of the teachers’ needs and voice. For the first time, teachers’ “professional growth” became an articulated purpose of supervision and “the first step to greater democracy in its operation” (Barr et al., 1938, p.6). The ensuing period from 1937 to 1952 has been defined by Lucio and McNeil (1962) as the “Period of Cooperative Group Efforts” because it is during this time that cooperative practices such as curriculum development and in-service education courses began to emerge. The teacher evaluation approach started to embody what
Catlin and Smyth (1989) define as *educative* practices, and for the first time there was an attempt to include teachers and other members of the professional community into a domain that had been the exclusive realm of administrators and school supervisors in the past. It was also during this period that cooperative educational leadership and human relation supervision were beginning to develop into legitimate fields of study. Supervisors became aware of the importance of creating a sense of satisfaction among teachers “by showing concern for them as people” (Burnham, R., 1976, p. 303).

Significant to the shift in thinking was Wiles’ (1955) theory of supervision as human relations. For the first time, he defined the role of instructional supervision as creating an internal mechanism with the primary aim of monitoring the implementation of the curriculum, to ensure a desirable increase in the teachers’ capabilities. According to Wiles, this can be accomplished by upgrading the teachers’ conceptual knowledge and skills by means of providing support to facilitate better performance and to ensure better student learning outcomes. Wiles’ work was reflective of the ideas stemming from what has been defined as the *Cognitive Revolution* (Mandler, 2002) an intellectual movement of the 1950s which began in the context of what is known collectively as the cognitive sciences, with approaches developed within the then emergent fields of artificial intelligence, computer science and neuroscience. The Cognitive theoretical perspective posited that by studying the functions in artificial intelligence and computer science, it became possible to make testable inferences about human mental processes. Unlike Behaviorism, which relied on observing and altering overt behaviors, the Cognitive approach attempts to explain human behaviors by understanding thought processes (Newell, Shaw & Simon, 1958). The assumption is that human beings are
logical beings and, similar to computers, they select the choices that make the most sense to them. Wiles’ theory of supervision is based on the principle that if we upgrade the teachers’ conceptual knowledge and skills, that is to say, we provide them with better input (much as we would for a computer), we can then obtain a better performance or output, which in turn ensures better student learning outcomes.

Wiles’ ideas were echoed in other contemporary documents including a widely-published administrator’s manual (Hicks, 1960), which defined supervision as a process for stimulating teacher growth (cognitive input) to the end that better learning experiences would be provided for children (tangible output). In another document (Minor, 1961), similar ideas assert that the supervisor’s primary concern should be “Helping the teachers and school personnel to solve problems that arise or are concerned with a desirable learning situation for children” (p. 25). Further, Neagley and Evans (1964) demonstrate a similar perspective by defining modern supervision as a “positive, democratic action… through the continual growth of all concerned” (p.3). Additional evidence of the shift in perspective is that the supervisor’s role came under further scrutiny and question. A review of the existing literature revealed that scholars were actively struggling to define, justify, promote and professionalize the practice of teacher supervision (Leeper, 1969). It is during this period, in fact, that for the first time in history a strongly articulated desire emerged at the national level to clearly outline and analyze the role of the administrative supervisor. Research focusing on how supervisors envisioned their function and purpose developed, and questions about how to select and prepare supervisors became important markers in delineating future standards for the profession.

While the perceived need for a more coherent focus on teacher performance appraisal emerged in the 1960s, it was not until the beginning of the 1970s that school districts across the nation activated a concerted effort to develop sound models for teacher evaluation systems (Danielson, 2011, p.14). Although the field was becoming progressively more democratic and inclusive, these models were still characterized by a top-down, *impositional* structure in which the administrator set the goals, while the teacher was perceived as the recipient of the insights (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Though teacher professional development was starting to be widely recognized as a valuable source for growth and reflection, data on the teacher's performance was still typically rooted in the same, traditional measures. For example, rating scales, a vestige of the Efficiency Movement era (1890–1932), were still used in many districts to represent the level of competency of the teacher’s performance, which could be rated on a scale from “1” to “4” representing low, medium, and high. According to Danielson and McGreal (2000), what was essentially missing from these evaluations were clear and universal guidelines for each category that teachers could use to improve their instruction. Further, according to these authors, such systems still endure in many districts around the country which means that, over the years, teachers have been hired, trained and fired in accordance to teacher evaluation systems they had little or no input in creating and often no say so in improving. Any changes in teacher evaluations since the 1970s have indeed been heavily influenced by educational policy instead of
being informed by insights and knowledge within the profession (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

One example of a change in educational policy that deeply influenced teacher evaluation was *A Nation at Risk* (1983). Now considered a landmark in American educational history, this report generated a torrent of local, state, and federal reform efforts never seen before. The report summarized feedback from a commission, whose members were drawn from education, government and private sectors. Although the report was later found to be seriously flawed by several errors in the data pertaining the decline in scholastic aptitude test scores, and progress achievement (Stedman, 1994), it is undeniable that it also had a tremendous impact in the realm of public education in America. The report purported that educational institutions were grossly underachieving, as evidenced by the low student test scores. In its opening pages, we find the following solemn quotes, “The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people” (p. 9), and “If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war” (p. 9).

Among its findings, the report claimed that 13 percent of 17-year-olds were functionally illiterate, school content was diluted and lacked purpose, the use of classroom time was ineffective, the field of teaching was not attracting enough academically able teachers and that teacher preparation programs needed substantial improvement. In other words, the findings disclosed that the teaching profession needed to be improved in order to make it more respected and effective. *A Nation at Risk*, also
identified teacher evaluation as the all-important gateway for personnel decisions and stated that “Salary, promotion, tenure, and retention decisions should be tied to an effective evaluation system that includes peer review so that superior teachers can be rewarded, average ones encouraged, and poor ones either improved or terminated” (Recommendation D.2: Teaching). A Nation at Risk was the first time teacher evaluation was identified as a national policy target and, as such, the object of renewed national interest. As a direct result of this report, Furtwengler (1995) found that states that had previously left teacher evaluation to local discretion, started to require districts to become more accountable at the state level and to offer specialized training to both teacher and administrators. According to Furtwengler, after the publication of A Nation and Risk, twenty states resolved to enact the first requirements for teacher evaluation, while twenty-nine attempted to initiate performance evaluation systems. Although some of its conclusions were later questioned, the report certainly served to heighten the sense of urgency regarding the state of American education by stressing the need for increased accountability and the necessity of improving the existing evaluation systems to insure teachers adhered to established standards of desirable practices and outcomes. While the tone of the report was certainly an alarmist one and some of its findings were found to be flawed, it is also true that this document provided the impetus for many districts to examine their own teacher evaluation structures, resulting in more efforts and allocation of funds to provide better training for teachers and administrators. It is perhaps worth noting here, that the word training, as opposed to teacher preparation or development, is still being widely utilized by districts during this period. The rationale behind this distinction is attributable to the idea that teaching could be
broken down into concrete and observable behaviors or skills, as opposed to taking into account the teachers’ beliefs, knowledge, and thinking processes that underlie actual teaching behaviors (Freeman, 1989).

**Supervision as management (1990s-2000s).**

Another important influence on teacher evaluation was the report *What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future* (1996), by the National Commission Report on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF). This report identified teacher quality as the most important element for improving student learning and “the key to reforming American education” (p. 7). The NCTAF believed that education reformers must provide the conditions for recruiting, preparing and retaining the highest quality teachers. It further specified that they must provide the necessary support and conditions essential for teachers to teach effectively. According to the document, integral to this process was the existence of effective, knowledgeable administrators, who could aptly “manage” the environment insuring teachers receive optimal support to promote teaching and learning. The NCTAF report also mapped out a clear plan for providing every child with high quality teaching by attracting, developing, and supporting excellent teachers. This document further highlighted the need to hire educators who had mastered both content knowledge and the teaching skills necessary to engage students in learning. This report is important because it is a precursor to the more dramatic teacher evaluation reform that would take place a decade later and also because it contained elements that Gitlin and Smyth’s considered *educative*, such as organizing schools in ways that promote success by flattening hierarchies, investing more in teacher salaries, and selecting principals who not only understand teaching, but can also lead schools to be high
performing. The idea that teachers must be given the necessary support to be able to carry out their responsibilities effectively, and that districts have a vested responsibility to insure the system and structures are in place to make sure this happens, was certainly not a novel concept in the American educational system (Wiles, 1955). However, this report contributed to the growing belief that teachers enter the profession with knowledge and skills that are grounded in their specific backgrounds, ideology, practices and individual talents and skills. These not only contribute to a teacher’s instruction but are also valuable assets which must be taken into consideration when improving common educational aims. The report changed the old perception of teacher “training” into a teacher “development” viewpoint. In this viewpoint, changes are not exclusively limited to the behaviors the training wants to instill, but rather changes occur in the levels of awareness and understanding because the teachers’ prior knowledge and beliefs are valued and utilized as the basis for reflection and future improvement (Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001). In this way, the NCTAF report (1996) appeared to have attempted to shift the view of teaching from a monolithic, homogeneous whole, to a varied community of individuals who must become actively involved in the process of assessing and improving professional standards and outcomes.

The report contains some elements indicative of a socio-cultural perspective of education in that it values the teacher background, ideology, practices and considers them not as existing in a vacuum, but within the broader societal context. Coined by Wertsch in 1985, the term Sociocultural Theory encompasses ideas derived from the work of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) who posited that human mental functions are shaped by cultural mediation integrated into social activities
(Vygotsky, 1978). The report highlights the notion that it is the district’s responsibility to ensure teachers are given the necessary support and guidance by expert administrators who must establish systems and structures designed to favor purposeful involvement and interactions with other knowledgeable members of the larger professional community. This involvement, if seen from a sociocultural perspective, is an integral part of acquiring the thought processes and practices which will enhance a teacher’s professional competence. Furthermore, the report also invites members of the teaching community to become involved in the process of assessing and improving professional standards and outcomes for the overall betterment of the profession. The most significant contribution of the NCTAF report to the field is perhaps that by identifying teacher quality as the most crucial element for improving education nationally, it implicitly validated the importance of the teacher’s role and it served to elevate its perceived status and professional standing.

**Entering the Era of No Child Left Behind**

Without a doubt, however, the most momentous and consequential event in the recent history of education in this country, was the signing of the *No Child Left Behind* Act (NCLB) of 2001. This legislation sponsored by George W. Bush’ administration with bipartisan support from Congress, placed the federal government in a more prominent role in American Education. A major goal of NCLB was to increase accountability among schools and also among teachers. The legislation required schools to pass yearly standardized tests as evidence of students’ progress. Those schools not providing evidence of such progress would be faced with diminished funding. The NCLB Act also required states to provide highly qualified teachers to all students, and districts
to notify parents when certification requirements were not met by teachers of all core academic subjects, including teachers providing instruction to students with limited English proficiency. Educating limited English proficiency students, up until this moment had been relegated to the realm of bilingual education in this country, which was first established in the 1800s, thanks to the early efforts of parochial institutions and local ethnic organizations (Crawford, 1989). The constitutional basis for the educational rights of language minority students was then established by the 14th Amendment in 1868 and later reaffirmed by the Bilingual Education Act in 1968 which recognized the needs of students with limited English speaking ability (Wiley, 2002). However, it is not until the advent of NCLB and the increased accountability for educating all students, that districts across the country started to make a concerted effort to make bilingual education a more explicit focus of their school improvement plans in terms of funds, targeted professional development and the hiring and retaining of bilingually certified personnel (Wiese & Garcia, 2010).

Although the NCLB Act made bilingual education one of the areas that school districts across the country needed to pay attention to, this increased focus did not result in the inclusion of special considerations or any other particular adjustments in the way bilingual teachers were evaluated. In fact, empirical research conducted in the field has shown that despite the focus on the preparation of bilingual teachers and the redesign of responsive methods and curriculum, little has been done to adapt teacher evaluation systems and prepare administrators to conduct an equitable assessment of these teachers (White, 2002; Safty, 1992). Much as it was at its inception, teacher evaluation does not take into account the specific educational specialty or the individual
needs of the student population served. These systems are largely designed to be very general and all-inclusive in nature, giving very little guidance to the observer on whether the pedagogy applied is appropriate. While evaluation systems tend to be generic, research has been conducted to ascertain whether there is a necessity to address the limited extent by which they present a complete picture of instruction of language minority students (August, Salend, Staehr-Fenner & Kozik, 2012; Jones, Buzick, Turkan, 2013). In fact, it is precisely the new demands set by NCLB which galvanized the efforts to take an in-depth look into what are considered best practices in bilingual education and what elements both teachers and administrators should be supporting (Freeman & Freeman, 2007; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006).

Yet, there are over thirty years of research in language education, policy and planning that show that educating students with limited English skills, require a specialized pedagogy and the application of principles specific to the language acquisition process, not only in the execution of the instruction, but also in evaluating effective teaching (Cahnmann, 1998; Gittins, 2001; Krashen, 1996; Lindholm, 1991).

One example of a research-based instructional model developed specifically to address the need to define and evaluate the effective instruction of language learners is the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol or SIOP, (Echevarria, Short & Powers, 2006). Teachers across the country now use SIOP to design language and content instruction. Further, administrators also use it to support school improvement efforts, monitor progress, and provide feedback to teachers. Though highly regarded for its effectiveness as an observational and coaching tool, the identifiable features delineated by SIOP and other similar tools on how language teachers are to differentiate
instruction, are not yet included within systemic evaluation systems utilized by districts (Staeher Fenner, Kozik, Cooper, 2014). In this respect, it can certainly be said that, while NCLB succeeded in spurring an interest in studying best practices in bilingual education, this knowledge did not serve to alter or inform teacher evaluation systems in any significant way.

However, an important area in which the NCLB Act contributed to change the educational arena, was that it made it necessary for districts to hire the appropriately certified teachers and with that, it galvanized the impetus to find qualified bilingual personnel who could aptly teach academic content to students of a language other than English. With the intent of helping to improve the qualifications of teachers, NCLB provided funding states could use for a wide variety of efforts, from improving certification systems to supporting recruitment and retention strategies for highly qualified teachers. The law also supported ongoing professional development for all teachers, regardless of their qualification status (Birman at al, 2007). Private business groups and governmental agencies were influential in backing this Act spurred by the belief that American schools should do more to produce more competent workers.

Embedded in NCLB, are a series of recommendations and strategies offered to districts by the National Governors’ Association (NGA) to help them move teacher evaluation systems from mere personnel function to a tool for instructional improvement. Such recommendations included: 1) broadening participation in evaluation design to include teachers and administrators; 2) incorporating student learning into teacher evaluation; 3) training evaluators in pre-service programs and 4) creating professional accountability (Goldrick, 2002). These recommendations, in addition to the renewed
focus on students’ achievement and the increased accountability, spurred a wave of new district initiatives aimed at ensuring that improvements were made to avoid decreased funding related to the increased scrutiny. This Act also served to reaffirm the role of the government in establishing and mandating the necessary requirements for what are to be considered desirable student and teacher outcomes at a national level.

Though there is little doubt that NCLB has changed the landscape of the educational field by providing new standards of accountability for evaluating what is considered sound teaching, it is also undeniable that it has engendered much criticism and controversy. This is true, in particular, for the lack of monetary support to assist all schools in their efforts to achieve such high expectations and the excessive emphasis posed on standardized tests when determining future funding for schools (Kim & Sunderman, 2004). In fact, the Act has been criticized as perpetrating existing inequalities and punishing students, teachers and communities for an assortment of uncontrollable variables (Noddings, 2005; Uzzell, 2005). Further, the use of standardized tests as the main means of evaluating teaching, in particular for students whose primary language is not English, has been widely decried and questioned. In fact, by making accountability the focal point of education, NCLB has reverted to a dominant perspective of the profession ignoring other important factors such as existing support systems, availability and allocation of resources to schools and districts, as well as socio-economic and linguistic differences (Abedi, 2004; Gitlin & Smyth, 1989).

Perhaps one of the most outspoken critics of NCLB has been American education historian and policy analyst Diane Ravitch. Ravitch who was at first a staunch supporter of NCLB, later became disillusioned with the policies she had formerly
espoused. Through her writings and advocacy, Ravitch has given voice to the growing sentiment of disenchantment and discontent in the educational community regarding NCLB, by publicly condemning its unrealistic expectations and the punitive uses of accountability to fire teachers and close schools. Ravitch strongly maintains that the expectations set by NCLB are impracticable and therefore not actionable. She points out, for instance, that according to this act every child is supposed to test on grade level in reading and math by the year 2014. Such expectations, she asserts, are not only unrealistic but are indeed setting many school districts, teachers and students, up for failure (Ravitch, 2010).

**Teacher Evaluation Post No Child Left Behind**

Considering all the criticism NCLB has engendered and its unpopularity among the educational community, it should not be a surprise that the subsequent administration responded by outlining and promoting new systems intended to capture student achievement and teacher effectiveness. Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, the Department of Education financed *Race to the Top*, a $4.35 billion initiative which offered states competitive grants to improve education at the state and the local level. *Race to the Top* focused its reform in four areas:

1. Rigorous standards and assessments aimed at preparing students for college and careers.
2. Data systems that can effectively measure student growth while informing principals and teachers about ways of improving instruction.
3. Recruitment, development, rewarding, and retaining the best teachers and principals.

4. Support for “turning around” low achieving schools.

Within the time period immediately after the awards were announced, the majority of states submitted applications to obtain funding. However, grants were awarded solely to those states that had modified their teacher evaluation systems by weakening tenure protection and linking teacher evaluation ratings to students’ outcomes. Because the majority of states wanted an opportunity to gain available federal funding, teacher evaluation systems’ reform accelerated sharply across our country.

This is certainly the case in the state where this study was conducted, where a new law on teacher performance evaluation was enacted in 2010 by its General Assembly after intense state-wide negotiations with teacher unions and district leaders. The new law highlights a series of rules regarding teacher practice and student growth components of evaluations. It mandates the redesign of most teacher and principal evaluation systems in the state and it also requires that school districts develop new evaluation systems in good faith cooperation with their teachers or their teachers’ unions. Furthermore, the new law requires districts to include a measure of student growth as a significant factor in evaluations, in addition to a measure of teacher practice.

The district where this research study was conducted, started implementing the State law during the school year 2012-2013. In order to develop the new teacher evaluation system, the district formed a joint committee with the local union and the
parties met together to develop a plan of implementation. This plan uses the minimum amount of student growth allowed by law for its first three years. According to the district, the new evaluation system aims at establishing a common definition and standards for teaching excellence, by building on the principals’ and the teachers’ expertise in analyzing instruction in order to support teacher growth. In an effort to craft a better and more inclusive system, the district elicited the thoughts, suggestions and ideas from thousands of teachers. The district reports that in the spring and summer of 2011 more than 2,000 teachers took part in various focus groups to voice their opinion about how a meaningful evaluation system that could help them grow as professionals should be constructed.

**The New Teacher Evaluation System**

An examination of the district’s current evaluation system through the lenses of the *dominant* and *educative* modes, reveals that it has the potential of encompassing many characteristics of the latter approach. The *dominant* viewpoint focuses primarily on perpetuating the existing status quo (Gitlin & Smyth, 1989). By weaving in the input gained from teachers and union representatives in constructing the new evaluation tool, the school district has shifted the dialogue from an exclusively systematic district’s perspective onto a more inclusive plane. If the main intent of the *educative* mode is for teachers to become actively involved in assessing and improving their educational aims and practices, then it is certainly to be regarded as a positive *educative* attribute that those whose performance will be judged by the new system had their voice heard in creating it. The district’s decision to be more inclusive and receptive to the feedback from the field through the teacher focus groups and the extensive negotiations with its
union, have undoubtedly played a critical role in ensuring the new system is more thoughtfully constructed in terms of supporting both instructional and supervisory practices. Another positive attribute and improvement, when compared to the old teacher evaluation system, is that the new system has multiple measures of determining a teachers’ overall performance rating. There is now strong proof that using a combination of classroom observations and student learning data is more accurate than using either of these components on its own (Kane & Staiger, 2012). The above premise is also evidenced by an increased interest in alternate ways of evaluating teachers in a more comprehensive way such as through educators’ portfolios for their potential to promote reflection on practices, demonstrate impact on students and also support personnel decisions (Kenny; Iqbal; McDonald; Borin; Dawson; Chan & Kustra, 2017). The new evaluation system’s components include: Teacher Practice, Student Growth and Student Feedback. The anchor of the Teacher Practice component is the new District’s Teaching Framework. Modeled after the Charlotte Danielson’s 2011 Framework for Teaching, the district’s Teaching Framework was revised in collaboration with the union and Charlotte Danielson to emphasize its connections to the Common Core Standards and to reiterate high standards for teachers and students. The Student Growth component, on the other hand, will be measured through the use of standardized assessments and of teacher-designed performance tasks. The Student Feedback component will be aggregated through the use of student surveys.

Because this research study focuses on analyzing how and in what ways the new evaluation system is influencing teacher instructional practices, the District’s Teaching Framework is of extreme significance for this purpose, as it is what provides
the common language for instruction across content areas and disciplines and is also the blueprint for administrators to observe and provide teachers with meaningful feedback about their practice. From an educative point of view, this tool seems promising as it is based on a research-based, time-tested coaching tool highly regarded and accepted in the educational community: The Charlotte Danielson’s 2011 Framework for Teaching. Never before in the history of the district, has there been a guidance document teachers and administrators could use to establish meaningful dialogical exchanges in regards to directing and shaping future teaching practices. The prior evaluation system, in place since the 1970s, was a checklist with a grading scale of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. There was not a well-established and articulated district-wide criterion of what constituted good teaching, which was left at the discretion and judgment of the administrators. This lack of guidance and tangible standards for excellence has not only favored a great range of variability in terms of criteria for evaluating teachers, but it also potentially promoted dominant practices of conducting the evaluations, as the view of teacher competency was based on the administrators’ technical rationality of what they personally considered to be desirable outcomes (Gitlin & Smyth, 1989). Because the conversations between the parties are now evidence-based, and the ensuing discussions are based on the parameters listed by the Teaching Framework, this new tool can be a powerful agent for self-reflection and a springboard for altering or reaffirming thoughts, beliefs and actions. Using the Charlotte Danielson’s Framework as the common language and foundation, teachers and administrators can now establish whether there is congruence between the initial teaching aims and intentions (as established together during the pre-conference), and the actual teaching
practice. By clearly defining the criteria of what constitutes effective teaching, the Danielson’s Framework can create the foundation for a focused, reflective exchange where future goals and desirable results can be thoroughly analyzed, discussed and steps for improving future teaching practice can be devised by both teachers and administrators. In this way, the new evaluation system can be an educative tool for self-reflection and improvement, both professionally and in terms of achieving better students’ outcomes. As Frontier and Mielke have highlighted in their book *Making Teachers Better, Not Bitter* (2016), the premise is that when supervision can create the conditions for developmental feedback to inform progress in a learning environment, the resulting payoff is teacher growth in their expertise, autonomy and improved teaching.

While there was some data which demonstrated that in general most teachers and principals in the district thought that the new system was far better than the old, at the time the study was conducted, there was no evidence, at a granular level, of whether this system was helping change teacher practices in a significant and lasting way. In other words, it still remained to be seen whether instructional practices were being altered because teachers saw intrinsic value in the guidance and the reflective processes engendered by and through the utilization of the Framework. Of particular interest, due to its distinctive demographics, was to examine how the new Teaching Framework was being perceived and utilized by the district’s bilingual teachers, which constituted nearly 2/4 of the entire teaching workforce.

As it was previously alluded to earlier in this chapter, elements specific to bilingual education have not traditionally been a focus of teacher evaluation in this country (August, Salend, Staehr-Fenner & Kozik, 2012; Jones, Buzick, Turkan, 2013).
The dramatic shift in demographics and increase in the English language learner population in schools across the nation, together with the persistent achievement gap of this population, however, have sparked an urgency to closely reexamine and evaluate instructional practices in the field. Though schools have become high-stake environments for both bilingual students in grades K-12 and their teachers, appropriate preparation, resources and on-going supports are consistently lacking for this group (de Jong & Harper, 2009). The expectation is that bilingual students will demonstrate grade level appropriate growth on standardized assessments which were developed for English-speaking students and that bilingual teachers’ performance, though facing additional linguistic and academic hurdles, can be judged utilizing the same criteria as their general education peers. The underlying premise is the assumption that the educational reforms developed for the mainstream population will work well enough for this distinctive group (de Jong & Harper, 2009). Evidence indicates, nevertheless, that both bilingual teachers’ performance and bilingual student achievement are positively impacted when they receive the specialized guidance and support they need and require (de Jong, Coady, & Harper, 2009). This research study seeks precisely to examine the perceptions of the district’s bilingual teacher population in regard to the new evaluation system, so that their specific needs can be identified and their input can be taken into consideration in order to develop a better understanding and improve communication between them and their administrators, district stakeholders and the larger educational community.

It is to the district’s credit that it did acknowledge that this particular teacher population and its administrators needed specific guidance in integrating the
requirements of the new evaluation system with research-based pedagogy of educating language minority students. In fact, during the first year of implementation, the district created an *English Learner Companion Guide* (i.e. *E.L. Addendum*) by enlisting the help and counsel of its bilingual teachers. This instructional guide is intended to be used together with the *Teaching Framework*. It outlines strategies teachers can employ as they deliver instruction and it also identifies milestones in the language acquisition process, which can help determine student growth in learning both content and language. Though the *Companion Guide* seems to have been well-received by both teachers and administrators, to date there is no study or tangible proof that it is being used widely, thoughtfully and consistently to improve teaching and learning.

The plausible question remains then whether teachers, in particular bilingual teachers, believe the new evaluation system is helping them become better at their craft, or they are just showing the administrators what they want to see for the sake of completing the evaluation cycle. Hence, are they reverting to the old, usual practices once the evaluation is over? Is this new evaluation a lasting, consequential improvement or, in the words of Hazi, and Arredondo-Rucinski (2009), *Just another tap dance?* (p. 31). Based on a retrospective analysis of the history of teacher evaluation in this country, the new system seems to encompass several of the dialogical and democratic elements that should facilitate the pedagogical exchanges of ideas which were lacking in many of the old evaluation systems. These elements of exchange and refection can offer a platform for reframing and renegotiating thought at a deeper and fundamentally *educative* level. The new system may hold the potential of empowering the teachers by providing them with the tools by which they can refine their practices,
but also with the language they need to define and defend them. Because there is a lack of definitive proof on this aspect, however, we can only speculate that indeed this new system is achieving these lofty and idealistic goals.

The purpose of this study is therefore to try to shed light on this subject by investigating the following research questions: “How do bilingual teachers perceive the new evaluation system as it relates to their practices?”, “What changes in teaching practices do bilingual teachers attribute to the new evaluation system?” and “Are there any differences in the way bilingual teachers and non-bilingual teachers perceive the evaluation system?”

These questions are the basis for gaining an informed glimpse into what is legitimately materializing in the district in regards to how the new evaluation system is being perceived and utilized by bilingual teachers. The answer to these questions may lead to new forms of self-reflective knowledge, which in turn could foster new reflexive forms of communication between teachers and administrators in regards to teaching and evaluative practices. The knowledge this process generated is not based on current assumptions but on the unadulterated feedback from the trenches, which will serve to give the teachers both a voice and a platform for expanding their scope of autonomy and professionalism. In turn, the administrators can gain the information they need to guide, counsel and lead pro-actively and with insight.

The goal and most desirable outcome of the educative approach, as seen from a Critical perspective, is to enable the development and the refinement of our ability to engage as critical citizens, that is, as empowered agents able to effectively question, challenge, and contribute to the progressive transformation of the prevailing status quo.
in order to engender better circumstances that will benefit the community as a whole (Nowlan, 2001). German sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1984), has once defined rationality and the ability to make progress not so much as the possession of knowledge, but rather how “subjects acquire and use knowledge” (p. 11). This study’s most aspirant intention is to help construct bridges for understanding and a path for improved communication in the professional community regarding teacher evaluation processes. Path and bridges, these, that can lead us toward discovering the reality of what aspects of these processes are truly helping teachers grow in their practice, so that we can offer them the support and the informed leadership they need to help students learn better and do better in their classrooms today, and in their lives in the future. In her book Getting Teacher Evaluation Right (2015), Darling-Hammond affirms that the United States is at a critical moment in teacher evaluation which is currently undergoing extensive changes and reforms in many districts across the country, some of which are radical in nature. It is imperative at this juncture, she says, that districts “…not substitute new problems for familiar ones, but that we instead use this moment of transformation to get teacher evaluation right.” (p.1). It is the wish of the author of this study to give voice to what the teachers in her district perceive to be helpful and what they think should be improved in this critical area, so that all stakeholders can reflect on the ways progress can be made, as opposed to reverting to old patterns and practices that are known to entail difficulties and embody old ways of thinking.
CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to analyze how and in what ways a new teacher evaluation system is influencing the instructional practices of bilingual teachers. This chapter will: a) explain the context of the research; b) describe the research methodology and sample selection; c) describe the procedure used in designing the instrument and collecting the data; d) provide an explanation of the statistical procedures which was used to analyze the data; e) address ethical considerations.

Context of the Research

The setting of this study is a large urban Midwestern district with a sizable Latino population. Latino students comprise the largest ethnic denomination in the district, or 45% of the total student enrollment. There are approximately 6,500 English Language Learners in the district and over 1,800 bilingual teachers who serve them. In this district, bilingual teachers are defined as teachers currently instructing English Language Learners (ELLs) in their native language and/or in English as a Second Language, depending on the particular school setting. During the 2012-2013 school year, the district adopted a new Teaching Framework as a way of evaluating its teachers’ performance. To date, however, there have not been any studies ascertaining its impact on teaching practices as it pertains to bilingual teachers, though they constitute a considerable subsection of the entire teaching workforce. The intent of this research study is to help shed light upon what is currently happening in the teaching “trenches” as a result of the implementation of the new system, as it is perceived by the district’s bilingual teachers.
Research Methods

A mixed methods research methodology was utilized to answer the questions, “How do bilingual teachers perceive the new evaluation system as it relates to their practices?” and more specifically, “What changes in teaching practices do bilingual teachers attribute to the new teacher evaluation system?” Additionally, the study also asked, “Are there any differences in the way bilingual teachers and non-bilingual teachers perceive the evaluation system?”

An on-line survey was used to collect detailed information from bilingual teachers to examine their perceptions about the ways the new Teaching Framework is influencing how they plan and deliver instruction. In order to further investigate and delve into the results revealed by the survey, selected bilingual teachers were invited to take part in a focus group session, where the findings were discussed and further analyzed. The results obtained quantitatively by means of the survey, offered a broad systemic view and a base-line of the teachers’ perspectives. The qualitative portion of the research methodology, or the focus group, was used to further explore the statistical trends and insights disclosed by the survey at a more personal, granular level in order to draw more pertinent and informed conclusions. This choice of research typology was based on the premise that the mixed methods approach allows the researcher to combine both qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry to triangulate the results, so that the findings may be mutually corroborated (Bryman, 2006). Additionally, combining these approaches may offset any potential weaknesses and strengths associated with either the quantitative and qualitative approaches, allowing for a more
comprehensive account and an increased integrity and credibility of the findings (Bryman, 2006).

**The Quantitative Portion of the Mixed-Methods Study: The Survey**

**Purpose for the survey.** An on-line survey was designed to gather data from a sizable group of teachers to develop an understanding of how they perceive the new evaluation system. The survey was specially designed to capture what aspects of the new evaluative tool and its accompanying *English Learners Companion Guide* were the most useful in helping teachers improve their teaching practices. The responses gathered by means of the survey provided the basis for designing the questions that were utilized during the course of the focus group.

**Participant selection.** The on-line survey was sent to a selection of schools across the district. These schools were chosen by reason of their substantial bilingual population and also based on their geographical location, to ensure that all regions within the district were represented. Though the study was originally designed to exclusively target bilingual teachers, the survey was also sent to mainstream education teachers, based on a recommendation made by Institutional Review Board. The Board felt that eliciting information from this group would allow the researcher to better understand the perceptions of the targeted teacher population by offering a measure of comparing and contrasting the data collected. The participants’ names and e-mails were drawn from information publicly available on the school’s website and also by contacting each of the school principals in order to gather recommendations about possible candidates. The survey was e-mailed to 300 teachers (150 bilingual and 150 regular education teachers). 56 teachers completed the survey.
**Survey design.** Although there is not a distinct formula to construct well-designed questions, the following key principles, based on the work of Check and Schutt (2011), were considered for designing and refining each item on the survey. To make sure that the questions would have a consistent meaning for all responders, lengthy wording, lack of specificity, vague language and leading questions were purposely avoided. A consistent focus on the research topic under investigation was maintained throughout the survey. This focus was also the primary basis for making decisions about what items should be included and which excluded. Additionally, to avoid what Schober (1999) defines as the “context effect” that is, to prevent preceding items from influencing how subsequent items could be interpreted, the sequence of questions was carefully scrutinized and considered. For this aim, after they were designed, questions were sorted into broad thematic categories, which became separate sections in the survey. A special effort was then made to organize these sections in a logical order so that they would make sense in natural conversation, and would also avoid influencing how the questions could be comprehended and responses produced. For the same purpose, the first question was given special attention and was designed specifically to make sure that the reader retained no doubt about the primary purpose of the survey (Dillman, 2007). Also, following Cude’s suggestions (2004), to enhance the research effectiveness and minimize confusion, a question-and-answer format, similar to those found on paper questionnaires was utilized. Differences in the visual appearance of questions were avoided and drop down boxes were used sparingly to allow respondents to easily scroll from question to question. Additionally, respondents were provided with "skip to the next question" options in those cases
where the questions may not have been applicable to all teachers (2007). All questions
designed to gather demographic data for the purpose of accurately describing the
sample and its characteristics, were placed at the end of the survey. This choice was
based on the premise that, “after completing the other survey questions, the
respondents would be able to better see the importance, relevancy, and usefulness of
providing the demographic data, whereas this may not have been evident at the
beginning” (Ravid, 2013, p. 8).

Before administering the survey to the targeted population, questions were
reviewed by a panel of four district-level experts. These experts included one of the
designers of the *English Learner Companion Guide*, a statistician and two bilingual
professional development specialists. The feedback received from this panel of experts
helped the researcher check for consistent understanding of the terms used, and also
helped validate some of the assumptions made in regards to the accessibility and the
clarity of the content of the survey. This method of reviewing questions by utilizing an
expert panel was found to be the most effective in identifying the greatest number of
problems with questions (Presser & Blair, 1994).

The final stage of preparation was to conduct a pilot study to field test the survey.
In this stage, the survey was administered to a small sample of individuals from the
targeted population. A total of six bilingual teachers took the pilot survey. After their
responses were obtained, the answers were analyzed to identify questions not yielding
valuable data. Such questions were modified or altogether discarded. The respondents
were interviewed to get information pertaining to how long on average it took for them to
complete the survey and to see whether any clarifying directions, word changes or additional response categories were necessary.

**Survey content.** The content of the survey was based on the four domains of the district’s new evaluative system, the *Teaching Framework*. The *Framework* is in essence a rubric that describes teaching practices across a continuum for each of its components. It is also the basis for the new teacher’s evaluation cycle as well as for the conversations that take place during the pre- and post-conferences between teachers and administrators. The *Framework’s* four domains, **Planning and Preparation**, **Classroom Environment**, **Instruction** and **Professional Responsibilities**, identify those aspects of a teacher’s responsibilities that have been documented through empirical studies and theoretical research as promoting improved student learning (Danielson, 2011). These domains are subdivided into four or five components and are deliberately organized clockwise to represent the teaching progression, where planning precedes teaching, a strong classroom environment must be in place for optimized learning to occur, and professional responsibilities always lead to better planning (Danielson, 2011).

The first Domain in the district’s *Teaching Framework* is **Planning and Preparation**. The components of this domain outline how a teacher organizes the content for what students are expected to learn, that is, how the teacher designs instruction for improved learning outcomes. According to the district’s *Teaching Framework* manual, these include demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, demonstrating knowledge of the students, selecting instructional goals, demonstrating knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction, and assessing student
learning. Under this domain teachers are evaluated through the knowledge of the subject they teach and the strategies they use. This domain also includes making significant connections to the curriculum and the development of skills related to the subject matter to promote the growth and the development of students. The district’s *Teaching Framework* describe teachers who excel in this domain as having a strong command of the subject they teach and a deep understanding of the internal relationships across the various disciplines. Domain 1 accounts for 25% of the total teacher’s evaluation score.

Domain 2 of the district’s *Teaching Framework* is **Classroom Environment**. This domain encompasses interacting positively with students and creating an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning. Domain 2 components encompass all non-instructional interactions that occur in a classroom, such as creating an environment of respect and rapport among the students and with the teacher, establishing a culture for learning, managing classroom procedures and organizing the physical space. Classroom management also falls in the realm of Domain 2. Teachers who are well-versed in this particular domain are defined in the district’s *Framework* as being able to expertly create an environment of respect and rapport through the way they interact with their students and by the way they encourage positive interactions in their classrooms. In this environment all students feel valued, safe and motivated to learn. Domain 2 accounts for 25% of the total teacher’s evaluation score.

Domain 3 has to do with **Instruction** and it contains many components essential to the engagement of students in learning, as they develop complex understanding and participate in a community of learners. The district’s *Teaching Framework* defines this
domain as gauging the level of student involvement in meaningful, relevant work which extends beyond the classroom onto the students’ lives and experiences. These include communicating clearly and accurately, engaging students in learning, providing feedback to students, and demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness. According to the district’s Framework, teachers who excel in Domain 3 have finely honed their instructional skills and their work in the classroom is fluid and flexible. Such teachers know how to easily change and adapt approaches as the situation demands it, and they seamlessly integrate ideas and concepts from other parts of the curriculum into their explanations and activities. Domain 3 accounts for 40% of the total teacher’s evaluation score.

The final domain of the district’s Teaching Framework is Domain 4 Professional Responsibilities. The components in Domain 4 represent the wide range of a teacher’s responsibilities outside the classroom. These include reflecting on teaching, maintaining accurate records, communicating with families, contributing to the school and district, growing and developing professionally, and displaying professionalism. According to Charlotte Danielson (2011), the components in this domain are associated with being a true professional educator. Domain 4 therefore includes a wide range of professional responsibilities, from self-reflection and professional growth, to participation in a professional community. These components also include interactions with the families of students, contacts with the larger community, and advocacy for students. Teachers who excel in this domain are defined in the district’s Framework as being able to continuously reflect with accuracy and specificity on how their teaching impacts student learning, so that they can apply the lessons they learned to improve the effectiveness of
their teaching practices in the future. Domain 4 accounts for 10% of the total teacher’s evaluation score.

Because the focus of this research study is on how the new evaluation system is helping bilingual teachers in the district change their teaching practices, Domain 3 (Instruction) of the Teaching Framework was the primary focus of the survey. However, all aspects of the teaching experience, as highlighted in the remaining Domains of Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, and Professional Responsibilities are also of interest to this study and were explored by the survey. For this purpose, the survey was divided into different sections individually dedicated to ascertaining what specific aspects of each Domain are considered by bilingual teachers to be the most helpful in providing guidance for improving their teaching practices and supporting bilingual learners. Respondents were asked to rank the different components of each Domain in order of importance for helping to change their teaching practices, as well as to provide specific examples (in a narrative form) of how their practices have changed because of the new evaluation system. The data collected by means of the narrative portion of the survey, was utilized to help craft detailed questions for the focus group in order to elicit feedback in regards to why specific changes in instructional practices may have occurred in particular Domains. Since the existing structures in place in every school to support teacher growth are likely to differ depending on the setting, a series of questions were drafted to investigate the correlation between these factors and change in teachers’ practices.

It is important to note here that the language used in the survey is drawn directly from the Teaching Framework and may not necessarily correspond with each teacher’s
own thinking. In order to facilitate a better understanding and increased clarity, the different Domains and Components were listed exactly in the order they appear in the Framework, so that the survey respondents could easily find each item in the document, in case they had some doubts in regard to which specific element the survey questions were addressing.

Because bilingual teachers also have access to an *English Language Learner Companion Guide* to guide their teaching practices, the survey incorporated various questions detailing how teacher practitioners are currently utilizing this resource. The *English Language Learner Companion Guide* was created to share how unique aspects of English Language Learner (ELL) teaching practice align with the district’s *Teaching Framework*. The district recommends that bilingual teachers and school administrators review this document prior to and during the pre-observation conferences, observations, and post-observation conferences to gain more information about best ELL teacher practices. The *Companion Guide* is supposed to be used in conjunction with the full *Teaching Framework* and it specifically describes how the research-based teaching practices highlighted in the new *Framework* align with best practices specific to the instruction of English Language Learners. The *Companion Guide* was created with the intention of building a common understanding and vision, and to further professional discourse and collaboration. Prior to this study, however, there was no existing data on whether and how this resource ancillary to the new *Teaching Framework* was being utilized in the field.

**Data processing and analysis.** Data collected by means of the on-line survey was transferred to the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software
program. Frequencies, means and standard deviations were calculated and reported for each element within every Domain to explicitly identify how the new *Teaching Framework* is altering the way teachers plan and deliver their instruction. Percentages of responses were correlated with specific demographic characteristics of the participant sample to determine whether there were any patterns or trends within each category. The identified patterns and trends were then explored in the context of the focus group, as questions were then designed based on the survey results. In particular, the narrative portion of the answers on the survey, though not reported as part of the quantitative data, was organized, condensed and analyzed to establish evidence-based themes that were further investigated by the focus group. The survey administration period extended over a period of four weeks.

**The Qualitative Portion of the Mixed-Methods Study: The Focus Group**

**Purpose for the focus group.** The focus group provided a forum for investigating the results obtained by means of the on-line survey. While the survey offered a broad systemic view and a base-line of the teachers' perspectives, the focus group was used to further explore the statistical trends and insights that were disclosed at a more personal, granular level in order to draw more pertinent and informed conclusions. In this way, the focus group enabled the researcher to gain a more complete understanding of how bilingual teachers perceive the new evaluation system as being helpful when it comes to improving their instructional practices. The focus group was moderated by the researcher.

**Participant selection.** The option of partaking in the focus group was offered to all participants at the end of the on-line survey. Only one respondent out of the 22
bilingual teachers who took the survey expressed interest in participating. The invitation was then sent again to all 150 bilingual teachers who had been originally targeted for the study. As none of these respondents expressed an interest, selected administrators from schools across the district were contacted to gather recommendations about possible candidates. This yielded three additional participants. For their partaking in the focus groups, these teachers received a $30.00 gift card as a token of appreciation for their time and willingness to share their opinions.

Prompts design. The questions for leading the focus group were prepared based on the data collected by means of the on-line survey. The questions were purposely drafted to be open-ended and to keep the flow of the discussion fluid, so that participants would have the freedom and the latitude to share their views and voice their opinions. The prompts aimed at eliciting the participants’ opinions and insights in a balanced and inclusive manner and the discussion was set up to get feedback from every participant. For this very purpose, the researcher politely redirected the conversation by limiting the amount of time individuals had to share their experiences in order to avoid having some participants dominate the conversation. A series of questions and prompts that could have originated based on the results of the survey, were prepared in advance by the researcher as a means of illustrating the process and the intent of some of the questions that could possibly be asked during the course of the focus group. These questions were submitted and approved both by the Research Review Board and the Institutional Review Board and they proved to be very helpful in providing a baseline for designing the final focus group questions.
**Data processing and analysis.** The focus group session was audiotaped to make sure that the unadulterated content could be captured and analyzed at a later time. Two recording devices were utilized to avoid any problems due to malfunctioning equipment. The answers and insights provided by the focus group were evaluated through the process of content analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). Responses were fully transcribed, summarized and then coded to prioritize data from most to least common patterns, and to specifically ascertain whether the answers provided by the focus groups validated, amplified or disproved those provided by the majority of survey respondents. The content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004) of the focus group’s discussion was made with the purpose of making educated inferences from the texts (focus group’s transcripts) to the larger contexts of their use (bilingual teachers in the district). Inferences made in this analysis were abductive in nature, that is, they did “proceed across logical distinct domains … from particulars of one kind, to particulars of another kind” (p. 37), for the purpose of producing insights that would be useful to both teachers and administrators as they continue to navigate the evaluative process and practices in the district. The group’s answers provided a medium for delving into the reasons why certain results were evident in the survey data. In this way, the focus group was the vehicle for leading to an explanation and justification behind the responses revealed by the quantitative portion of the research methodology.

**Ethical Considerations**

An introduction and a statement of informed consent were given to respondents prior to taking the on-line survey to orient them through the process. The statement of informed consent noted ethical obligations such as confidentiality and voluntary
participation. The consent process ensured that individuals were voluntarily participating in the research with full knowledge of relevant risks and benefits. The consent also ensured that the participants had all of the information that might reasonably influence their willingness to participate in a form that they could understand and comprehend (Sales, & Folkman, 2000).

In accordance to the American Psychological Association’s (2002) Ethics Code, participants were informed about the following:

1. Purpose of the research and the expected duration and procedures.

2. Participants’ rights to decline to participate and to withdraw from the research once it has started, as well as the anticipated consequences of doing so.

3. Any prospective research benefits.

4. Limits of confidentiality, such as data coding, disposal, sharing and archiving, and when confidentiality must be broken.

5. Incentives for participation.

6. Who participants can contact with questions.

To prevent any disclosure of personal information and to preserve subject confidentiality, only numbers were used to identify survey participants on their questionnaires. All documentation that pertained to the study was kept in a safe, private location, unavailable to any other individual, with the exception of the researcher. The survey participants were made aware of these measures and precautions in the survey’s introduction, where they were also notified of the importance of their
contribution for the purpose of informing and improving the current teacher evaluation process in the district.
CHAPTER 4
Quantitative Results

This study’s purpose was to analyze how and in what ways a new teacher evaluation system was influencing the instructional practices of bilingual teachers. A mixed methods research methodology was employed to answer the questions, "How do bilingual teachers perceive the new evaluation system as it relates to their practices?" and "What changes in teaching practices do bilingual teachers attribute to the new teacher evaluation system?" Additionally, this study also sought to answer the question, "Are there any differences in the way bilingual teachers and non-bilingual teachers perceive the evaluation system?" The study’s hypothesis was that the new evaluation system was perceived favorably by the teachers and additionally that it was making a positive difference in improving the teachers’ instructional practices. For the quantitative portion of the study, an on-line survey was developed to examine the teachers’ perceptions about the ways the new evaluation system was influencing their teaching practices. Although the researcher had originally intended to focus exclusively on bilingual teachers, the district also requested that non-bilingual teachers be invited to partake in the survey portion of the study. This was done in order to establish whether the changes in practices and the perceptions regarding the new evaluation system would be specific to the bilingual teacher population, or they could also be applicable to teachers in other specialties. For the qualitative portion of the study and to investigate the statistical trends and insights disclosed by the survey, a group of four survey participants (bilingual teachers) were later invited to participate in a focus group, where the findings were discussed and further explored (see Chapter 5).
The statistical analysis for the quantitative portion of this research study was conducted by transferring the data obtained by means of the online survey, to the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software program. This program allowed the data to be converted into a variety of descriptive statistics (demographics, means, medians, modes, standards deviation, ratios and percentages). SPSS was also used to conduct a t-test on survey items that had continuous data response options, in order to analyze the differences between bilingual and non-bilingual teachers.

**Quantitative Data Analysis**

The on-line survey was sent out to 300 teachers across the district (150 bilingual; 150 non-bilingual educators) in the fall of 2015. The survey was open for a six-week span. There were a total of 56 survey respondents. Of these respondents, 22 were bilingual teachers and 34 were non-bilingual. Table 1 highlights the teachers' characteristics and demographic information.
Table 1

*Characteristics of Participating Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers Options</th>
<th>Bilingual</th>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Bilingual</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Assignment</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenured Status</td>
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<td>Tenured</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Tenured</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Experience</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-3 years</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>7-10 years</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years of Experience with Bilingual Students</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-3 years</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Over 20 years</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Does not apply</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>21</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(multiple answers possible)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Grade</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Grade</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Grade</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Grade</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th Grade</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th Grade</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th Grade</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th Grade</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In regard to Table 1, it is to be noted that in the particular district where the study was conducted, bilingual students may be placed in a non-bilingual setting for part of the day with teachers who are not bilingually endorsed. For this reason, some non-bilingual teachers reported on the survey to have experience working with this particular group of students, even though by State Law they do not have the necessary bilingual endorsement or certification. Additionally, it is to be noted that in the district studied teachers may be teaching several grades of students, as it is shown by the large numbers of survey participants (particularly in K-8th) indicating multiple levels taught.

Analysis of the Survey Data

The online survey questions had originally been organized in logical order so that they would make sense in natural conversation and they would not influence how items were comprehended by participants (Schober, 1999). Therefore, the first necessary step in organizing the data was to group questions in a way that would facilitate statistical tests that answered the study’s research questions and also established whether there were significant differences between bilingual and non-bilingual teachers.

The eight questions items highlighted in Table 2 specifically address the three research questions directly pertaining to the teachers perceptions and changes in their practices as attributed to the new evaluation system. The questions are displayed in a continuous data response format (strongly agree, agree, etc.). t-tests were done to examine the differences between group means. Results on these tests revealed that there were no statistically significant differences at the p<.05 level for the way bilingual and non-bilingual teachers responded to the survey questions (see Table 2).
Table 2

*Bilingual and Non-Bilingual Teachers’ Perceptions of the New Evaluation System*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Questions</th>
<th>Bilingual Teachers (n=22)</th>
<th>Non-Bilingual Teachers (n=34)</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a teacher, how helpful is the Teaching Framework in providing guidance to improve your teaching practices?</td>
<td>M 1.73</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>-.738</td>
<td>.464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD .703</td>
<td>.808</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teaching Framework is an effective instrument for determining your areas of desired instructional improvement.</td>
<td>M 1.77</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>-1.893</td>
<td>.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD .528</td>
<td>.904</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teaching Framework is an effective instrument for determining your areas of instructional strength.</td>
<td>M 1.91</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>-1.159</td>
<td>.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD .526</td>
<td>.729</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teaching Framework can be used as a coaching tool.</td>
<td>M 1.82</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>-.634</td>
<td>.529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD .501</td>
<td>.814</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teaching Framework is a good tool for coaching me.</td>
<td>M 1.82</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>-1.695</td>
<td>.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD .501</td>
<td>.904</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teaching Framework helped me change the way I teach.</td>
<td>M 1.91</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>-1.541</td>
<td>.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD .526</td>
<td>.994</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teaching Framework enables my supervisor to support my personal growth.</td>
<td>M 1.86</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>-1.496</td>
<td>.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD .468</td>
<td>.904</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teaching Framework is a fair way of judging a teacher’s performance.</td>
<td>M 2.45</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>-.356</td>
<td>.723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD .671</td>
<td>.825</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is important to note that although Table 2 shows that the results on the questions that specifically address any changes attributable to the new evaluation system are not statistically significant, when the data is examined at the granular level, there are some identifiable patterns which distinguish the bilingual respondents. While it would not be possible to generalize these findings due to the small size of the survey sample (only 56 teachers) and the fact that this sample was skewed in terms of numbers of bilingual versus non-bilingual respondents (22 bilingual and 34 non-bilingual participants), it is nevertheless noteworthy to mention that the bilingual teachers’ responses were overall more favorable toward the new evaluation system, when compared to the non-bilingual teachers.

For example, if we examine the results for the first question, “As a teacher, how helpful is the Teaching Framework in providing guidance to improve your teaching practices” (exemplified in Table 3), we see that no bilingual teacher surveyed reported that the Framework was not helpful, whereas 8 non-bilingual teachers (23.53%) reported this. Both teaching specialties had one respondent who was undecided regarding how they should express their ratings. However, the one non-bilingual respondent who marked the category “Other”, expressed difficulty in deciding whether the Framework was not helpful at all, or somewhat helpful in limited circumstances, while the bilingual respondent was undecided between the ratings of very helpful or somewhat helpful.
Table 3
*Bilingual and non-bilingual teachers’ responses to “As a teacher, how helpful is the Teaching Framework in providing guidance to improve your teaching practices”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Bilingual Teachers</th>
<th>Non-Bilingual Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Helpful</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Helpful</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Helpful</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, when respondents were asked to qualify whether “The Teaching Framework is an effective instrument for determining your areas of desired instructional improvement”, the results showed (Table 4) that more bilingual teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that the Framework is indeed helpful (95.45%). Also notable is that, while the same number of bilingual teachers and non-bilingual teachers (n 15) agreed the Framework is helpful to them in this area, only 1 bilingual teacher (4.55%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this premise, as opposed to 11 (32.35%) non-bilingual teachers.
Table 4

Bilingual and non-bilingual teachers’ responses to “The Teaching Framework is an effective instrument for determining your areas of desired instructional improvement”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Bilingual Teachers</th>
<th>Non-Bilingual Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, when respondents were asked whether “The Teaching Framework is an effective instrument for determining your areas of instructional strength”, results showed that comparable numbers of bilingual and non-bilingual teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (Table 5). However, only two bilingual teachers (9.09%) versus nine non-bilingual teachers (26.47%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this premise.

Table 5

Bilingual and non-bilingual teachers’ responses to “The Teaching Framework is an effective instrument for determining your areas of instructional strength”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Bilingual Teachers</th>
<th>Non-Bilingual Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>72.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 illustrates the opinion of survey respondents when asked whether they believed “The Framework can be used as a coaching tool”. The results displayed in
Table 6 mirror those highlighted for the previous two questions in terms of the more positive response of bilingual teachers versus their non-bilingual counterparts. In this instance as well, the percentage of bilingual teachers (95.46%) either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the Framework can be used to coach them, is larger than the percentage of non-bilingual teachers (82.35%). On the other hand, a much larger percentage of non-bilingual respondents (17.64%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, when compared to bilingual respondents (4.55%).

Table 6

*Bilingual and non-bilingual teachers’ responses to “The Teaching Framework can be used as a coaching tool”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Bilingual Teachers</th>
<th>Non-Bilingual Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5 22.73%</td>
<td>10 29.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>16 72.73%</td>
<td>18 52.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1 4.55%</td>
<td>4 11.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0 0.00%</td>
<td>2 5.88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To delve deeper into the teachers’ perception of the *Teaching Framework* as it pertained to them personally, teachers were also asked to respond to the statement, “The Teaching Framework is a good tool for coaching me”. The results highlighted in Table 7 validate the results reported in Table 6 as regards to the bilingual teachers. In fact, all bilingual teachers responded to this statement in the very same way they responded to the statement “The Teaching Framework can be used as a coaching tool”. That is, if they had indicated that they believed the Framework could be used as a coaching tool, they also reported that this statement applied to them personally. This was not the case for the non-bilingual teachers, where there was a slight variation in the
number of respondents in every rating category provided. Again, the numbers of non-bilingual teachers who indicated they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the usefulness of the *Teaching Framework* as a coaching tool far exceeded that of bilingual teachers (1 to 11 ratio).

Table 7

_Bilingual and non-bilingual teachers’ responses to “The Teaching Framework is a good tool for coaching me”_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Bilingual Teachers</th>
<th>Non-Bilingual Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>72.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, respondents were also asked whether the *Teaching Framework* had helped change the way they teach. Results for this question are highlighted in Table 8, where it is again evidenced that only 2 bilingual teachers (9.09%) disagree or strongly disagree with this statement, as opposed to 12 non-bilingual respondents (35.30%).
Table 8

*Bilingual and non-bilingual teachers’ responses to “The Teaching Framework has helped me change the way I teach”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Bilingual Teachers</th>
<th>Non-Bilingual Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>4 18.18%</td>
<td>8 23.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>16 72.73%</td>
<td>14 41.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2 9.09%</td>
<td>7 20.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0 0.00%</td>
<td>5 14.71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 highlights the teachers’ responses as it regards to their opinion of how the *Teaching Framework* is enabling school administrators to support their professional growth. Once again, the bilingual teacher’s outlook of the *Teaching Framework* as a tool for supporting professional growth was more positive for bilingual teachers than it was for non-bilingual respondents. In fact, only 1 bilingual teacher (4.55%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, as opposed to 8 non-bilingual respondents (23.53%) who disagreed and 3 non-bilingual respondents (8.82%) who strongly disagreed.
Table 9

*Bilingual and non-bilingual teachers’ responses to “The Teaching Framework enables my supervisor to support my professional growth”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Bilingual Teachers</th>
<th>Non-Bilingual Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>77.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 highlights the teachers’ response to the statement, “*The Teaching Framework is a fair way of judging a teacher’s performance.*” In this instance, the differences in opinion between the bilingual versus non-bilingual teachers were less pronounced. In fact, a similar percentage of respondents in both categories were in either agreement or in strong agreement that the Framework is indeed a fair way of judging a teacher’s performance (54.55% bilingual; 55.88% non-bilingual). Comparably, when the percentages for the Disagree and Strongly Disagree options are calculated for both groups, we see that an almost identical percentage of respondents in each group did not think the Framework is a fair evaluative tool (45.46% bilingual; 44.12% non-bilingual).
Table 10

*Bilingual and non-bilingual teachers’ responses to “The Framework for Teaching is a fair way of judging a teacher’s performance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Bilingual Teachers</th>
<th>Non-Bilingual Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While it is not possible to establish a statistically relevant variance between the bilingual and non-bilingual respondents, the results presented in Tables 2-10 exemplify that, when the data is examined discretely, there are discernable patterns indicating that bilingual teachers may have overall a more positive view and perception of the Teaching Framework. This is true in terms of its usefulness in providing guidance for improving teaching practices (Table 3); determining areas of instructional improvement (Table 4); determining areas of instructional strength (Table 5); usefulness as a coaching tool (Tables 6-7); instrument for changing teaching practices (Table 8), and tool for supervisors to support a teacher’s professional growth (Table 9).

In order to ascertain in what specific ways the Framework was found by teachers as being helpful in supporting their students’ learning, the survey also asked, “*What aspect(s) of the Teaching Framework is the most helpful to you in supporting your students?*” Survey respondents were asked to rate the four domains of the Framework, (i.e. **Domain 1: Planning and Preparation; Domain 2: Classroom Environment; Domain 3: Instruction; Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities**) in order of
importance. Figure 1 represents graphically the respondents’ overall rankings of the most helpful domains (4 Highest through 1 Lowest).

According to their ratings, bilingual respondents ranked **Domain 1: Planning and Preparation** as the most helpful domain (40.91% or 9 respondents). **Domain 3: Instruction** was chosen as the second most helpful domain (50% or 11 respondents), while the **Domain 2: Classroom Environment** ranked third (54.55% or 12 respondents). The least helpful, when compared with the others, was reported as being **Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities** (68.18% or 15 respondents).

Non-bilingual respondents indicated that the most helpful domain was **Domain 3: Instruction** (41.18% or 14 respondents) and the second most helpful domain was **Domain 2: Classroom Environment** (50.00% or 17 respondents). **Domain 1: Planning and Preparation** was ranked third (44.12% or 15 respondents). As it was
also the case for bilingual teachers, non-bilingual respondents indicated that **Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities** was the least helpful in providing them guidance in supporting their students (79.41% or 27 respondents).

It is interesting to note that, though the choices of most helpful domains were different for the two teacher categories, the percentages of how the respondents ranked their preferences were similar in terms of ratios. For example, 40.91% of bilingual teachers indicated that **Planning and Preparation** was the most helpful domain, while an almost identical percentage of non-bilingual teachers (41.18%) indicated that their first preference was the **Instruction** Domain. This pattern was also replicated when expressing preference for the second most important domains selected by the two teaching categories (50% of respondents in each), an indication, perhaps, that the respondents in both groups felt equally as strong about their rankings in terms of helpfulness of the domains.

As each of the *Teaching Framework*’s domains are further divided into subcategories, a series of ensuing questions asked the teachers to rank these components in terms of usefulness as it relates to their practice. Domain 1 or **Planning and Preparation**, encompasses five components: **Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy; Demonstrating Knowledge of Students; Selecting Instructional Outcomes; Designing Coherent Instruction** and **Designing Student Assessment**. Respondents were asked to rank these components in order of importance (1 Highest through 5 Lowest) for each Domain.

An analysis of the data for the question, “**Under Domain 1, which component would you say was the most helpful to you in guiding your professional practice?**”,

77
revealed that 45.45% of respondents, or 10 bilingual teachers, indicated that

*Demonstrating Knowledge of Students* was the most helpful component when it came to offering them guidance regarding their professional practice (Table 11). Interestingly, *Designing Student Assessment* was ranked both the second most helpful domain and the fourth least helpful domain by the same number of respondents (27.27% or 6 respondents in each category). Similarly, the teachers’ third choice, *Selecting Instructional Outcomes*, also ranked as number 5 (least helpful) as indicated by the same number of respondents (6 or 27.27%).

Though the data revealed that there was a definite preference in regards to the most useful component (*Demonstrating Knowledge of Students*), according to the bilingual teachers surveyed there was no definitive ranking or common agreement as regards to the degree of usefulness of the other components in Domain 1. In fact, a cross-sectional examination of the data in Table 11 revealed that the participants’ preferences were equally distributed across the Domain’s component. For example, *Designing Coherent Instruction* was ranked as the first, second and last (or fifth) choice by 4 respondents or 18.18%. *Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy* also displayed a variety of preference selections, with 22.73% or 5 respondents indicating that it was their first and third choice and 18.18%, or 4 respondents indicating that it was their second, fourth and fifth choice respectively.
Table 11

Bilingual Teachers’ Rating of Domain 1 Components (in order of importance - 1 Highest 5 Lowest)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain 1 Components</th>
<th>Rating 1 (Highest)</th>
<th>Rating 2</th>
<th>Rating 3</th>
<th>Rating 4</th>
<th>Rating 5 (Lowest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 5</td>
<td>n 4</td>
<td>n 5</td>
<td>n 4</td>
<td>n 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Demonstrating Knowledge of Students</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 10</td>
<td>n 4</td>
<td>n 2</td>
<td>n 4</td>
<td>n 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Selecting Instructional Outcomes</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 2</td>
<td>n 4</td>
<td>n 6</td>
<td>n 4</td>
<td>n 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Designing Coherent Instruction</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 4</td>
<td>n 4</td>
<td>n 5</td>
<td>n 5</td>
<td>n 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Designing Student Assessment</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 1</td>
<td>n 6</td>
<td>n 4</td>
<td>n 6</td>
<td>n 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results for non-bilingual teachers’ (highlighted in Table 12), showed that 10 teachers or 29.41% of respondents identified both Demonstrating Knowledge of Students and Selecting Instructional Outcomes as being the most helpful in supporting their teaching practices. Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy was ranked both second and last, as regards to most useful component, by a similar percentage of respondents (26.47% and 29.41%). Designing Students Assessments was ranked third and Designing Coherent Instruction was ranked fourth in terms of providing useful guidance.
Table 12

Non-bilingual Teachers’ Rating of Domain 1 Components (in order of importance - 1 Highest 5 Lowest)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain 1 Components</th>
<th>Rating 1 (Highest)</th>
<th>Rating 2</th>
<th>Rating 3</th>
<th>Rating 4</th>
<th>Rating 5 (Lowest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy</td>
<td>11.76% n 4</td>
<td>26.47% n 9</td>
<td>14.71% n 5</td>
<td>17.65% n 6</td>
<td>29.41% n 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Demonstrating Knowledge of Students</td>
<td>29.41% n 10</td>
<td>14.71% n 5</td>
<td>8.82% n 3</td>
<td>26.47% n 9</td>
<td>20.59% n 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Selecting Instructional Outcomes</td>
<td>29.41% n 10</td>
<td>20.59% n 7</td>
<td>23.53% n 8</td>
<td>14.71% n 5</td>
<td>11.76% n 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Designing Coherent Instruction</td>
<td>14.71% n 5</td>
<td>23.53% n 8</td>
<td>20.59% n 7</td>
<td>29.41% n 10</td>
<td>11.76% n 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Designing Student Assessment</td>
<td>14.71% n 5</td>
<td>14.71% n 5</td>
<td>32.35% n 11</td>
<td>11.76% n 4</td>
<td>26.47% n 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In comparing the data exemplified in Table 11 and Table 12, it became evident that both the bilingual and (to a lesser extent) the non-bilingual teachers’ opinion as regards to the most useful components was not clearly defined. Hence, the lack of a discernable pattern in the data makes it difficult to ascertain which aspects of Domain 1 were influencing their practices the most.
As a way of summarizing the data exemplified in Table 11 and 12, Figure 2 offers a graphic representation of the respondents' overall rankings of the most helpful Components in Domain 1.

![Figure 2. Bilingual and non-bilingual teachers' rankings of what Components in Domain 1 are the most helpful in supporting students]

The same form of data analysis that was applied for the subcategories in Domain 1 was also employed for Domain 2, Domain 3 and Domain 4, as respondents were asked to rank each component in these particular domains in order of importance when it came to being the helpful in guiding their professional practice. Domain 2 is subdivided in four components as follows: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport; Establishing a Culture for Learning; Managing Classroom Procedures; Managing Student Behavior. Tables 13 and Table 14 highlight bilingual and non-bilingual respondents' answers to the question, “Under Domain 2, which component would you say was the most helpful to you in guiding your professional practice?”
Table 13

**Bilingual Teachers’ Rating of Domain 2 Components (in order of importance - 1 Highest 4 Lowest)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain 2 Components</th>
<th>Rating 1 (Highest)</th>
<th>Rating 2</th>
<th>Rating 3</th>
<th>Rating 4 (Lowest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</td>
<td>40.91%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 9</td>
<td>n 8</td>
<td>n 4</td>
<td>n 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Establishing a Culture for Learning</td>
<td>40.91%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 9</td>
<td>n 6</td>
<td>n 4</td>
<td>n 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Managing Classroom Procedures</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>40.91%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 2</td>
<td>n 6</td>
<td>n 9</td>
<td>n 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Managing Student Behavior</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>59.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 2</td>
<td>n 2</td>
<td>n 5</td>
<td>n 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Domain 2, the same percentage (40.91%) or 9 bilingual respondents identified the subcomponents, *Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport* and *Establishing a Culture for Learning* as being their first preference in terms of helpfulness. A very close percentage of teachers (36.36%) or 8 respondents ranked *Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport* as their second choice. *Managing Classroom Procedures* and *Managing Student Behaviors* ranked third and fourth respectively.
Table 14

Non-Bilingual Teachers’ Rating of Domain 2 Components (in order of importance - 1 Highest 4 Lowest)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain 2 Components</th>
<th>Rating 1 (Highest)</th>
<th>Rating 2</th>
<th>Rating 3</th>
<th>Rating 4 (Lowest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</strong></td>
<td>41.18%</td>
<td>26.47%</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 14</td>
<td>n 9</td>
<td>n 5</td>
<td>n 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>b. Establishing a Culture for Learning</strong></td>
<td>32.35%</td>
<td>35.29%</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 11</td>
<td>n 12</td>
<td>n 5</td>
<td>n 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>c. Managing Classroom Procedures</strong></td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>44.12%</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 4</td>
<td>n 10</td>
<td>n 15</td>
<td>n 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>d. Managing Student Behavior</strong></td>
<td>14.71%</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
<td>26.47%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 5</td>
<td>n 3</td>
<td>n 9</td>
<td>n 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-bilingual respondents’ answers for Domain 2, were more clearly defined in terms of preferences (Table 14). 41.18% or 14 respondents identified *Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport* as their first choice. 35.29% or 12 respondents ranked *Establishing a Culture for Learning*, second in terms of helpfulness. 44.12% or 15 respondents, ranked *Managing Classroom Procedures* third, while 50% of teachers or 17 respondents ranked *Managing Student Behaviors* last, or fourth in terms of helpfulness.

According to the data exemplified in Table 13 and Table 14, a similar percentage of teachers in both categories identified *Creating and Environment of Respect and Rapport* as being their first choice in terms of helpfulness. While the rating for *Establishing a Culture of Learning* was different for bilingual and non-bilingual respondents, (ranked first and second respectively), both categories ranked *Managing*
Classroom Procedures and Managing Student Behavior third and fourth when it came to providing guidance for their professional practice.

Figure 3 summarizes the data in Table 13 and 14, which exemplify the respondents’ overall rankings of the most helpful Components in Domain 2.

Table 15 and Table 16 highlight the results to the question, “Under Domain 3, which component would you say was the most helpful to you in guiding your professional practice?” Respondents were asked to rank in order of importance (1 through 5) the following components: Communicating with Students; Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques; Engaging Students in Learning; Using Assessment in Instruction and Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness.
Table 15

_Bilingual Teachers’ Rating of Domain 3 Components (in order of importance 1 Highest - 5 Lowest)_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain 3 Components</th>
<th>Rating 1 (Highest)</th>
<th>Rating 2</th>
<th>Rating 3</th>
<th>Rating 4</th>
<th>Rating 5 (Lowest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Communicating with Students</td>
<td>18.18% n 4</td>
<td>18.18% n 4</td>
<td>31.82% n 7</td>
<td>22.73% n 5</td>
<td>9.09% n 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques</td>
<td>18.18% n 4</td>
<td>22.73% n 5</td>
<td>22.73% n 5</td>
<td>22.73% n 5</td>
<td>13.64% n 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Engaging Students in Learning</td>
<td>40.91% n 9</td>
<td>27.27% n 6</td>
<td>13.64% n 3</td>
<td>13.64% n 3</td>
<td>4.55% n 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Using Assessment in Instruction</td>
<td>9.09% n 2</td>
<td>22.73% n 5</td>
<td>9.09% n 2</td>
<td>31.82% n 7</td>
<td>27.27% n 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness</td>
<td>13.64% n 3</td>
<td>9.09% n 2</td>
<td>22.73% n 5</td>
<td>9.09% n 2</td>
<td>45.45% n 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data highlighted in Table 15 shows that bilingual teachers found _Engaging Students in Learning_ both most helpful and second most helpful in guiding their professional practice. _Communicating with Students_ ranked third, _Using Assessment in Instruction_ ranked fourth and _Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness_ fifth.
Table 16

Non-Bilingual Teachers’ Rating of Domain 3 Components (in order of importance 1 Highest -5 Lowest)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain 3 Components</th>
<th>Rating 1 (Highest)</th>
<th>Rating 2</th>
<th>Rating 3</th>
<th>Rating 4</th>
<th>Rating 5 (Lowest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Communicating with Students</td>
<td>20.59%</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>32.35%</td>
<td>20.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 7</td>
<td>n 5</td>
<td>n 4</td>
<td>n 11</td>
<td>n 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Using Questioning and Discussion</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
<td>20.59%</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques</td>
<td>n 8</td>
<td>n 8</td>
<td>n 7</td>
<td>n 6</td>
<td>n 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Engaging Students in Learning</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>26.47%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 10</td>
<td>n 10</td>
<td>n 9</td>
<td>n 2</td>
<td>n 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Using Assessment in Instruction</td>
<td>20.59%</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
<td>26.47%</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 7</td>
<td>n 8</td>
<td>n 9</td>
<td>n 5</td>
<td>n 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>41.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 2</td>
<td>n 3</td>
<td>n 5</td>
<td>n 10</td>
<td>n 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data highlighted in Table 16 shows that non-bilingual teachers found Engaging Students in Learning both most helpful and second most helpful in guiding their professional practice. The data relating to this component mirror the results expressed by bilingual teachers in Table 15. Engaging Students in Learning and Using Assessment in Instruction were both identified as third most helpful, while Communicating with Students ranked fourth. Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness was ranked fifth or least helpful, as it was also the case for the bilingual respondents.
Figure 4 summarizes the data in Table 15 and 16, which exemplify the respondents’ overall rankings of the most helpful Components in Domain 3.

![Bar chart showing the rankings of different components for bilingual and non-bilingual teachers.]

*Figure 4. Bilingual and non-bilingual teachers’ rankings of what Components in Domain 3 are the most helpful in supporting students.*

The answers to the last survey question regarding the Domains’ components, *(Under Domain 4, which component would you say was the most helpful to you in guiding your professional practice?)* are highlighted in Table 17 and Table 18 below. Again, respondents were asked to rank in order of importance (1 through 5) each subcomponent in the Domain as follows: Reflecting on Teaching and Learning; Maintaining Accurate Records; Communicating with Families; Growing and Developing Professionally and Demonstrating Professionalism.
Table 17

Bilingual Teachers’ Rating of Domain 4 Components (in order of importance 1 Highest - 5 Lowest)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain 4 Components</th>
<th>Rating 1 (Highest)</th>
<th>Rating 2</th>
<th>Rating 3</th>
<th>Rating 4</th>
<th>Rating 5 (Lowest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Reflecting on Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>59.09%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 13</td>
<td>n 1</td>
<td>n 2</td>
<td>n 3</td>
<td>n 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Maintaining Accurate Records</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 1</td>
<td>n 5</td>
<td>n 2</td>
<td>n 3</td>
<td>n 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Communicating with Families</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 3</td>
<td>n 7</td>
<td>n 6</td>
<td>n 4</td>
<td>n 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Growing and Developing Professionally</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 2</td>
<td>n 8</td>
<td>n 4</td>
<td>n 6</td>
<td>n 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Demonstrating Professionalism</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 3</td>
<td>n 1</td>
<td>n 8</td>
<td>n 6</td>
<td>n 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the results highlighted in Table 17, the majority of bilingual teachers (59.09%) indicated that Reflecting on Teaching and Learning was their first choice in terms of usefulness. Growing and Developing Professionally was ranked second by 36.6%. The same percentage of teachers (36.6%) selected Demonstrating Professionalism as their third choice. Growing and Developing Professionally and Demonstrating Professionalism were both ranked as the fourth most helpful components by 27.27%, while 50% ranked Maintaining Accurate Records as the least helpful.
Table 18

Non-Bilingual Teachers’ Rating of Domain 4 Components (in order of importance 1 Highest - 5 Lowest)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain 4 Components</th>
<th>Rating 1 (Highest)</th>
<th>Rating 2</th>
<th>Rating 3</th>
<th>Rating 4</th>
<th>Rating 5 (Lowest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Reflecting on Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>64.71%</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Maintaining Accurate Records</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
<td>20.59%</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
<td>35.29%</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Communicating with Families</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>20.59%</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Growing and Developing Professionally</td>
<td>2.94%</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
<td>26.47%</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Demonstrating Professionalism</td>
<td>2.94%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>44.12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results for the non-bilingual respondents highlighted in Table 18 show that

*Reflecting on Teaching and Learning* was their first choice in terms of usefulness, (as it was also the case for the bilingual respondents). It is to be noted that no respondents identified this category as being the least helpful to them. *Communicating with Families* was ranked second by 29.41% or 9 teachers. *Demonstrating Professionalism* was identified as the third choice by 10 teachers (29.41%). *Maintaining Accurate Records* was ranked fourth by 35.29% of the respondents (12 teachers) while *Demonstrating Professionalism*, was identified as the least helpful by 15 teachers or 44.12% of respondents.
Figure 5 summarizes the data in Table 17 and 18, which exemplify the respondents’ overall rankings of the most helpful Components in Domain 4.

![Bar chart showing bilingual and non-bilingual teachers' rankings of Components in Domain 4](image)

**Figure 5.** Bilingual and non-bilingual teachers’ rankings of what Components in Domain 4 are the most helpful in supporting students

To explore in more depth how the Framework has helped teachers change their practices, survey respondents were asked to list all the areas in which they have made improvements in their teaching because of its use and guidance. Table 19 exemplifies the survey respondents’ answers.
Table 19

*Differences between bilingual and non-bilingual teachers in the areas of improvements in Instruction made because of the guidance provided through the Teaching Framework*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Bilingual Teachers (n= 22) %</th>
<th>Non-Bilingual Teachers (n= 32) %</th>
<th>Combined Total (n= 56) %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of Low- and High-Level Questioning</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards-Based Learning Objectives</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Techniques</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Participation and Explanation of Thinking</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to Student Needs</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directions for Activities</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Adjustment</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Delivery and Clarity</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards-Based Objectives and Task Complexity</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback to Students</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Performance Levels</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring of Student Learning</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Self-Assess. and Monitoring of Progress</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention and Enrichment</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Oral and Written Language</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure, Pacing and Grouping</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Suitable and Engaging Texts</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An analysis of the data in Table 19, reveals that the *Use of Low- and High-Level Questioning, Standards-Based Learning Objectives, Discussion Techniques, Student Participation and Explanation of Thinking, and Response to Student Needs* were the most often cited areas of improvements which teachers in both categories attributed to the guidance provided by the *Teaching Framework*. It is interesting to note that bilingual teachers, however, expressed a marked preference for *Discussion Techniques* (50% of the respondents), as opposed to non-bilingual teachers (only 38% of the respondents). The results also showed that 55% of bilingual teachers found they had improved in the area of *Use of Low- and High-Level Questioning*, as opposed to non-bilingual teachers (41% of respondents).

It must further be noted that a similar percentage of bilingual and non-bilingual respondents identified *Standards-Based Learning Objectives* and *Student Participation and Explanation of Thinking*, as areas of improvements. Equally interesting is that both bilingual and non-bilingual teachers expressed similar choices, in most cases, for the areas where they identified they had made the least improvements because of the Framework (i.e. *Persistence; Structure Pacing and Grouping; Access to Suitable and Engaging Texts*).

When teachers were asked whether they needed more professional development on how the *Teaching Framework* could help them improve their teaching practices, 14 bilingual teachers responded Yes (63.64%), versus 14 non-bilingual teachers (41.18%) who also responded Yes. On the other hand, only 8 bilingual teachers, or 36.36%, indicated they did not need any professional development, as compared to 20 non-bilingual respondents or 58.82%. 

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Based on these data it appears that bilingual teachers, when compared to non-bilingual teachers, feel they need further professional development to help navigate the *Teaching Framework*. This is also corroborated by the data in Table 20, which exemplifies how many hours of professional development respondents have received so far. It is apparent that, although the percentages and the numbers of respondents are fairly similar in terms of hours from 0 to 8 hours of attendance, only a small percentage of bilingual teachers (9.09%) have received more than 10 hours of professional development on the Framework, when compared with non-bilingual respondents (32.35%).

Table 20

*How many hours of professional development have you received on the Teaching Framework?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Bilingual Teachers</th>
<th>Non-Bilingual Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers were also asked whether they have access to professional development in the form of in-school coaching on how to utilize the *Teaching Framework* to improve their instructional practice. Similar percentages of teachers in both categories responded that they did indeed have access to in-school coaching (54.55% for bilingual teachers; 50.00% for non-bilingual teachers).
When asked whether they felt that their school administrator needed more professional development on how to provide them guidance so they could improve their teaching practices, 27.27% or 6 bilingual teachers responded positively. 38.24% or 13 non-bilingual teachers also responded positively to this question, indicating that a larger percentage of non-bilingual respondents thought that their administrators could benefit from professional development focused on how to help their teachers improve instruction using the *Teaching Framework*.

Because the Framework does not specifically address the needs of teachers who have bilingual students in their classrooms, an English Learner Addendum was created to help provide guidance in this particular area. When respondents were asked whether they have ever used the *Addendum* in order to plan their instruction, 45.45% (n 10) of bilingual teachers said they did, as opposed to 17.65% (n 6) non-bilingual teachers. Of these respondents, 45.46% of bilingual teachers thought the *Addendum* was helpful or very helpful, as opposed to only 26.47% of non-bilingual respondents. To ascertain whether the school administrators were using or were aware of this resource, respondents were asked whether the administrators had ever referred to the *Addendum* during the mandatory pre-or-post evaluation conferences. 77.27% (n 17) bilingual teachers responded no. 88.24% (n 30) of non-bilingual teachers also responded no. Finally, teachers were asked to specify how they had learned about the Language Learner Addendum. For the majority of bilingual teachers, the most common means for learning about this resource was the Office of Language and Cultural Education (13.64%) and the school administrator (13.64%). For non-bilingual respondents, the most common means was the school administrator. However, 50.00% of bilingual
teachers and 55.88% of non-bilingual teachers reported they had never heard about the Addendum before. Although the question regarding the English Learner Addendum was not directly related to the research questions, this item was added to the survey in order to determine whether the resources produced by the district to help the teachers navigate the Framework were being accessed by the teachers and also to find out how they were becoming aware of their existence.

Summary of Findings

An analysis of the data on survey items that specifically addressed the research questions revealed that there was not a statistically significant difference, as measured by the t-test, between the bilingual and non-bilingual respondents (Table 2). When data on these survey items was examined discretely, however, it revealed that the bilingual teachers’ responses were generally more favorable toward the Teaching Framework (Tables 3-9). Nevertheless, in reason of the small sample size, it is not possible to formulate any applicable generalizations based only on these data.

Bilingual respondents ranked Domain 1 (Planning and Preparation) as the most helpful in supporting students. Non-bilingual respondents, on the other hand, indicated that the most helpful domain was Domain 3 (Instruction). Both bilingual and non-bilingual respondents ranked Domain 4 (Professional Responsibilities) as being the least helpful (Figure 1).

Under Domain 1, bilingual teachers indicated that the most helpful component in guiding their professional practice was Demonstrating Knowledge of Students. There was no clear preference about the least helpful component (Table 11). Non-bilingual teachers indicated that Demonstrating Knowledge of Students and Selecting
Instructional Outcomes were equally most helpful in supporting their teaching practices. Designing Coherent Instruction was the least helpful component (Table 12).

For Domain 2, bilingual teachers ranked Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport and Establishing a Culture for Learning most helpful. Managing Student Behaviors was the least helpful (Table 13). For the same Domain, non-bilingual teachers identified Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport as the most helpful and Managing Student Behaviors as the least helpful (Table 14).

Under Domain 3, bilingual teachers indicated that Engaging Students in Learning was the most helpful in guiding their professional practice while Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness was the least helpful (Table 15). Non-bilingual teachers indicated that Engaging Students in Learning was the most helpful and Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness the least helpful (Table 16).

For Domain 4 Reflecting on Teaching and Learning was ranked by bilingual teachers as the most helpful. Maintaining Accurate Records was the least helpful (Table 17). Non-bilingual respondents (Table 18), showed that Reflecting on Teaching and Learning was their first choice in terms of usefulness, while the least helpful was Demonstrating Professionalism.

Specific areas where most survey respondents (over 50%) felt they had made improvements because of the Framework included: Use of Low- and High-Level Questioning Standards; Based Learning Objectives; Discussion Techniques; Student Participation and Explanation of Thinking; and Response to Student Needs (Table 19).

The survey also revealed that more bilingual teachers, when compared to non-bilingual teachers, felt they needed further professional development on the Teaching
In fact, results showed that only a small percentage of bilingual teachers (9.09%) received more than 10 hours of professional development on the Framework, when compared with non-bilingual respondents (32.35%).

On the other hand, a larger percentage of non-bilingual respondents (38.24%) thought administrators could benefit from professional development focused on the Framework as opposed to bilingual respondents (27.27%).

Survey questions regarding the English Learner Addendum, a Framework companion guide, revealed that more bilingual teachers were familiar and utilize this resource (45.45%), when compared to non-bilingual teachers (17.65%). Also, a larger percentage (45.46%), of bilingual teachers thought the Addendum was helpful to them, while only 26.47% of non-bilingual respondents did so. According to the data collected, it did not appear, however, that administrators in either category were extensively using this resource as a reference during the mandatory pre-or-post evaluation conferences.
CHAPTER 5
Qualitative Results

In order to gain a better understanding and draw more pertinent and informed conclusions about the statistical trends and insights gained through the survey, in the early spring of 2016, an invitation to participate in a focus group was extended to all bilingual teachers who took the on-line survey (22 teachers). This choice of research typology was based on the premise that comparing the findings obtained through the quantitative portion of the study with those obtained through a qualitative approach, would allow the researcher to triangulate the results and, in doing so, reach a more complete understanding of how bilingual teachers perceived the evaluation system.

Because only one of the survey respondents had expressed interest in participating, the invitation was sent to all 150 bilingual teachers who had been originally targeted for the study. As none of these respondents expressed an interest, selected administrators (10 principals) from schools across the district were contacted via e-mail to gather recommendations about possible candidates. The administrators were selected based on their schools’ geographical location to represent all the different regions in the district, and also based on the size of their bilingual programs (schools with less than 20 bilingual students were not included). Six out of these ten administrators agreed to pass the request along to their teachers. This yielded three additional candidates which, together with the original respondent, made up the composition of the focus group. The low rate of response is possibly attributable to circumstances surrounding an impending teacher strike and an impasse in negotiations between the district and the local teacher union. The disagreement involved, among
other matters, the district’s proposed changes to the current evaluation system. It is likely that because of the researcher’s position as a central office administrator, respondents did not feel comfortable sharing their views about such a delicate and contentious subject within the then current political climate within the district. The extended search, however, did yield a small group of professionals who were willing to meet on a Saturday morning to share their ideas related to the topics included in the survey. The recruitment process for the focus group participants took approximately a month.

The focus group met on Saturday, March 26, 2016 in a suburban library. The location was chosen because it was centrally located, had ample free parking and provided a spacious and private room in a neutral, non-district related environment. The participants stated they had never met prior to the day the focus group took place. The researcher acted as the focus group moderator. Before the start of the session, she asked the participants to sign an audio consent form (Appendix G) in order to receive permission to record the content of the discussions. The session lasted one hour and nineteen minutes from start to end.

**Demographic Data**

Before starting the focus group session, participants were also asked to fill out a form to gather general demographic information (Appendix D), such as grades and subjects taught, years of experience, tenure status and highest level of education. Participants were assigned a number as they arrived, so that they would never be referred to by name during the focus group session. During the transcription of the proceedings, in order to facilitate the data reporting process and to continue preserving
their anonymity, the participants were assigned pseudonyms as follows: Participant #1 was identified as Juanita; Participant #2 as Maria; Participant #3 as Ana; Participant #4 as Maribel.

All focus group participants were employed as full-time teachers serving bilingual students in schools with large bilingual programs (more than 200 students in each of their respective buildings). Three of these four participants stated they had completed the on-line survey. The researcher had no previous personal knowledge of the participants, except for Participant #2 (Maria), who disclosed that she recognized the researcher from having worked in one of the schools where she was assigned ten years prior. Maria reported she had left the country to teach abroad shortly after having worked at the school, and had only recently returned to the district in the fall.

Participant #1, Juanita, reported having over 20 years of teaching experience. She had tenure status and a Doctoral Degree. She was currently teaching grades 2nd – 8th as a bilingual resource teacher in the west side of the district. At the time the study was conducted, Juanita’s school had 1,437 students and 32% of the total student population was enrolled in the bilingual program. Participant #2, Maria, had 7 years of teaching experience in the district. She taught outside the country for ten years and had just recently returned to teach in the district at the beginning of the school year. She had non-tenure status and a Master Degree. She was currently teaching 4th grade in the far north side of the district. At the time the study was conducted, Maria’s school had 804 students and 54% of the total student population was enrolled in the bilingual program. Participant #3, Ana, had 11 years of teaching experience. She had non-tenure status and a Master Degree. She was currently teaching 7th grade in the north-east side of the
district. At the time the study was conducted, Ana’s school had 930 students and 43% of the total student population was enrolled in the bilingual program. Participant #4, Maribel, had 1 year of teaching experience. She had non-tenure status and a Bachelor Degree. She was currently teaching 5th grade in the south side of the district in a Dual Language school. Maribel was the only teacher in the focus group representing the Dual Language Program. Maribel’s school had 1,020 students and 50% of the total student population was enrolled in the bilingual program. There were only twelve Dual Language schools in the district at the time the study was conducted.

**Process of Data Analysis**

The answers and insights provided by the focus group were evaluated through the process of content analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Krippendorff, 2004). Responses were fully transcribed, grouped by research question and then coded to identify patterns and content categories. Through this process, four broad data categories or themes were identified in the participants’ answers:

1. **Usefulness of the Framework**
2. **Changes in teaching practices**
3. **Professional development needs**
4. **Administrator’s role**

The first theme, *Usefulness of the Framework* is directly related to this study’s first research question, “**How do bilingual teachers perceive the new evaluation system as it relates to their practices?**” The second theme, *Changes in teaching practices*, is related to this study’s second research question, “**What changes in teaching practices do bilingual teachers attribute to the new teacher evaluation**
system?” The remaining themes, Professional development needs and the Administrator’s role, though not addressed directly by the research questions, were explored by the on-line survey. It is important to note here that the abovementioned themes emerged not by happenstance, but by explicit design, as the questions that were asked of the focus group’s participants were specifically formulated to both address the study’s research questions and to further explore the data collected by means of the survey. This was done so that parallels and comparisons could be drawn between the focus group and the survey responses to see if the findings could be validated, amplified or disproved. The survey questions were also utilized to find an answer to the third research question, “Are there any differences in the way bilingual teachers and non-bilingual teachers perceive the evaluation system?”

After the entries were grouped in the four category themes as stated above, they were then coded to indicate both the existence and the frequency of specific reoccurring common words or phrases. In order to track member participation, the researcher tallied the number of times each teacher spoke during the session. Results are as follows:

- Ana 29 times
- Maria 23 times
- Juanita 15 times
- Maribel 14 times

Additionally, for the purpose of ascertaining the amount of speaking each member contributed to the discussion, a word-count was conducted for each of the participants’ contributions. The total number of words was as follows:

- Ana 2,793
- Maribel 1,784
• Juanita 1,298
• and Maria 1,296

These calculations are of importance because they helped frame the participants’ comments within the broader context of the discussion. For example, at a first glance, when looking at the transcripts, it appeared that Maribel and Juanita did not contribute to the conversation as much as the other two participants, at least based on the number of times they spoke up. However, what they shared in terms of quantity, as measured by number of words contributed, was actually higher that one would assume if judging exclusively from the times they chose to partake in the discussion. In the same way, the process of tallying the participants’ responses also revealed that Ana was the most active participant. While it could be surmised that Ana dominated the conversation, at least based on the number of times she participated, when her comments were later analyzed and situated in the context of the discussion, it became apparent that Ana’s contributions were often made to confirm or to express agreement of other people’s comments and ideas. Looking at the transcriptions of the proceedings both quantitatively (by tallying the responses) and also qualitatively, (by analyzing the content and the context of the responses), helped the researcher to interpret the findings and to draw more informed conclusions about the nature of the conversation and the dynamics within the focus group.

Though the researcher’s intent was to facilitate the proceedings so that the conversation would have the most natural flow possible, the dialogue that took place during the course of the focus group had more of the tone of a turn-taking interaction. The group dynamics were such that participants resolved to politely wait for each member to finish her statements before interjecting with their ideas and opinions. That is
not to say that the conversation was not lively and that every group member did not have the chance to contribute to the discussion. It is just that the nature of the dialogical exchanges was orderly and linear, mirroring the order the focus group questions had been formulated. This favored organizing the data entries in a similar way, linearly and by category or topic discussed. The researcher tried to interject as little as possible in the conversation and, aside from posing the questions to the focus group; she participated in the proceedings only when the participants asked her to clarify what she had said. The researcher's goal in doing this was to remain on the sideline of the conversation, as opposed to being at the center of it, so that her own outlook and opinions would not influence those of the participants. For the same purpose, and to ensure that the participants' voice and opinions could come through truthfully and unbiased, the individual focus group members' contributions have been related in this chapter exactly as they were uttered. In certain instances, words or sentences in the transcription had to be omitted, when the participants specifically mentioned identifiable characteristics of the district. Substitutive italicized words in a parenthesis were added to signify this. Similarly, clarifying words were inserted (also in a parenthesis), when the participants made mention of specialized terminology particular to the district, which may not have been readily recognizable by an outside reader. For the sake of conciseness, repetitive or extraneous words and phrases were sometime omitted and replaced by an ellipsis (…), if they were found to impede rather than enhance clarity.

In different occasions during the course of the focus group, the participants made reference to the specific types of bilingual education programs in existence in the district. These programs consisted of the Dual Language model, the Transitional
Bilingual Education model (or TBE), and the Transitional Program of Instruction model (or TPI). The Dual Language model is a long-term bilingual program that consistently and strategically uses two languages (English and Spanish in the school district studied) for instruction, learning and communication. Its major goals are to develop full biliteracy and bilingualism, high academic achievement and multicultural flexibility. The Transitional Bilingual Education model, on the other hand, only temporarily supports English learners’ academic development by providing native language instruction as they acquire English for a period ranging from one to eight years. The Transitional Program of Instruction model provides specialized instruction in English as a Second Language to students who are not yet proficient in this language. This program is offered in schools with students from multiple language backgrounds. The two most common forms of English as a Second Language instruction in the district studied, were the traditional and the content-based approaches, delivered either as pull-out (English language learners are pulled out of their classroom for a few periods a week in small groups) or push-in (the ESL teacher provides instruction within the classroom).

It must be noted that during the proceedings the teachers appeared to be very attentive to one another, often supporting and echoing each other’s statements rather than challenging each other’s views (i.e. “I agree with…”; “I also think that…”). The researcher also noted and was surprised to see that at the conclusion of the session, the participants stayed around for an extended period of time to chat with one another and when they said goodbye some hugged, other shook hands, exchanging phone numbers and vowing to stay in contact in the future.
After the focus group concluded, the recorded proceedings were promptly and carefully transcribed by the researcher to ensure that the contents of the discussion and the essence of the experience would be accurately captured and preserved, to later allow for a thorough analysis of the insights gained during the session. The analysis of the content of the focus group proceedings centered on identifying the participants’ opinions and perceptions about the Teaching Framework, the district’s new teacher evaluation system. The analysis of the transcriptions revealed a series of common patterns in the participants’ contributions which were utilized to organize the data in the four category themes described earlier in the chapter:

**Usefulness of the Framework**

In regard to the “Usefulness of the Framework in Providing Guidance on Teaching Practices” theme, every participant mentioned at least once that this tool had been useful in providing guidance concerning teaching practices and expectations. For example, at the very beginning of the focus group, when participants were asked, “Overall, do you think that the Teaching Framework is an effective tool for helping you improve your instructional practice?” Juanita, a veteran teacher, started the conversation relating the following in a foreign accent. As she was speaking, all the participants leaned forward, perhaps because she spoke very softly.

I think it is, up to a certain extent...Personally, in my practice it made me aware how important are the assessments, and to make the bilingual child feel important about their culture....I emphasize these areas more than before, I think these are the changes I see in my practice. We know we have to teach the bilingual students these things, but I did not do it as much before. Now it is more
relevant to me...I have to say that in general, it did change my practice for the better because of the culture aspect.

Juanita’s comments demonstrate that she found the Framework to be beneficial because it strengthened her practice in two ways. First, it made her aware of the importance the assessments played in her instruction. Second, it helped her understand how important it was to enable the students to value their own culture.

Maria, a seven-year veteran teacher, who had just recently returned to the district after a long period of time teaching abroad, did not build on Juanita’s comments, but, rather, shared why the Framework was valuable to her.

I think it is helpful for me because having come back after I have been gone for six years, to have something to look at where I have an idea of what is expected of me and know how I am being evaluated and know that it is not something that the administrators do kind of subjectively, or evaluate based on what they think they should see, but I do not think that it is specific enough, even if there is a Bilingual Addendum, when they come to see you, I do not think they focus enough on the fact that you have a bilingual group....

Unlike Juanita, Maria stated that the Framework enabled her to know what the building administrator expected of her. Further, she expressed some relief that the administrator had to use the Framework to evaluate her in an objective way. As these two teachers demonstrated, both found the Framework helpful but for different reasons.

Because the other two participants had remained quiet and appeared to be reticent in responding, the facilitator then asked explicitly, “Has the Framework helped you change the way you personally teach? Has it molded or changed the way you
instruct your students? At this, Maria provided a brief comment without specific examples: “It has reinforced my beliefs. I feel I am doing what I am supposed to do.” Because the facilitator was trying to be just an observer of the group, she did not probe her answer to gather more details, which left questions about what her beliefs were or what practices she engaged in, which she defined as what she is “supposed to do.” She may have added more, but Ana, a veteran teacher, followed up by stating the following:

I think the Framework has helped me, has helped me be a better teacher…the lesson planning, being organized in terms of dates, what I should follow for the following year, and I have changed my objectives, so as a guide it has been good and again for professional development, it has kept me on task with my Domain 4.

In contrast to Maria’s vague comments, Ana provided explicit details about how the Framework was influencing her practice, including her planning, organization, and objectives.

Maribel, the youngest participant and a first-year teacher, followed up Ana’s comment in a soft voice, “I think because it has best practices embedded, it has made me a better teacher.” Juanita, who had been the first to initiate the conversation about the usefulness of the Framework did not add anything else to the dialog on this subject.

The participants’ quotes seem to indicate that the bilingual teachers in the focus group had a positive outlook regarding the usefulness of the Teaching Framework. However, they also made apparent that the areas of identified improvement were different for each individual. One participant, for example, found that the Framework
made her more aware of the importance of the assessments and also of integrating a cultural element in her instruction. Another related that the Framework helped clarify what was expected of her when she is being evaluated (though she also lamented that the guidance offered was not specific enough when it comes to bilingual students). Another participant related that the Framework reinforced her beliefs about what are considered best teaching practices while yet another related that the Framework was helpful to her in terms of becoming more organized, in particular as it related to her professional responsibilities.

**The Bilingual Addendum**

After discussing the usefulness of the Framework, the group turned its attention to the Bilingual Addendum. This supplement to the Framework, was created by the district to help teachers and administrators identify best teaching practices that effectively support bilingual students. It is notable that, although the researcher had prepared a specific question to probe into the usefulness of the Addendum, this topic was brought up by the participants even before she had the chance to ask the group about it. In fact, the Addendum was quoted repeatedly (in 17 instances) in the context of the focus group. The participants related that although they found the Addendum to be generally useful, there was a lack of communication and explanation related to this resource.

Juanita opened up the conversation by noting both the limitations and strengths of this, “The Bilingual Addendum, even if it does not touch all aspects of the bilingual classroom, at least it gives some parameters about the importance of the students’ culture for kids and that we have to give it the time to teach it.” Maria followed up by
noting that though her administrator was aware of this resource, it was not something that was being used during the evaluative process and it was not integrated in the professional conversations around teaching practices:

I knew about it because of the meeting at the beginning of the year. The principal did say if you are bilingual make sure you have the Bilingual Addendum, because we will be looking at that, but when I was evaluated, and we just had our conference this week, that was never mentioned.

To this later Maria also added:

And there is not enough conversation about it. Because I feel, like in the beginning of the year we were told, Ok, look at the Framework if you are a bilingual teacher look at the Addendum, but there is no conversation about it. What does it look like? What do you want to see? We have the pre-conference, but usually they just say what they want you to do. What lesson they want to see. There is nothing specific about bilingual and bilingual students…

Maribel, the first-year teacher, contributed that she was also aware of the Addendum, but that it was not something that was currently being used by her administrator:

I have also heard of the Addendum, but it is not something that has ever been explained to me. It is not something I can see in the rubric that I am supposed to follow….it has never been addressed in any pre-conference or post-conference.

To delve more deeply into this topic the researcher asked the participants to raise their hands in response to this question, “How many of you had the Addendum
mentioned during their evaluation? Did you bring it out to the administrator or vice versa?" To this only Juanita raised her hand and responded:

The first year he did not seem to know about it. So, I pointed it out to him. And then we went point by point…And then, (attributing to the administrator) “Oh, you are right! I am so sorry.” So, the following year it was better. He is better. With the bilingual classroom teachers, they talk. Even though they complain about the same thing, Oh, they want the kids independent and I do not get Distinguished. They complain about that, but I do not know. I think it is the philosophy of the administrators. Because you are bilingual your kids are not going to perform. It is just sad, very sad, in (names district) that ideology, point of view. I think that plays a role. If the administrator does not see bilingualism as a plus, then he is always going to see problems with the teachers.

Juanita’s comments show that she had to assume an active role in ensuring her administrator was aware of the Addendum, so that he could better understand the instruction taking place in her classroom. Juanita made a point to review its contents in detail with him (point by point), which according to her resulted in the administrator demonstrating a better understating of bilingual teaching practices the next year (He is better). However, Juanita lamented that, despite this, teachers in her building still complained they were being evaluated too harshly and they were unable to receive the highest (or Distinguished) rating. Juanita attributed this fact to an underlying belief on the part of the administrators and the district that cultivating bilingualism is not an asset to the students, which she believes will always pose a problem when assessing a bilingual teacher’s performance.
Juanita added,

I also think that administration is key in making (the Framework) successful for bilingual teachers, in a bilingual setting. So, I feel lucky that my administrator bases his evaluation in there because I made sure I do tell him. The first year it was not like that. He was not fully aware of the Addendum. So, I did talk to him and unfortunately, I had to fight for a better score on my evaluation because he was not aware. I mean, he did change the score on my evaluation and he did apologize to me. The thing is, they do need to be really educated on this. Bilingual students are never going to behave like monolingual students.

In the above comments, Juanita expands on her view that a knowledgeable administrator is essential or “key” in making the evaluative process fair and successful for bilingual teachers. Though she feels fortunate that her principal uses the Addendum as a base for his evaluation, she also acknowledges that she had “to fight” or advocate for a fair assessment of her instructional practices. By using the Addendum as a basis for her conversation with the administrator, Juanita was able to articulate and support her pedagogy, which reportedly resulted in the evaluator changing his original rating of her performance and even offering an apology for his previous assessment. Juanita, is therefore of the opinion that in order to be fair, evaluators really need to be educated on best practices of teaching bilingual students, as the needs of this specific population are far different than those of monolingual students.

To the following topic, Ana contributed finally:
Also, another thing for this, the *Bilingual Addendum*, you know it is unrealistic to have that added when, you know, you do not have curriculum attached to that. There are no actual materials that you can use. There is nothing that is certified by *(the district)* that you can use.

Ana’s concern, as stated above, addresses the need for the district to have an actual curriculum for the bilingual program that would validate and support what stated in the *Addendum*. In Ana’s view, it is unrealistic to only rely on this resource for guidance on instructing bilingual students, without having any accompanying materials that would reinforce and exemplify best teaching practices.

From the teachers’ comments regarding the Bilingual Addendum, it appears that the members of the focus group were aware of this resource. In general terms, they seemed to view the Addendum as a valuable resource for their practice even though, in one of the participant’s words, “…it does not touch all aspects of the bilingual classroom…” However, it did not appear that administrators are making reference to this resource during the evaluation cycle and in particular when it would be most suitable to do so, in the pre-conference phase, when teaching expectations are defined and student outcomes are discussed. In fact, only one participant (Juanita) reported that the *Addendum* was used during her evaluation cycle, and this was done only after she explicitly brought this resource to the administrator’s attention and reviewed its contents with him.

The need to have a more open and explicit conversation with administration during the evaluation process about bilingual education practices and in particular about the needs of bilingual students, is clearly apparent in the teachers’ comments. The
teachers expressed concern over a lack of open conversation and consensus on what constitutes good teaching practices in a bilingual setting, as well as the lack of a coherent curriculum attached to the Addendum. This, in their eyes, may signal that there is a misalignment between their goals and intentions and those of their administrators.

Changes in Teaching Practices

Another theme that emerged in the analysis of the answers provided by the focus group participants, was the one related to Changes in Teaching Practices. This area is directly related to this study’s intent of finding out whether the Teaching Framework is having an impact on bilingual teachers’ instructional practices and it was therefore expressly addressed by the facilitator by asking the following question, “Has the Teaching Framework helped you change the way you teach? And, if so, what aspects of the Framework are particularly helpful to you?”

Juanita, who out of the focus group participants, was usually the first to start the conversation, once again shared,

I think it the Framework has made me better. In the sense of planning…I even feel better about myself and what I am teaching to the students, how I am teaching the students…To me it has helped me, like I said before to become aware, Ok, wait a minute this is what is expected of me and best practices. I am not sure that I will get there with my students, but Planning really helped me.

In the comments above Juanita acknowledges that the Framework has helped her improve the way she plans her instruction and she also relates that she has gained more confidence in the way she teaches. While she could not say for certain these
changes have had an impact on her students, she does state with assurance that the area of Planning and Preparation highlighted in the Framework, helped her determine what is expected from her in terms of best teaching practices.

Maribel responded to the same question by also relating that the *Planning and Preparation* section of the Framework was the most relevant in terms of improving her teaching practices,

I think it is very specific in the Framework how the Planning can be very superficial and becomes so intricate in the higher levels. I think it provides very specific examples. For example, in a Distinguished *(the highest rating)*, Planning is basically interdisciplinary, there is no other way, that is just best practices and that if it is cohesive, if it follows an order that makes sense for the students… in that way it has helped me make sure that even though I am expected to follow a basal or a curriculum, as a teacher who wants to provide the best services for her students, I have to somehow make it interdisciplinary. And to make sure that I am thinking about all the subjects I am teaching as a self-contained teacher and how it progresses in a way that makes sense and builds some prior knowledge and for my students to really see that and to make connections. I think it has been really helpful in that way.

In Maribel's opinion, the Planning and Preparation portion of the Framework is valuable because provides specific examples that show how to effectively scaffold instruction in a logical and cohesive manner for the students, so that the teacher can lead them from the lowest level of thinking to the highest, by highlighting the different
connections between disciplines in a way that make sense for them and also builds on their prior knowledge.

Maria echoed this view toward the Planning Domain by relating the following,

I think that one of the reasons it (Planning) may be the most helpful, is because it is more clear, it is more precise. There are not many places you can veer out of it as the other Domains like instruction because once you go into the classroom you are going to see a lot of different things. While “Planning and Preparation” is more precise, like if you are going to be planning and preparing it is going to look this way so I think that is more clear-cut than the other domains.

Similar to what Maribel’s had stated previously, Maria also related that she found Planning and Preparation to be the most helpful of the Framework’s Domains because in her opinion it is the most precise and the clearest. In fact, according to Maribel, unlike the Instruction Domain, where there can be room left for interpretation and practices can look different once they are applied in the classroom, the Planning and Preparation section offers clear parameters on the steps preceding the actual teaching, from which it is difficult to veer away from.

Because the conversation seemed to have come to a stall, the facilitator posed the following question to try to further delve into the subject of concrete changes in teaching practices related to the use of the Framework, “Did the Framework alter the way you address instruction? And if so, the question is what aspect of the Framework are particularly helpful to you?”

Ana contributed,
I felt that when it (*the Framework*) came out, that … I would rethink the questions, are these at a high level enough? I would write down the questions that were at least at little higher, but at their levels. I almost had to dissect the questions for my students, and I have been teaching 7th grade for a while now like four years and I would think, OK they understand… they should be at the academic level that they would understand the questions. But it is like I had to show them how to think, I had to train them on how to think outside the box and I had to train them on how to respond as well, and I think every year it is the same thing. So, it is either not happening in the lower grades, or you know, it is so high up there the level…or like you said earlier they do not know English, they do not know Spanish and they have the issues, so then you have to train them on how to think, how to respond…

Ana’s contribution to the discussion highlights the practical ways in which the Framework has helped her to rethink her instruction. Ana recounted that she found herself examining in more depth (“I almost had to dissect”) the questions she was posing during her lessons, to determine whether these were at a higher-order level enough to raise her students thinking, but also that they were not above their academic level. Ana recounted that the fact she has been teaching the same grade (7th grade) for four years, led her to believe that she understood what her students could understand. The Framework, however, helped her see that she needed to do more to help them think deeply and differently (“outside the box”) about the different topics and perspectives presented to them. According to Ana, this required explicitly showing them how to approach and respond to an issue. Ana also pointed out that this type of
instruction, which would help students think more critically and effectively, needs to take place in the lower grades, though it is difficult to teach students who are trying to learn both English and Spanish how to think and respond in a language they are still mastering.

Maribel added to Ana’s comments by commenting,

Well, you asked what part of the Framework has been particularly helpful. Questioning in Domain 3…Specifically, using questioning in instruction has definitely impacted the way I formulate my questions. I am more intentional about writing questions ahead of time and scaffolding them. I think ideally you are asking higher levels questions for all the students, but I think what is not addressed is then how you differentiate, how do you scaffold at their level of proficiency. You can have a really well-developed, high level question, but if they are grasping it at different levels…Language Proficiency and Language Objectives are the buzz words right now, but if you do not know exactly what it should look like, or how they should be implemented in practical ways, within your lesson…

Much like Ana, Maribel also pointed out that the Framework has helped refine her awareness of the importance of Questioning. She points out that she too is now more intentional and more deliberate about the way she formulates her questions and about how she helps her students think at a deeper level. Maribel, however, also mentions that the area of Questioning in Domain 3 does not provide specific guidance on how to address the linguistic needs of bilingual students. She mentions that it is not enough to have well-developed questions for them, because in a bilingual classroom
students may have different levels of language proficiency, or understanding of the language. Bilingual teachers then need to also plan and anticipate how they are going to differentiate instruction to address the language objectives and the different language proficiency levels of their individual students. Maribel laments there is no guidance in the Framework on practical ways a bilingual teacher can do this during the course of a lesson.

In the responses highlighted above, all four teachers explicitly made mention that the Framework had helped them improve their instructional practices. The area of Planning and Preparation seemed to be particularly relevant for the majority of the focus group participants. This particular Domain was found to be useful because of the clear guidance and precise examples it provides when it comes to organizing the content for what students are expected to learn and when designing instruction for improved learning outcomes. Teachers also reported that the Framework is helping them reframe their instruction in the area of providing students with higher-order level questions that purposely elevate their thinking. More guidance seems to be needed, however, in the area of designing differentiated questions to address the varied and distinct levels of language proficiency of bilingual students. In general terms, however, from the contributions shared by the focus group participants, teachers appear to have benefitted from the Framework’s guidance, as both a tool for reflecting on their teaching practices and for improving the way they deliver instruction.
Areas of Perceived Frustration

Lack of specific reference to bilingual education in the Framework. Though participants expressed overall positive views regarding the Framework and its usefulness in providing guidance, particularly in the area of Planning and Questioning, they consistently expressed concerns about the general and all-purpose nature of the Framework when it comes to addressing bilingual education and the needs of bilingual students in particular. To this point, Ana contributed,

When I received it (the Framework), it did not have anything to accommodate the bilingual student. So, I went to the Framework trainings… and bilingual was left at the end as it was the diverse learner…They said, if you are a bilingual teacher or sped (special education), you have to add. You are going to get a new Framework…it is going to come out … the Framework…and there is going to be exceptions and I do not think it should be like that. I do not think there should be exceptions. They should know right off the bat.

Ana’s comments above were expressed with a mixture of hesitancy and apparent frustration. For the first time during the focus group’s exchanges, the seemingly confident and outspoken Ana appeared to be agitated when relating the absence of specific references to bilingual students in the Framework as well as her experience with the district-led Framework trainings. While Ana relayed that in the trainings there was an acknowledgment of bilingual students and of students with diverse needs, she also noted that these were “left at the end”, as a mere footnote or an afterthought. According to Ana, the trainers recognized that the needs of bilingual and special education students were not specifically addressed in the Framework, and that teachers
would “have to add” to it on their own and that were “going to be exceptions” to be made for the students, even hinting that a separate Framework would have to be created. Ana appeared visibly concerned and frustrated by this, lamenting that the district had not already incorporated considerations about bilingual and special education students when creating the Framework.

Maria followed up Ana’s statements by expressing similar concerns,

After I have been observed, I have been asked to self-assess based on the general rubric, but there is nothing in there that says something about having bilingual students and so when I am planning and instructing I am thinking about my bilingual kids, I am thinking, “OK, I have to find a way to get them talking, to get them more comfortable, focus more on vocabulary, do a lot of repetition”, but when I am being evaluated I do not feel that is being considered. In my school in particular, they are focusing on English, English, English and they are even putting pressure on the lower grades where there should be just English. Then I think, when we get audited I am wondering what are they supposed to be seeing?

Maria’s concerns about the Framework echoed those expressed by Ana as regards to a lack of specific guidance for bilingual teachers in the area of planning and instruction. Maria additionally expressed concern over the fact that during the evaluative process, the administrator had asked her to conduct her self-assessment using the standard Framework rubric, which is very generic and not reflective of the way she approaches instruction with her bilingual students. Additionally, Maria expressed the alarming concern that in her particular school there is also an urgency to quickly switch
bilingual students from instruction in the native language over onto English instruction only, even in the lower grades. This is contrary to the district and state’s mandate that all students in the bilingual program must receive a minimum of three years of instruction in the native language (and up to six years of native language support), if they cannot demonstrate proficiency in English on the state-mandated test. Bilingual auditors are routinely dispatched to schools from the central office to monitor that this type of instruction is being carried out in classrooms. This lack of adherence to state and district’s mandates, prompted Maria to express perplexity and confusion over what she is to do in terms of language instruction as a bilingual teacher.

**Promoting Best Practices for Teaching Bilingual Students**

While in their comments the teachers acknowledged that overall the Framework had helped them improve certain aspects of their teaching, they also related that there was little guidance in the Framework in terms of addressing the pedagogy specific to bilingual students. Maribel, for instance, cited as an example the fact that according to the Framework, a teacher can only receive the highest rating if her students demonstrate ownership of their learning, self-regulating and acting independently during the observation. Maribel pointed out that bilingual students as language learners, are very dependent of the teacher as a language model and most knowledgeable other, and that a bilingual teacher must be at the center of the classroom environment modeling and organizing activities for optimal learning. Nowhere in the Framework, however, there is a mention of the special considerations that must be applied when observing a bilingual setting, and this according to Maribel is contradictory in nature.

Maribel also added,
The Framework does not address at all best practices for bi-literacy, for true bilingualism. If it was not for my own research, and for the professional development experiences that the administrator encourages us Dual Language teachers to go to, outside of (city’s name) even, I would not have any idea of how to best service my students to value both languages equally and so it does not address it at all.

Maribel points out that there is a deficiency in the Framework, when it comes to addressing the pedagogy relating to educating bilingual students. As a Dual Language educator, Maribel laments in particular the lack of mention in the Framework about the value of attaining biliteracy, that is, of helping students develop the native language (Spanish), while also acquiring proficiency in their target language (English). This inconsistency in the Framework leads Maribel to decry that if it were not for her own research, and for the professional development her administrator encourages to participate in (unrelated to the Framework), she “…would not have any idea of how to best service (her) students.”

Later in the conversation, Juanita also expressed similar views in regard to the Framework’s capacity to support bilingual teachers,

It (the Framework) does address the fact that we should be differentiating. But sometime the spectrum is so big that there is no time to fully address the different levels in the curriculum. I only work with newcomers, from 2nd grade through 8th grade, and it is a joy. I love to work with them, but I cannot…because of the demands of assessments… My planning needs to be very limited, because sometimes they cancel my classes, because they need me for something else.
For example, For ACCESS (standardized test administered to bilingual students in January-February to measure growth in English), now that it is finished I am better than before but still it is superficial. It does not go in depth. It does not give us, or it does not give the administrators…OK, you need to be more patient with this teacher, right? You need to see all of this, because they are working with all these kinds of levels, with all these different cultures and I feel that sometimes we are punished, because we do not bring the kids at their level soon enough. You know, so it is bittersweet to me, the Framework.

Though Juanita recognized that the Framework addresses the fact that teachers should be differentiating instruction to meet the needs of their students, she also pointed out that the spectrum of linguistic and academic diversity within the bilingual classroom is so large that it is difficult for a teacher to address the curriculum in depth. Juanita expressed that the current Framework does not give the administrators a clear idea of what the bilingual teacher’s demands are, so that they can be taken into consideration during the evaluative process. Because the nature of the demands is different than for a general education teacher, and because the Framework does not address these factors, Juanita believes that administrators should apply different parameters and exercise more patience when evaluating a bilingual teacher. Juanita refers to the Framework as being “bittersweet”, on one hand, highlighting the necessity of differentiating instruction for the students, while on the other not giving enough specifics about what this entails for bilingual teachers who, in Juanita’s words “…are working with all these kinds of levels, with all these different cultures…” Juanita expressed that this lack of clear mention of the pedagogy that must be applied in a bilingual setting, may be
detrimental rather than helpful to the bilingual teachers. She conveyed that the lack of specific guidance for teaching language learners can contribute to establishing false expectancies in regard to the students’ learning outcomes and goals, which she wistfully lamented by saying, “…I feel that sometimes we are punished, because we do not bring the kids at their level soon enough.”

In the sections above, the four focus group participants shared similar concerns about the absence of specific references to bilingual education and best teaching practices for addressing the needs of bilingual students in the Framework. This lack of mention is viewed as problematic by the teachers, as they are unable to draw specific guidance from this resource when it comes to instruction, yet this is the very instrument that is being used to evaluate their professional performance. Teachers expressed the concern that by not addressing with specificity the goals and requirements specific to educating the bilingual students, the Framework may be engendering confusion and undermining the value and the aim of their work of educating students to be become fully bi-literate in both English and Spanish.

**The Administrator’s Role: A Critical Factor**

Another theme that surfaced in the focus group’s conversation around the Framework, was the importance of the role of the administrators in the evaluation cycle. Just as it was the case for the *Addendum*, this was not a topic directly addressed by the researcher, but it was something that was spontaneously brought up by two of the participants (Ana and Maribel) during the proceedings. In particular, these two teachers stressed the necessity of educating the administrators about bilingual pedagogy and the
specific needs of bilingual students, to ensure they possess the tools that would make it possible for them to conduct fair and useful evaluations.

Ana brought up this topic first, by contributing the following,

The administrators are not educated on bilingual and bilingual practices, so it is always the teacher’s responsibility to educate them but I do not feel that it should be like this because they have that information, they have the Framework...You are a bilingual teacher, a bilingual educator, there are going to be newcomers (students newly arrived to the country) and my administrator, if I had not said I have newcomers, she would not have known. Last year I had five. This, year I have three. If I do not verbalize and I do not do something special for them...I do not have any place where I can look to do something different for them. I have to do my own curriculum.

In the quote above, Ana expresses her opinion that administrators do not have enough knowledge about bilingual education and bilingual practices. She also expresses frustration over the fact that in the absence of clear guidance or curricular resources from the district, the responsibility of educating the administrators in this area falls onto the teachers. Ana laments this fact, and believes that the information the administrators need, should come directly from the Framework, so that all parties can have the same parameters and operate on the same common ground.

Ana also related, however, that during the first four years she was at her school, she had an administrator who was very knowledgeable about bilingual education (she had worked as a bilingual compliance facilitator for the district before), and therefore she would refer very often to the Framework while giving feedback on instruction,
At my school, for the four years I am at the school, we had one administrator that was focused on that (the Framework), so she would bring it up, all the time, all the time…but it is not the same everywhere, and again if she, if a new boss has a different, you know, value, or a different vision then she might not do the same because of that.

Ana also added later,

Still, I am telling you from the training there is no way for the administrators to understand it, unless they have the training, unless they see and they have the experience with those students. They say, “Oh yeah, I worked with bilinguals”, but unless you taught them, there is no way for you to know only by a book, unless you have been teaching them. Dual Language is very different. Bilingual, having newcomers is very different, and then they (the administrators) do not know unless they are in the classroom, learning. I have a student. He is a newcomer and he was asking me about the weather and about the snow. “Teacher is it going to snow anymore?” in Spanish, “Maestra, va a nevar?”

Tenendo miedo (Being afraid). My thing is, you do not get those experiences, unless you are there and you see those kids, asking me about Donald Trump. “Me voy a tener que regresar para Mexico, maestra?” (Will I need to go back to Mexico, teacher?). I know…Yeah, it is something that you only as a teacher and a bilingual teacher can understand. No one knows as an administrator. I mean, I have been through the classes for the Framework and I thought that would give me insight, but that is just what is on paper. It is not experience.
In the comment above, Ana expresses her belief that in order to develop a thorough understanding of bilingual education, it is not enough to receive mere training on it. What administrators need, according to Ana, is real-life experience teaching bilingual students in an actual classroom setting. Only in this way can they gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and the variety of programming options available. In Ana’s opinion, only by working closely in a classroom setting with this particular student population, would it be possible for them to understand their reality and their specific needs, both academically and socio-emotionally. No amount of training or studying about bilingual education can, in Ana’s opinion be as beneficial and as useful for the administrators as real life-experience in the teaching trenches.

While Ana was speaking, the other teachers remained silent, but smiled and nodded deliberately as Ana was talking. After a short while, Maribel followed up Ana’s comments by stating that having an administrator with a background in bilingual education, was indeed beneficial. Maribel related that although her principal does not refer to the Addendum during the evaluation process, she finds his feedback useful, as he is a former bilingual teacher who values bi-literacy.

I am a first-year teacher and I have the privilege to be teaching in a Dual Language School. There are not many in the city, so I think the vision of the school helps “frame” (gesturing with the index and middle fingers on each hand to indicate quotation marks) in a way the Framework. The principal is bilingual and he values bi-literacy. I think it is only helpful because he is the one observing me, so his feedback has specifically
addressed the needs of bilingual students. I think I personally would be terrified if someone else who did not have experience working with bilingual students would be observing me.

As a bilingual educator, Maribel considers herself to be lucky because as a new teacher, she can avail herself of the help and support of a principal who understands bilingual education, and she teaches in a program where bi-literacy is encouraged. She is grateful for her situation, because she understands that this is not necessarily the norm for her colleagues teaching in other schools in the district, where she candidly admits she would be afraid to be evaluated by an administrator who does not have experience working with bilingual students.

She added,

Again, my three administrators, no… two of them are bilingual, and have been bilingual teachers and I think that feedback that has been useful for me, it is only because they add to the Framework the bilingual piece. So, I think they have an understanding that, just like we are expected to think interdisciplinary, all these components play a role.

Ana expressed echoed Maribel’s response by stating, “My thing is that when the principal is bilingual, like my principal was (she is not there right now anymore). But, she knew the process and all my evaluators knew the process.”

Both Ana and Maribel related that they valued having administrators who had prior experience in the field of bilingual education. They reported appreciating the quality of their feedback, as it was informed by their knowledge and background in the field, which they found to be beneficial. In Maribel’s case, she felt that her
administrators valued biliteracy and were able to “specifically address the need of bilingual students”, because of their experience with bilingual education and also because “they have an understanding that …we are expected to think interdisciplinary.” For Ana, having an administrator who is bilingual meant that “she knew the process” and could therefore support and advise her in her efforts. Ana also stressed that experience in the field of bilingual education is not something that administrators can acquire just by studying it, “that is just what is on paper. It is not experience”, but one must really get to know the students by engaging with them in the classroom setting. Otherwise, according to Ana, administrators would not be able to truly understand the teachers’ reality and how they must tend to the particular socio-emotional needs of immigrant students, as they are trying to navigate their new reality (exemplified by the students’ inquiries about the inclement weather and their fear of being deported by Donald Trump). These are aspects that as stated by Ana are, “…something that you only as a teacher and a bilingual teacher can understand.”

Ana also mentioned the need for teachers for advocating and defending their own practices when administrators are not familiar with bilingual education. She expressed that this did not seem fair to her, especially in view of the fact that there is a formal document which should clearly define expectations. It is apparent, from both Maribel’s and Ana’s comments that they both see the benefit of having an administrator who understands bilingual education and can provide them with informed feedback. This, according to the teachers, is preferable to having someone who does not have the experience needed to advise them or to evaluate them fairly, as illustrated by
Maribel’s quote, “I personally…would be terrified if someone else who did not have experience working with bilingual students would be observing me.”

**Professional Development Needs**

Because both Maribel and Ana had expressed their belief that knowledge of bilingual education would be highly beneficial for administrators to have when they observe and evaluate bilingual teachers, the facilitator followed up by asking the focus group in what areas they felt their administrators needed further professional development in regards to the Framework. Maria started the conversation by stating that her preference would be to provide the administrators with guidance on instruction and how this would look different depending on the setting and the needs of the specific student population. She stated “I would request professional development for the principals as well in instruction, primarily…I mean for bilingual students, but also on what does it look for special education students…What does it look for every type of classroom setting.”

Ana followed up by adding that the administrators would also need to know about the different types of bilingual programs and what they entail,

We would request bilingual training for specific bilingual classrooms. Again, we have the Dual Language, that would look different, and a newcomer class, then TBE (Transitional Bilingual Education model), then TPI (Transitional Program of Instruction), then my classroom, which is supposed to be 7th grade bilingual Language Arts but, again, I have all levels of bilingual, because when I tested with the ACCESS, they were all at different levels, plus the newcomers.
In Ana’s opinion, the administrators should receive training of the different bilingual programming options, as they vary in design and purpose. In a Dual Language Program, students would receive instruction in both English and Spanish, as this program goal is to develop high level of proficiency in both languages. In a bilingual Transitional Bilingual Program (TBE) on the other hand, students would receive the majority of the instruction in their native language for the first three years or until they can demonstrate adequate proficiency in English, as measured by the state mandated assessment, the ACCESS test, mentioned by Ana. Then the study of the native language is suspended. In a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI), the teaching is conducted exclusively in English, with only forty-five-minute period of daily English as a Second Language instruction. This program is the least useful in terms of developing literacy in both languages, but it is implemented in those schools that do not have enough students of one particular language group to create a separate classroom and hire a teacher of that language for them. Ana believes that learning about these different programs, would help the administrators better understand how to evaluate the bilingual teachers, and also that it would help them get a better idea of the classroom realities they have to contend with.

Maribel followed up Ana’s comments by adding that in addition to becoming familiar with the different types of bilingual programs available, administrators should also take into consideration other important elements that are involved in bilingual education, when evaluating a teacher. She stated,

I think administrators should also be expected to think about evaluation in a more comprehensive way so for example, taking into account, yes there is a
Framework, but also the WIDA Standards\(^1\), and like you said the language objectives, the language acquisition, all the different models you are working with, and the different classrooms that they might present.

Maribel points out that there are multiple aspects that an administrator must be aware of in order to conduct a fair and comprehensive evaluation of a bilingual teacher’s performance. The Framework is certainly central to this process, but in addition to operating within the specifications of a particular bilingual program, when designing instruction, bilingual teachers also have to take into consideration the State-mandated Standards for English Language Learners, and the different levels of language proficiency that may have in their classrooms. This, according to Maribel, is important knowledge for an administrator to have, in order to fully grasp the complexities of educating bilingual students.

As the discussion had fallen silent, and no one seemed to have anything else to add, the facilitator asked the participant, what their greatest challenge was in utilizing the Framework. Immediately, two of the teachers readily answer the question. Juanita was the first to respond, “What my administration’s expectations are for my instruction.” Maria, readily added, “How the Framework is for every student. That is mine.”

Ana then followed up,

And how does the Framework fit every teacher and every grade level and every bilingual classroom, because every classroom is different and every curriculum focus is different. For example, before my principal left, we had the focus of project-based learning, so we had to think interdisciplinary all the time. And I am

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\(^1\) The **WIDA Standards** (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessments) are State-mandated Standards for English Language Learners.
just teaching Language Arts, so does the Framework work for that? Yes, but in other schools if you are teaching by a basal is different.

Juanita’s, Maria’s and Ana’s comments build upon each other and are similar in nature, as they all lament the inadequacies of the Framework in providing administrators with guidance regarding instruction as it applies to the specific bilingual settings and programs. Ana in particular explains that because bilingual classrooms are different and the varying needs are different at each grade level, it is difficult to have a common understanding and expectations throughout the district. The absence of a common curriculum, according to Ana, further complicates matters. In some schools, it may be easier to implement the use of the Framework across disciplines. In others, and Ana gives the example of schools where teachers are required by the administrators to use a specific textbook (basal), it may harder for the teacher to have an interdisciplinary approach, especially when there is a change in administration and the next principal may have a different instructional focus than the prior administration.

Adding to Ana’s point about the Framework’s shortcomings in providing guidance in the realm of bilingual instructional practices, particularly as it regards to her own program, Maribel continued,

I agree the Instructional Domain is definitely the most challenging and just personally in a Dual Language setting, it does not explain at all what instruction should look like at all by giving us a model so in my case I am 50/50, (students are instructed 50% of the time in English and 50% in Spanish), so the instructional practices are very specific when you are looking at the research,
when you are looking at the different curricula that is out there, but that is not something that is specified in the Framework.

Maribel built on Ana’s comments by agreeing the Framework lacks specificity in terms of guidance when instructing students in a bilingual setting. Maribel decries that, in her particular situation as a Dual Language teacher, the Framework does not make any mention and provides no examples of what instruction should look like in a setting where English is being taught as a second language 50% of the time, while the teachers also trying to maintain the students’ native language the other 50% of the time. This according to Maribel requires the use of a different research-based methodology and specific curricula. These aspects, however, are not something addressed by the Framework.

From the insights shared in the focus groups in regard to any specific professional development needs, there seems to be an agreement among the teachers that principals would benefit from receiving guidance on how the Framework applies to the different types of instructional settings in the district. The focus group participants suggested that this could be accomplished by offering administrators differentiated professional development on bilingual education, special education and every other type of specialized classroom environment. According to the participants, administrators would especially benefit from learning about the different types of state-mandated bilingual education models and also the specific State Standards for English Language Learners. All members of the focus group reported viewing the Framework as being too general in nature and not reflective of the teaching expectations and instructional outcomes for every teacher and every type of bilingual setting. Because of its lack of
specificity, the Instructional Domain of the Framework, which defines teaching expectations, is viewed as being “definitely the most challenging” aspect of the Framework, as one the participants poignantly expressed.

**The English-Only Challenge**

Although no specific question addressed the issue directly, teachers also reported that they felt pressured by their administrators to teach in English as opposed to teaching in Spanish. This practice is contrary to both research-based teaching practices for bilingual education, (Freeman & Freeman, 2007; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006) as well to state law, which mandates that all students enrolled in a bilingual program must receive content area instruction in their native language, until they can demonstrate a functional knowledge of the English language on a state mandated assessment\(^2\). Every focus group participant mentioned, at some point, her discomfort with being forced to teach in English and that this added to the challenges they encountered with using the Framework. Some members of the focus group also lamented that the absence of guidance regarding best practices of educating bilingual students in the document, is creating undue confusion and is potentially damaging to the quality of education bilingual students are receiving. These quotes were identified during the analysis of the focus group transcriptions and were extracted and later aggregated as represented below, to identify any common patterns in the participants’ contributions and opinions.

Maria was the first to start commenting on this point by stating, “What I am hearing from the administrators is, teaching in English, teaching in English…the primary teachers, especially are feeling the pressure of teaching in English.” Additionally, Maria

\(^2\) Article 14 C of the Illinois School Code
shared that there is a feeling of uncertainty and confusion in her school when it comes to the kind of bilingual program they have at her school.

And so, which one is it? So, we do not have a set structure a bilingual program where we can say this is our philosophy about bilingual education, this is what we follow in our school, so we know that from kindergarten to 5th grade this is what you will see in a bilingual classroom in each grade.

In the above comment, Maria expresses frustration over not being provided a model or a precise structure for what a bilingual program should look like. The absence of a clearly articulated philosophy anywhere in the Framework makes it very difficult in her opinion to know the type of instruction that should be provided to bilingual students throughout the grade levels in a given school.

To this topic, Juanita contributed the following statements,

I teach newcomers from 2nd grade up, especially the middle grades and most of the time is hard for me to get anything higher than Proficient because the kids do not speak, even if I am talking to them in their language because of cultural differences…It does not matter how much we try…Sometimes the administrators do not see these things.

Reiterating what Maria had said in regard to the difficulties created by the lack of guidance in the realm of bilingual education, Juanita uses her particular teaching situation as an example. As she teaches students who have recently arrived to this country, she finds herself being penalized during her evaluation for being unable to make them converse in English and sometimes even in their native language, during her lessons. Juanita is acknowledging that bilingual students often undergo a “silent
period”, or a stage when they do not attempt to speak at first as they are learning a new language. This preproduction stage has been very well-documented in the research in the field (Tomioka, 1989). However, according to Juanita, it is difficult to make administrators understand this, which is engendering feelings of frustration and futility which she meaningfully expresses in the quote “It does not matter how much we try…”

Even Maribel, who teaches in a Dual Language school (where by design both languages are to be taught in an equal balance), contributed,

I think the issue is that they (the administrators) are being pressured from the higher powers above, for example: data driven, data driven, but at the same time in practical, everyday life we do not have enough assessments to tell for example what the students’ academic proficiency is in Spanish, so all that data that you are looking at is all English.

Maribel makes reference to the fact that administrators may feel tacit pressure from the district to teach bilingual students in English, (even before they are ready for it), because all standardized assessments are only in English. As currently there is no way of measuring student achievement in Spanish, the administrators may feel compelled to give preference to English instruction so they can also account for the bilingual student population’s academic growth.

Ana, perhaps the most passionately vocal among the teachers, retorted this, “At the end of the day they are assessing them by using the NWEA scores (standardized assessment test in English for measuring academic growth in core subjects). So, if they are scoring them like that, then the teacher is going to feel pressured to go back to English, because all the assessments are in English.”
Ana, makes the point that the administrators may not be the only ones feeling the pressure to show the district the bilingual students’ academic growth. Teachers, according to Ana, are also feeling pressure to instruct students in English because there is no other way they can demonstrate how effectively their teaching is if their students are being tested in a language different than what they are using in their classroom.

Finally, Maribel added the following comment,

“If you are going to be truly data driven, it does not matter if the principals have this passion for bilingual students, I don’t think it matters much if they were bilingual teachers, I think at the end of the day everyone is pressured by someone else and that is really what is driving everything, so if they are only expected to see and to go by the data and the data is only showing English, it is completely getting bilingual out of the picture.”

Maribel expressed her concern that even if administrators believe in the value of bilingual education, there is not much they can do about it, because their vision is not supported by the district’s assessment policy, which currently requires that tests be administered in a language different than the language of instruction. Maribel believes that as long as the assessments are administered in English, the pressure to deliver instruction in this language will be there, and bilingual education and instruction are not going to be deemed as relevant or worth implementing.

From the comments above, it again appears that the teachers in the focus group are feeling that the Framework is not aiding them in their efforts to support best practices of teaching bilingual students when it comes to language learning. The lack of specificity in this area, according to the teachers, may instead be fostering systems and
behaviors that are contrary to what is in the best interest of the students, giving origin instead to practices which, potentially and most troubling, may be undermining federal and state mandates on bilingual education.

**Summary of Findings**

Four distinct themes were identified in the analysis of the transcripts of the focus group session: *Usefulness of the Framework*; *Changes in Teaching Practices*; *Administrator’s Role* and *Professional Development Needs*.

As regards to the *Usefulness of the Framework* category, all four participants related that the Framework had generally been helpful in providing guidance about what is expected of them when they are being evaluated. Participants related that the Teaching Framework had helped them improve their instructional practice in the areas of Assessments (Juanita); Teaching Expectations (Maria); Professional Responsibilities (Ana); Best Teaching Practices (Maribel). Additionally, the Framework seemed to have been particularly helpful in the areas of *Questioning* (Ana; Maribel) and *Planning and Preparation* (Ana, Juanita, Maribel and Maria). The latter in particular was found to be the most helpful in improving teaching practices.

All four participants also expressed there were challenges created by the all-encompassing nature of the Framework and, in particular, the lack of specific reference to best practices for teaching bilingual students. The *English Learner Addendum*, on the other hand, was deemed to be a valuable tool for helping navigate the Framework. Three out of four teachers (Juanita; Maria; Ana) reported using *the Addendum* to plan instruction. However, three teachers in the group (Maria; Ana; Maribel) also related that the *Addendum* had never been referenced by their administrators during the evaluative
process. The fourth teacher, Juanita, related that she was the one to point out the *Addendum* to her administrator, who now uses this resource during the post-evaluative conference to discuss and determine the teacher’s rating.

As regards to the *Administrator’s Role* category, all focus group participants commented at some point during the proceedings, about the benefits of having an administrator who is knowledgeable about bilingual education, when it comes to evaluating and providing feedback to bilingual teachers. As regards to the *Professional Development Needs* category, three participants (Juanita, Ana, Maribel) thought that that administrators could benefit from specific training in the areas of best teaching practices for bilingual students and other specialized settings, such as special education (Maria), and also on how the evaluation process should look different depending on the specific setting observed (Ana; Maribel, Juanita).

Three focus group participants (Juanita; Maria; Ana) shared that their greatest challenge in utilizing the Framework were the administrator’s lack of understanding of bilingual education and the absence of any reference in the Framework on this topic. The lack of specificity on differentiation for bilingual students was found to be particularly challenging when navigating the document (Juanita; Maria; Ana; Maribel).

In addition to the abovementioned themes, three participants also reported that they were experiencing a strong push by their administrators to teach in English, as opposed to Spanish (Juanita; Maria; Ana). This emphasis on teaching English-only was mainly attributed to the district’s assessment policy, which mandates English-only tests, whose results are solely used to determine student and teacher growth.
CHAPTER 6
Discussion

The purpose of the study was to use mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) to seek insights and explanations to the following questions:

- “How do bilingual teachers perceive the new teacher evaluation system as it relates to their practices?”
- “What changes in teaching practices do bilingual teachers attribute to the new teacher evaluation system?”
- “Are there any differences in the way bilingual teachers and non-bilingual teachers perceive the evaluation system?”

The study’s hypothesis was that the new evaluation system was being perceived favorably by the teachers and additionally that it was making a positive difference in improving their instructional practices. For the quantitative portion of the study, an online survey was used to collect information from both bilingual and non-bilingual teachers in an urban district. For the qualitative portion of this study, a focus group of bilingual teachers was later organized to further investigate the results revealed by the survey.

Interpretation of Findings

Data collected through the on-line survey revealed that both bilingual and non-bilingual teachers’ responses were generally favorable toward the Teaching Framework. Moreover, there was some indication that when it comes to changes attributable to the new evaluation system, bilingual teachers may be even more positively inclined toward
the Framework. Data gathered by means of the focus group (comprised of four bilingual teachers), also showed that the Framework had generally been helpful to them, in terms of improving and reflecting on their instructional practices.

Specifically, in regard to the first research question of “How do bilingual teachers perceive the new teacher evaluation system as it relates to their practices?” both data obtained through the on-line survey and the insights gleaned from the focus group, indicated that the bilingual teachers (as well as the non-bilingual teachers polled by the survey) have a positive outlook toward the current evaluation system in terms of its usefulness in providing guidance on the evaluative process. Though it would not be possible to generalize these findings to be applicable to the total teacher population in the district, due to the small size of the survey sample (only 56 teachers), this study does offer a glimpse into the way teachers across a large urban district regard, in general terms, the new evaluation system. While the study’s results seem to support the hypothesis that teachers in both categories have a positive perception of the new system, they also revealed that there were some notable differences in specific areas of the Framework they deemed to be the most useful for their practice. In relation to the research question “Are there any differences in the way bilingual teachers and non-bilingual teachers perceive the evaluation system?” the study showed (Chapter 4; Figure 1), that non-bilingual teachers found that the area that was most helpful to them was Domain 3 or Instruction (41%), while the bilingual teachers, by the very same percentage, selected Domain 1 or Planning and Preparation (41%). It was interesting to see that the Instruction Domain was not the area deemed to be the most relevant by both the bilingual and non-bilingual teachers.
Domain 3, in fact, is at the very core of the Framework, accounting for 40% of a teacher’s evaluation score. This Domain is unquestionably the most important in the evaluation process, as it contains all the components that are essential to the heart of teaching and student engagement. This Domain also relates directly to the actual teaching that takes place in the classroom and is the only area an administrator can witness firsthand when conducting a classroom observation. The Planning and Preparation Domain selected as the most helpful by bilingual teachers, on the other hand, is what precedes and guides the instructional portion of the lesson and has to do with how a teacher organizes the content for what students are expected to learn. The Planning and Preparation Domain only accounts for 25% of a teacher’s final evaluation score.

These ratings of Framework domains were also validated by the focus group’s participants. In fact, when bilingual teachers in the group were asked about their preferences in regards to the Framework’s domains, they confirmed that Planning and Preparation was the most useful to them. The teachers reported that they found it to be very clear and straightforward, offering a series of examples and explicit steps that could easily be followed. Teachers appreciated that there were no ambiguities in the language of this domain, or as one member of the focus group put it, “not many places you can veer out of it”, as opposed to other domains.

The researcher was indeed very surprised to see that the Instruction Domain was not equally valued by both groups, as this domain does account for the majority of a teacher’s cumulative score and, as such, it is the domain on which most of the district’s attention is devoted in terms of professional development. When probed on this subject,
to explore the possible reasons for this choice, focus group participants unanimously lamented the fact that the *Instruction* Domain does not address the needs of bilingual students and that it does not take into account the foundational pedagogy behind effectively teaching language learners. The teachers in the focus group overwhelmingly expressed a sense of pervasive confusion over the separation they perceive exists between the Framework and what they are actually doing in their classrooms to meet the needs of their bilingual students. When the survey results were correlated with what was shared in the focus group, it was evident that the bilingual teachers’ preference for the *Planning and Preparation* Domain stems precisely from the perceived disconnection between the *Instruction* Domain and their practices. This disconnection is not only being perceived as problematic because the Framework does not offer them any guidance in this realm, but also because the teachers felt that the *Instruction* Domain cannot inform administrators about what they should be looking for when conducting observations in the bilingual classrooms.

Specifically, as regards to their administrators, the teachers in the focus group overwhelmingly reported that, if they had no prior background in bilingual education, they lacked the knowledge and the wherewithal to be able to fairly judge their teaching abilities and also to provide them with useful feedback for improving their practices. This finding is consistent with the literature in the field which indicates that monolingual administrators face major challenges when conducting the evaluations of bilingual teachers because they lack the necessary training that would prepare them to conduct an equitable and informed assessment of instruction in bilingual settings (White, 2002; Safty, 1992). If the fundamental purpose of teacher evaluation is quality assurance and
professional development (Danielson, 2001), it was then obvious from what the teachers recounted in the focus group session, that the Framework is failing to provide them with the help they need in this area. This is certainly an issue of concern that the district must consider when preparing its administrators to conduct their evaluations in specialized settings, so they are provided with the tools they need to assess the teaching and to provide the teachers with the kind of informed feedback they need. Several studies have indeed shown that specialized training is crucial for enabling principals to successfully work with language minority students. It is such training that can help them to effectively develop policies and implement educational programs so that all students can have equal access to an education based on academic excellence and high expectations (Herrity & Glasman, 2010).

On the other hand, the English Language Learner (ELL) Addendum (the companion document created by the district to help administrators and teachers navigate the Framework), was often cited by the focus group participants as being a useful tool for planning instruction and also for helping to fill in the gaps existing in the Framework as regards to bilingual students. Three out of four focus group participants reported that the Addendum has been useful to them, while over 45% of bilingual survey respondents (virtually everyone who indicated on the survey that they had used the Addendum before) reported it was either helpful or very helpful to them when planning instruction. Unfortunately, it did not appear that administrators are using the Addendum as a reference during the pre-or-post conferences in the evaluation process. Over 77% of bilingual respondents indicated on the survey this was their experience, whereas four out of the four focus group participants also reported this. According to the
focus group participants, all administrators should be aware of this resource, as they must refer to it during the mandatory beginning of the year teacher evaluation overview. It appears, however, that they are choosing to exclusively utilize the generic, all-encompassing Framework Rubric for the final evaluation. This may be attributed to the fact that the administrators may be more comfortable and knowledgeable about this tool in the actual Framework, because the district has offered systemic and long-term training on it, while no formal training has taken place in regards to the Addendum.

Focus group participants also related that during their evaluation they found it necessary to take the initiative to educate their administrators about bilingual education. They did this so that the administrators could become aware that best teaching practices may look different in a bilingual setting because of the particular socio-emotional and linguistic needs of the students.

In fact, there is a large body of seminal research that shows that teaching language minority students requires a specialized pedagogy which takes into consideration that the students do not come to the classroom as empty vessels, ready to be filled by the new knowledge, but they must be afforded the opportunity to use their mother tongue and their prior life and academic experiences as a bridge to learning English (Freeman & Freeman, 1992; Gibson, 1998; August, Shanahan, Escamilla, 2009; Thomas & Collier, 2010; Wong-Fillmore, 1991). Students can in this way apply their background knowledge to connect to the new learning and make sense of the unfamiliar. Neglecting to include these considerations and not providing the necessary scaffolding, can severally affect a language learner’s educational, cognitive and socio-emotional development (Heath, 1986).
The teachers in the focus group felt that, though it was not necessarily their job to educate their administrators about bilingual education, they did not want to be marked down or penalized for the lack of knowledge they displayed in this arena. This forced advocacy role was considered to be frustrating at times, but absolutely crucial by the participants. They related that the administrators were sympathetic listeners and that one of the administrators even changed his final rating after the conversation he had with the teacher based on the Addendum. One has to wonder, however, if all others administrators in the district are as open to these types of pedagogical exchanges, and also about what happens when the evaluators are not receptive or willing to learn about bilingual education from their teachers. Additionally, the teachers, as the most vulnerable parties in the evaluative process, (since their professional future may be at stake), should not be put in the uncomfortable position of bargaining for their scores while educating their evaluators. For this reason, more formalized training on utilizing the Framework in a bilingual setting appears to be needed by administrators. Interestingly, this view was also shared by the non-bilingual teachers, who on the survey indicated that their administrators could also benefit from professional development focused on how to help their teachers improve instruction through the use of the Framework. In fact, the percentage of non-bilingual teachers who believed this (38%) actually outweighed the percentage of bilingual teachers (27%). Though it is beyond the scope of this research study, it would be interesting to ascertain in what particular areas non-bilingual teachers think their administrators need additional professional development on. As far as the bilingual teachers in the focus group are
concerned, however, the area of need for administrators appears to be how to fairly and knowledgeably conduct teacher observations in a bilingual setting.

Another point that surfaced from the focus group’s conversations, and that is worth highlighting here, is that in the instance where a teacher and an administrator did engage in a dialogical exchange about best teaching practices and instructional goals, the outcome (as perceived by the teacher who recounted it) was better evaluative results. The teacher in the focus group recounted that she felt it necessary to reach out to her administrator in an effort to educate him in regard to bilingual education. The administrator, in this particular case, had the openness and foresight to be willing to listen and learn from her. This exchange exemplifies what Gitlin and Smyth (1989) defined as an educative teacher evaluation approach because it allowed for the teacher to actively get involved in defining her aims and practices, and for the administrator to understand the relationship between these practices and the teacher’s pedagogy. This approach gave the teacher more control over her work, while at the same time empowering the administrator with the knowledge necessary to gain a more informed view of the practices he was observing. This exchange can be confirmation that the evaluative process, using as a base the Teaching Framework, may engender powerful conversations and collaborations that can serve to improve teaching practices by establishing congruency between the teachers’ aims and perceptions and the administrators’ beliefs and actions. The district could help maximize the benefits of such educative conversations by encouraging these exchanges and by providing specific guidance on how to engage in these powerful and reflective conversations while utilizing the Framework.
As regards to the research question, “**What changes in teaching practices do bilingual teachers attribute to the new teacher evaluation system?**” and the actual changes in teaching practices bilingual teachers attributed to the new teacher evaluation system, most survey respondents felt they had made improvements in their teaching because of the guidance provided by the Framework. In fact, over 50% of teachers in both categories indicated on the survey that this was true for them (Table 19 – Chapter 4). It is worth noting that both bilingual and non-bilingual teachers on the survey agreed, by and large, on the areas of instruction in which they had made the most and the least improvements. Notably, the top three areas of improvement highlighted in the survey, *(Use of Low- and High-Level Questioning, Standards Based Learning Objectives and Discussion Techniques)*, were also brought up by the focus group participants. These participants related that the Framework had been instrumental to them in shifting their attention to these areas and in some cases that it had given them confirmation they were teaching in the way they were supposed to with respect to these particular aspects. Focus group participants also related that the Framework helped to draw their attention to specific aspects of their teaching they had not particularly paid attention to before. A teacher mentioned, for example, that as a result of using the Framework she had become much more intentional about including high and low level questions when checking her students’ understanding. Another shared that she was now much more careful and thoughtful in designing her lesson’s objectives, while others recounted that the Framework had helped them to better plan their lessons, which they felt are now more focused because of it.
About the above-mentioned areas of improvements, it should also be remarked that the bilingual teachers in the focus group never expressed any concerns about the applicability of bilingual pedagogy, or any other considerations about language acquisition in this regard, as they had instead done when talking about the Instruction Domain. This could be attributed to the fact that these components (i.e. Use of Low- and High-Level Questioning, Standards Based Learning Objectives and Discussion Techniques) are very descriptive in nature and they transcend the specificity of any particular discipline or teaching specialty, as they speak to generally applicable research-based principles and best teaching practices. For example, the Standards Based Learning Objectives component states that the teacher should clearly clarify directions and procedures and must anticipate possible student misunderstandings by offering clear, thorough and accurate explanation of content. It also gives a series of pertinent scenarios and techniques to demonstrate how this is accomplished in the classroom.

In looking at this component there can be little argument, in fact, that a teacher, no matter what the language of instruction is, should clearly communicate the learning objectives and should guide the students to see their relevance. The same is true for the Questioning and Discussion Techniques components which exemplify that teachers should use in their instruction a variety of low- and high-level, developmentally appropriate questions to challenge students cognitively and to advance their thinking. These, again, are basic tenets of effective teaching which, regardless of the context, any educator can and should relate to. It is therefore recommendable that both administrators and bilingual teachers use the Framework as a springboard for engaging
in conversations about what pedagogically sound practices are, as specified in the Framework, as opposed to defining what this document does not include or does not elaborate on. It is from this place of agreement and mutual understanding that common ground can be established among the parties and a foundation of trust can be built, so that educative dialogical exchanges, as defined by Gitlin and Smyth (1989), can begin between teachers and administrators. Far from being antagonistic, these conversations can be mutually enriching for both parties, as administrators can learn about the particular needs of bilingual students, (especially when they are not familiar with bilingual pedagogy), and teachers can learn about the administrators’ expectations in regard to their teaching.

Finding common ground and a mutual understanding of the Framework is very important for both the teacher and the administrator during the evaluative cycle, of course, but it may be even more critical in the realm of bilingual education, at least from what has transpired from the focus group proceedings. A common thread in the conversation with the teachers in that setting, was a persistent sentiment that the Framework is not particularly applicable to bilingual educators, because it does not clearly describe how to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of bilingual students. The Framework was perceived as being “too general” when it comes to addressing bilingual education and how bilingual students learn. All four focus group participants expressed they felt there was a disconnection between the Framework’s rubrics and best practices of teaching bilingual students. The teachers voiced their concerns that the Framework was being used to evaluate the performance of bilingual educators. They felt, as a group, that what the Framework highlights and what the bilingual
teachers are supposed to do, are in actuality discordant, as this instrument does not take into account the students’ developing language proficiency and does not include any cultural considerations.

The notion that the Framework may not be as applicable to them because they are bilingual teachers, may lead to adverse corollary behaviors such as the one Hazi, and Arredondo-Rucinski (2009), have described as “Just another tap dance” where the teachers are not really valuing or learning from the evaluative process, but are just showing the administrators what they want to see for the sake of completing the evaluation cycle. This would be, of course, both disempowering for the teachers and impractical for the administrators, since the main purpose of conducting an evaluation is to produce long-lasting and consequential improvements (Danielson, 2001). However, if the two parties can start the evaluative process by having honest pedagogical conversations about the instructional goals and the perceived concerns and problem areas, these can be brought out into the open and addressed in an honest and educative manner, that is, in a way that both respectful of the teacher’s ideology and also conducive to the administrator’s fundamental goals of ensuring that effective teaching is taking place.

An issue that may have to be addressed in order to build the common ground and the understanding necessary for open and honest communication is, according to what transpired from the focus group participants’ comments, the misaligned perception they had about the Framework. The focus group participants brought up repeatedly and insistently that this document is disconnected from best teaching practices as pertains to bilingual students. What is important to consider, is that the Framework is a generic
instrument that applies to all disciplines. It is used to evaluate a teacher at the Pre-K level as well as an Algebra teacher in high school. As such, this tool identifies in general terms those aspects of a teacher’s responsibility that have been proven by research as promoting improved student learning (Danielson, 2011). It is certainly not the only possible description of practice, and it was never portrayed by the district as being such. That is why additional documents were created by the district in order to give guidance and support to teachers and administrators in regards to the different specialized settings. The English Language Learner (ELL) Addendum is one of these documents. The Framework should not be looked at as the end-all-be-all “source” in the evaluative process. In fact, the Framework is best utilized when it is looked at as the foundation (or the start) for professional conversations among practitioners, as they seek to enhance their skills in the complex task of teaching (Danielson, 2011). If the teachers are looking at this instrument as providing all the answers, they will certainly be disappointed and confused by it. Since the district has conducted systemic and wide-spread training on the Framework over the past three years, these points should be clear to both teachers and administrators. In fact, the researcher was both surprised and taken aback by the misconstrued conception the teachers had about the Framework, because as a district’s administrator she had participated in many of the trainings and she is certain that this information was shared in those settings. It is true, however, that the survey shows that only a small percentage of bilingual teachers (9%) received more than 10 hours of professional development on the Framework (Table 20 – Chapter 4), when compared with non-bilingual respondents (32%). It is also true that according to the survey’s results more bilingual teachers (64%), when compared to non-bilingual teachers (41%),
feel they needed further professional development on the Teaching Framework (Table 18). The survey’s results combined with what transpired in the focus group session may indicate that there are gaps in the depth of knowledge and in the training of bilingual teachers on the Framework, a fact which, (at least according to the focus group participants), may also be true for the administrators.

More focused and in-depth professional development on how the Framework is applicable to different instructional settings, may indeed be necessary for bilingual teachers and administrators, so that they can gain the knowledge necessary to engage in informed pedagogical exchanges for the purpose of improving educational aims and practices.

From the survey’s results, it is nevertheless encouraging to see that bilingual teachers seem to consider that the Framework can be used as a coaching tool. In fact, 95% of the teachers polled either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (Table 5 – Chapter 4). The very same percentage of bilingual teachers also related that they believed the Framework was a good tool for teaching them personally (Table 6 – Chapter 4). This was not the case for the non-bilingual respondents, who indicated in much larger percentages that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this premise. This data may signify that once the bilingual teachers get the focused training they seem to need on how the Framework applies to their instructional setting, they would be likely to utilize this tool not as a prop for a well-staged “tap dancing” performance at the time the evaluators come to observe their classrooms, but as a valuable tool for actually reflecting and improving in their practices.
It must also be mentioned that, although this research study did not address the topic directly, a widespread trend emerged in the focus group when the participants described their experience with the evaluation process. The teachers overwhelmingly reported that they felt pressured by their administrators to teach in English as opposed to Spanish, the students’ native language. In fact, every single participant in the focus group expressed discomfort with this trend. They attributed it to the fact that their administrators did not have enough knowledge of the theory behind bilingual education and also that the State mandated assessments were all in the English language. This according to the teachers leads the administrators to tacitly give preference to English instruction, since this is the medium that it is ultimately used to judge the students’ performance and hence their schools’ academic standing. The teachers felt that as long as high-stakes assessments were only in English, even when the administrators believe in bilingual education, they would still feel the need to push students to receive instruction in English, which is contrary to what research has proven to be best teaching practices and in the best interest of the students. In fact, there is a large body of research extending over several decades, which indicates that maintaining and nurturing the students’ native language in an academic setting, can be a powerful springboard for acquiring both the new language and the new content (Cummins, 1989; Genesee, 1987; Gittins, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 2010). In particular, Jim Cummins’ extensive research on the subject has highlighted the importance of having a sound foundation in one’s native language when learning a new language. In his Developmental Interdependency Theory (1991), which is based on both empirical evidence and seminal research in the field, Cummins postulates that growth in the
target language is highly dependent on a well-developed first language and that both languages can reinforce and complement each other in a process he calls common underlying proficiency. Through his Thresholds Theory (1991) Cummins further maintains that students must attain a certain level of proficiency in both the native and second language in order for the beneficial aspects of bilingualism to be compounded, and that this only becomes evident overtime. This also means that the benefits of bilingual education may not immediately be apparent. A well-reputed and often cited Collier and Thomas’ study (1989) shows in fact that it usually takes five to seven years for language minority students to develop the linguistic and academic skills they need to become fully proficient in the target language, and this assumes that the students are being provided adequate support and scaffolding through instruction in the native language. Forcing students to learn academic content in a language they are not yet proficient in, for the sake of improving their immediate achievement on English-only standardized tests, may in the long run delay their language acquisition process, as well as affect them the students’ social and emotional growth (Krashen, 1981; Wong-Fillmore, 1991). During the focus group’s proceedings, the participants did express, on several occasions, their concern about the effects of forcing students to learn predominantly in English on their overall development. They lamented that their administrators did not value or take into enough consideration their bilingual students’ inherent cultural and socio-emotional learning needs, because they lacked the professional knowledge necessary to appreciate what bilingual teachers have to do in order to provide an education that is respectful of both who their students are and what they need. The teachers also felt that the Framework is lacking in this area and that it
cannot provide the administrators with the precise guidance they need to understand and hence evaluate them fairly on this element. This trend of favoring instruction in English over the native language, if found to be prevalent in other schools in the district is indeed disconcerting, as it goes against the precepts that are at the heart of bilingual education theories and is contrary to empirical and seminal studies conducted in the field.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the results of the on-line survey, it can be surmised that the study’s hypothesis that the new evaluation system is being perceived favorably and that it is helping to improve instructional practices, may be more applicable to bilingual teachers as opposed to their non-bilingual counterparts. It would be interesting therefore to conduct this study with a larger population sample to see whether the results can be replicated in order to draw more informed and definitive conclusions on this point. If the results show, once again, as they did in the survey, that bilingual teachers have indeed a more positive view of the Framework, it would be then pertinent to delve into the reasons this may be occurring. For instance, it may be worth investigating if bilingual teachers’ views stem from the fact that by the very nature of their professional responsibilities, they may need to be more flexible in executing their duties and in utilizing the resources that are available to them.

Also, as suggested by this study, it appears that both administrators and teachers need further professional development on the Framework. The area of need for the administrators, according to the teachers, seems to be gaining a better understanding of bilingual pedagogy and related research in the field, which (again,
according to the teachers), would allow them to better support and more fairly evaluate them when utilizing the Framework. To this point, it would also be interesting to expand this study to include the administrators, in order to gain some insight on whether the teachers’ perspective of what their areas of needs are, match their perceptions. Clearly, for the teachers the area of need in terms of further professional development appears to be gaining a better understanding of the Framework as a holistic, broad-spectrum tool that can be used to plan and reflect on instruction, particularly when it comes to best teaching practices that are universally applicable to all students.

Also, the district may want to look at what aspects of the Framework could be amended or strengthened in order to better support the teaching of language learners in the district. Though the Addendum seems to be useful in providing some guidance to bilingual teachers, and their administrators, they may undoubtedly benefit from a more specific focus and reference to the pedagogy applicable to this specific student population in the actual Framework. For this reason, it would be useful for the district to assemble a Task Force of bilingual stakeholders and specialists, (inclusive of bilingual teachers and administrators), to design a series of recommendations on how the Framework can be modified in order to improve instruction and student outcomes.

Limitations

In examining this study’s limitations, it is important to note that the data was gathered from a relatively small number of participants. The on-line survey polled a total of 56 teachers (22 bilingual and 34 non-bilingual), while the focus group consisted of four participants in all and only three of them had partaken in the survey. The limited size of the participant sample, both as regards to the survey and, in particular, the focus
group, makes it difficult to formulate any generalizations that could be made applicable to the larger bilingual and non-bilingual teacher population in the district. The low rate in response is likely attributable to the circumstances surrounding the possibility of an impending teacher strike due to an impasse between the district and the local union during the time the study was conducted. The disagreement involved, among other matters, the district’s proposed changes to the current evaluation system which is precisely the subject of this study. It is possible that because of the researcher’s position as a central office administrator, respondents did not feel comfortable sharing their views about such a delicate and contentious subject. Though the timing of the study was unpredictably regrettable, it can also be surmised that those individuals who, despite the circumstances accepted to participate in the study, considered it was very important for their voice to be heard and their honest opinions considered. This was certainly the impression the researcher gathered from the focus group participants’ contributions.

Another limitation worth noting in regard to this study, lies in the protocol that was used to conduct the focus group. The researcher’s original intention was to structure the discussion so that it would have the flow of a natural conversation. For this reason, she had resolved to being the least intrusive as possible, and aside for posing questions or clarifying what she had asked, she did not intervene or participate in the discussion. The intent was not to influence the participants’ opinions and to let the conversation evolve organically within the group’s members. However, during the transcription of the conversations, it became apparent that there were many missed opportunities where it would have been appropriate for the researcher to ask the participants to clarify or
expand on what they shared during the proceedings. Doing so would have undoubtedly added to the depth of the discussion and would have generated more insights and an enhanced understanding of the teachers’ views and opinions.

Despite this shortcoming, and the fact that this study’s findings may lack in external validity because of the small sample size surveyed, many useful insights can be gained from it. The results do offer a compelling glimpse into the perception of bilingual teachers as regards to the new evaluation system, which can be the basis for informed reflection and further exploration and research.

**Conclusion**

In examining the totality of this study’s findings, it is important to note that the patterns identified in the data collected through the on-line survey and the focus group are consistent and support its hypothesis that the new evaluation system is being perceived favorably by bilingual teachers in the district and that it is making a positive difference in improving their instructional practices. The insights gleaned from this study seem to indicate, in fact, that the *Teaching Framework* may hold great potential as a tool for helping bilingual teachers navigate the evaluative process, as well as for improving the actual teaching that is taking place in the classrooms. Though the sample size of the study was relatively small, and it is therefore difficult to make far-reaching generalizations based on the data collected by this study, what is both notable and promising is that the results gathered by means of the survey are paralleled by those collected within the focus group. In fact, a preponderance of bilingual teachers polled by the on-line survey found the framework is a viable tool for reflecting and planning instruction. These results were unanimously confirmed by the focus group participants.
Furthermore, both the survey and the focus group participants corroborated that the Framework is helping them improve and reflect on their teaching practices.

This study has also revealed that there seem to be specific areas of needed improvement and gaps of knowledge that the district has to help fill in as regards to the Framework, primarily on the topic of how the Framework intersects with research-based principles of teaching bilingual students. Further professional development and guidance in this area seem to be necessary for both teachers and administrators, to help them optimize the use of the Framework in the context of bilingual education. In fact, providing all stakeholders in the evaluative process with the tools they need to identify and cultivate effective teaching practices when it comes to bilingual students, could prevent them from perceiving the Framework as a fault-ridden document, and rather consider it as a starting point for generative conversations and exchanges about sound instructional practices that can support bilingual students.

The district, however, cannot not assume that these conversations will happen naturally and on their own, as for them to occur, more precise guidelines on how to engage in them and sustain them would be needed, both in written form (much like was done for the Bilingual Addendum) and also in the form of interactive and on-going professional development to help both parties pro-actively and successfully participate in the evaluative process. In a recent article on *Rethinking Teacher Evaluation*, Charlotte Danielson (2016) posits that, “Professional learning requires active intellectual engagement. In the context of an evaluation process, this means using observation and evaluation processes that promote active engagement: self-assessment, reflection on practice and professional conversation.” (p.20). As the district looks into better and
extended ways to improve teacher competency and student achievement, it would be in its best interest to craft a professional learning plan that actively engages its bilingual educators. This can be best accomplished by involving these stakeholders (teachers and administrators alike) in clearly identifying and defining their areas of interest and need in regard to teacher evaluation and the use of the Framework as an evaluative tool in a bilingual setting. It is also important for the district to create a safe environment or forum where all stakeholders can openly and honestly discuss the concerns and the perceived gaps in the evaluation process. As Danielson (2016) poignantly describes, “Learning can only occur in an atmosphere of trust. Fear shuts people down. Learning after all entails vulnerability. The culture of the school and district must be one that encourages risk-taking.” (p. 20). Active engagement, reflective practice and effective professional conversations can only occur in an environment where the teacher’s voices, (as well as those of their administrators), are heard and valued and where there is a concerted effort to make improvements that address the identified concerns and the challenges faced by bilingual educators.

As it also transpired in the focus group, bilingual teachers in the district studied may have many added responsibilities compared to their non-bilingual counterparts and may receive little support or understanding from the administrators, who in some cases may lack an understanding of the pedagogy inherent to bilingual students. Every teacher in the district has students with varying academic and cognitive levels in their classrooms, of course. However, bilingual teachers additionally have to account for the different language proficiency levels their students bring to the table (both in their native and in the target language) whether they have newly arrived to the country or are long-
term English Language Learners. For this reason, bilingual teachers have to design instruction that is tiered and highly differentiated to meet their students’ needs, while they are also teaching the content and the language necessary to understand it, all of this simultaneously. It is also worth mentioning here that bilingual teachers, unlike their colleagues, have the additional obligation to attend specialized training specific to bilingual pedagogy (at least three times as year) and have to administer additional State assessments to ascertain their students’ growth in English every year. Materials and resources are often scarce for these teachers and when policies or mandates are created, they are made to address the mainstream English-speaking population (much like the Framework itself), whereas bilingual students are often only a necessary afterthought. As a result of all these added factors, bilingual teachers in the districts may indeed need to be more flexible in executing their duties and more adapt at making the proverbial “lemonade” out of “lemons”, or the circumstances they have to contend with. This is certainly what the researcher in her role of district leader and school administrator has witnessed and is also possibly why more bilingual teachers than non-bilingual teachers have a more positive outlook of the Framework as a coaching and evaluative tool. Whether this is assumption is true or not, is beyond the scope and intent of this research study. It is, however, clear that bilingual teachers do need and require more specialized support in executing their duties. It would in fact behoove the district to further investigate their actual needs and perceptions in order to gain a better view of their professional situation and be better prepared to offer them the support they need during the evaluation process and beyond.
It is nevertheless encouraging to see from what the focus group participants have shared, that when the Framework is used as a springboard for initiating pedagogical conversations between teachers and administrators on what are considered sound instructional practices, the results are powerful dialogical exchanges between the two parties. The Framework may indeed hold the promise for discounting an antiquated top-down, dominant and unilateral approach to teacher evaluation, while favoring a shift toward dialog that accounts for and is respectful of, teacher ideology and practice. These educative exchanges, as they are defined by Gitlin and Smith (1989), and are exemplified by the focus group participant who has partaken in them, have the potential of providing the basis for teachers to become more actively involved in assessing and improving their educational aims and practices. They can also allow the administrators to find the necessary leverage to better understand, guide and support their teachers through thoughtful discussions and reflections on instruction.

In his book *The Enlightened Eye* (2017), Eliot Eisner wrote that “By broadening the forms through which the educational world is described, interpreted, and appraised, and by diversifying the methods through which content is made available and teaching methods are used, the politics of practice become more generous” (p.246). The Framework has the potential to indeed be the conduit for expanding and refining the way we currently look at teacher practice and can provide common language and the starting point for collaboration and strategic planning by all stakeholders, so that all parties feel equally invested, empowered and participative in the process of cultivating and developing powerful teaching. It is the hope and recommendation of the researcher that the district will make a concerted effort to favor these educative and growth-
engendering exchanges by promoting them and by exploring the ways in which they can be maximized and supported for the aim of providing students with the best possible quality of education they both need and deserve.
References


(Eds.), *Cognition and Survey Research* (pp. 77-93). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.


APPENDIX A

Survey Content

Dear Potential Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Fabiola Fadda-Ginski, a student and doctoral candidate at National-Louis University, Chicago, Illinois. The purpose of the study is to seek insights and explanations to the questions: “How do teachers perceive the new evaluation system as it relates to their practices?” and "What changes in teaching practices do teachers attribute to the new teacher evaluation system?"

With your consent, you will be taking an on-line survey that will last approximately 30 minutes. There are no risks associated with this research and your participation is strictly voluntary. You may withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

Your participation will remain anonymous. You will not be identified by name in any of our records. This means that your survey responses CANNOT be linked to you. All information you provide in the survey, including personal demographic data, will be kept confidential in a secure location. Only research personnel will have access to data from this study. All data will be reported only in group or aggregate form.

Though you are likely not to have any direct benefit from participating in this research study, taking part in the survey may contribute to developing a better understanding of the instructional implications of implementing the CPS Framework for Teaching in the district. While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed.

In the event you have questions or require additional information you may contact the researcher: Fabiola Fadda-Ginski, at National-Louis University, 1000 Capitol Drive, Wheeling, IL 60090; email: fginskifadda@my.nl.edu; phone: 773-791-8354. If you have any concerns, or questions, before, or during your participation in the study, that you feel have not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact Dr. Susan McMahon, student’s Dissertation Chair, at National-Louis University, 1000 Capitol Drive, Wheeling, IL 60090; email: SMcMahon@nl.edu

If you agree to the terms and conditions specified in the consent form above, please, mark YES. Then continue taking the Survey.

YES  NO
1. As a teacher, how helpful is the *Framework for Teaching* in providing guidance to improve your teaching practices?
   Very helpful
   Somewhat helpful
   Not helpful
   Undecided

2. What aspect(s) of the *Framework for Teaching* is the most helpful to you in supporting your students? (Mark/Rate in order of importance: 1 Highest through 4 Lowest)
   Domain 1: Planning and Preparation
   Domain 2: The Classroom Environment
   Domain 3: Instruction
   Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

3. Under Domain 1, which component would you say was the most helpful to you in guiding your professional practice? (Rank them in order of importance: 1 Highest through 5 Lowest)
   f. Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy
   g. Demonstrating Knowledge of Students
   h. Selecting Instructional Outcomes
   i. Designing Coherent Instruction
   j. Designing Student Assessment

4. Please, provide one example of how your practice(s) has changed in Domain 1 because of the guidance provided by the *Framework for Teaching*:

5. Under Domain 2, which component would you say was the most helpful to you in guiding your professional practice? (Rank them in order of importance: 1 Highest through 4 Lowest)
   a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
   b. Establishing a Culture for Learning
   c. Managing Classroom Procedures
   d. Managing Student Behavior
6. Please, provide one example of how your practice(s) has changed in Domain 2 because of the guidance provided by the Framework for Teaching:

7. Under Domain 3, which component would you say was the most helpful to you in guiding your professional practice? (Rank them in order of importance: 1 Highest through 5 Lowest)
   a. Communicating with Students
   b. Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques
   c. Engaging Students in Learning
   d. Using Assessment in Instruction
   e. Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

8. Please, provide one example of how your practice(s) has changed in Domain 3 because of the guidance provided by the Framework for Teaching:

9. Under Domain 4, which component would you say was the most helpful to you in guiding your professional practice? (Rank them in order of importance: 1 Highest through 5 Lowest)
   a. Reflecting on Teaching and Learning
   b. Maintaining Accurate Records
   c. Communicating with Families
   d. Growing and Developing Professionally
   e. Demonstrating Professionalism

10. Please, provide one example of how your practice(s) has changed in Domain 4 because of the guidance provided by the Framework for Teaching:

11. The Framework for Teaching is an effective instrument for determining your areas of desired instructional improvement
   Strongly Agree
   Agree
   Disagree
   Strongly Disagree
12. The *Framework for Teaching* is an effective instrument for determining your areas of instructional strength
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

13. The *Framework for Teaching* can be used as a coaching tool
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

14. The *Framework for Teaching* is a good tool for coaching me
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

15. The *Framework for Teaching* has helped me change the way I teach
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

16. If you “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”, please, mark all the areas for each component where you feel you have made improvements because of the guidance provided through the *Framework for Teaching*

   **a. Communicating with Students**

   - Standards-Based Learning Objectives
   - Directions for Activities
   - Content Delivery and Clarity
   - Use of Oral and Written Language

   **b. Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques**

   - Use of Low- and High-Level Questioning
   - Discussion Techniques
   - Student Participation and Explanation of Thinking
c. Engaging Students in Learning
Standards-Based Objectives and Task Complexity
Access to Suitable and Engaging Texts
Structure, Pacing and Grouping
d. Using Assessment in Instruction
Assessment Performance Levels
Monitoring of Student Learning with Checks for Understanding
Student Self-Assessment and Monitoring of Progress
Feedback to Students
e. Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness
Lesson Adjustment
Response to Student Needs
Persistence
   Intervention and Enrichment
Not Applicable

17. Do you feel that you need more professional development on how the Framework for Teaching can help you improve your teaching practices as a bilingual teacher?
   Yes
   No

18. How so?

19. Do you feel that your school administrator/s need more professional development on how the Framework for Teaching can help him or her guide you to improve your teaching practices as a bilingual teacher?
   Yes
   No
20. How so?
21. How many hours of professional development have you received on the Framework for Teaching?
0
1-3
4-7
8-10
More than 10

22. The Framework for Teaching enables my supervisor to support my professional growth
Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

23. The Framework for Teaching is a fair way of judging a teacher's performance
Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

24. Please, explain your answer:

25. Do you have access to in-school coaching on how to utilize the Framework for Teaching to improve your instructional practices?
Yes
No

26. Have you taken advantage of in-school-coaching on how to improve your teaching practices by utilizing the Framework for Teaching as a base?
Yes
No
Not Available

27. Have you ever used the English Language Learner (ELL) Addendum in order to plan instruction?
Yes
No

28. Did you find the English Language Learner (ELL) Addendum helpful in planning instruction?
Very Helpful
Somewhat Helpful
Not Helpful
29. Please, explain your answer:

30. Has your administrator ever referred to the English Language Learner (ELL) Addendum during the pre-or-post conference with you?
Yes
No

31. If yes, in what way?

32. How did you learn about the English Language Learner (ELL) Addendum?
Office of Language and Cultural Education
Network
Knowledge Center
School Administrator
Colleague
Never heard of it
Other (Specify)

33. What grades are you teaching this year (please, check all that apply)?
Pre-K
Kindergarten
First
Second
Third
Fourth
Fifth
Sixth
Seventh
Eight
Ninth
Tenth
Eleventh
Twelve

34. How long have you been teaching?
0-3 Years
4-6 Years
7-10 Years
11-15 Years
16-20 Years
Over 20 Years

35. Are you a tenured teacher?

36. How long have you been teaching bilingual students?
37. What is your highest level of education?
   Bachelor Degree
   Master Degree
   Doctorate

38. Would you be interested in participating in a focus group to discuss how the *Framework for Teaching* is changing instructional practices as experienced by bilingual teachers? Participants will receive a $25.00 gift card as a token of appreciation for their time and participation.

   Yes
   No

   If yes, at what e-mail address can we contact you?
APPENDIX B

Focus Groups Questions

1. Overall, do you think that the *Teaching Framework* is an effective tool for helping you improve your instructional practice? Explain why this is so and in what ways.

2. Has the *Teaching Framework* helped you change the way you teach? How so?

3. As a bilingual teacher what aspects of the *Teaching Framework* are particularly helpful to you? How so? What aspects are less helpful to you? How so?

4. Has the *Teaching Framework* helped you determine your areas of desired instructional improvement or strength? If so, in what ways?

5. One of the results uncovered by the survey seemed to be that the Planning and Preparation Domain was the most useful for bilingual teachers. Can you share your thinking about this?

6. What are your biggest challenges with utilizing the *Framework*? Why?

7. If the district were to poll bilingual teachers about their preferences for professional development in regards to the District’s *Teaching Framework*, what would you request and why?

8. If the district were to poll bilingual teachers about their preferences for professional development for their school administrator(s) in regards to the District’s *Teaching Framework*, what would you request and why?

9. Many would argue that the role of the administrator is crucial in supporting teachers in making changes in their practice. Based on your observations, do you agree or disagree with this assumption and why?

10. How closely does your administrator’s interpretation of your work reflect your understanding of your teaching?

11. The district provided the English Language Learner (ELL) Addendum for bilingual teachers to help them navigate the Teaching Framework. Did you find this helpful in planning instruction? Why or why not?

**Concluding Questions**: Was today’s session helpful/unhelpful? Has your thinking changed about anything we discussed?
APPENDIX C

Focus Group Introduction

Greeting: Welcome to our REACH Teacher Focus Group. Thank you very much for agreeing to be a part of it. We deeply appreciate your time and willingness to participate.

Introductions: Moderator

Purpose of the Focus Group: The reason why we are having this focus group is gain further insight into “How do bilingual teachers perceive the REACH evaluation system as it relates to their practices?” and more specifically, “What changes in teaching practices do bilingual teachers attribute to the new evaluation system?” We need your input and want you to share your honest opinion and thoughts with us.

Ground Rules

1. I WANT YOU TO DO THE TALKING

   I would like everyone to participate.
   I may call you if I have not heard from you in a while.

2. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS

   Everyone’s experiences and opinions are important and valuable.
   Speak up whether you agree or disagree.
   I want and need to hear a wide range of opinions.

3. WHAT IT IS SAID IN THIS ROOM STAYS IN THIS ROOM

   I want you to be comfortable sharing your truth.

4. I WILL BE TAPE RECORDING THE GROUP

   I want to capture your opinion in its entirety.
   I will not identify anyone by name in our report. Anything you say will remain anonymous.

Do you have any questions for us before we start?
# APPENDIX D

## Bilingual Teacher Focus Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How long have you been teaching?
- o 0-3 Years
- o 4-6 Years
- o 7-10 Years
- o 11-15 Years
- o 16-20 Years
- o Over 20 Years

### How long have you been teaching bilingual students?
- o 0-3 Years
- o 4-6 Years
- o 7-10 Years
- o 11-15 Years
- o 16-20 Years
- o Over 20 Years

### What grades are you teaching this year?
(Please, check all that apply)
- o Pre-K
- o Kindergarten
- o First
- o Second
- o Third
- o Fourth
- o Fifth
- o Sixth
- o Seventh
- o Eight
- o Ninth
- o Tenth
- o Eleventh
- o Twelve

### Are you a tenured teacher?
- o Yes
- o No

### What is your highest level of education?
- o Bachelor Degree
- o Master
- o Doctorate
APPENDIX E

Informed Consent

Dear Potential Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Fabiola Fadda-Ginski, a student and doctoral candidate at National-Louis University, Chicago Illinois. The purpose of the study is to seek insights and explanations to the questions: “How do bilingual teachers perceive the new evaluation system as it relates to their practices?” and “What changes in teaching practices do bilingual teachers attribute to the new teacher evaluation system?”

With your consent, you will be taking an on-line survey that will last approximately 30 minutes. There are no risks associated with this research and your participation is strictly voluntary. You may withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

Every precaution to protect your privacy will be taken. Your participation will remain anonymous. You will not be identified by name in any of our records. This means that your survey responses CANNOT be linked to you. All information you provide in the survey, including personal demographic data, will be kept confidential in a secure location. Only research personnel will have access to data from this study. All data will be reported only in group or aggregate form.

Though you are likely not to have any direct benefit from participating in this research study, taking part in the survey may contribute to developing a better understanding of the instructional implications of implementing the REACH evaluation system in the district. While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed.

In the event you have questions or require additional information you may contact the researcher: Fabiola Fadda-Ginski, at National-Louis University, 1000 Capitol Drive, Wheeling, IL 60090; email: fginskifadda@my.nl.edu; phone: 773-791-8354. If you have any concerns, or questions, before, or during your participation in the study, that you feel have not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact Dr. Susan McMahon, student’s Dissertation Chair, at National-Louis University, 1000 Capitol Drive, Wheeling, IL 60090; email: SMcMahon@nl.edu

If you agree to the terms and conditions specified in the consent form above, please type your name and date in the spaces below. Press NEXT to begin taking the Survey.
Thank you for taking the survey. This survey is an essential component of a dissertation study and the results will be complied and summarized as group results without disclosing specific information about individual respondents. Your time and cooperation in taking this survey are highly valued and appreciated. **Your responses are an important contribution to this study and they will be used for the following purposes:** To analyze how and in what ways the REACH teacher evaluation system is influencing the instructional practices of bilingual teachers.

At the end of the survey you will be asked whether you would be interested in participating in a focus group to expand the discussion about: 1) The impact of REACH on teaching practices as it pertains to bilingual teachers and 2) What additional supports can be useful to our bilingual teachers for future implementation of the REACH Framework.

**If interested, please provide an e-mail address you can be reached at, or send an email to Fabiola Fadda-Ginski at fginskifadda@my.nl.edu, indicating your interest.**

Please, remember ALL information WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.
This form must be completed by all individuals participating in the Teaching Framework Focus Group.

Participant Name: __________________________ Grade Level/s Taught: ______________

I hereby consent to be audio recorded during the course of the focus group to discuss 1) the impact of REACH on teaching practices as it pertains to bilingual teachers and 2) what additional supports can be useful to our bilingual teachers for future implementation of the Framework.

I understand that the audio recording will never be released or publicly displayed, and it will be used by the main researcher for transcribing purposes ONLY, so that the information related during the course of the conversations can be truthfully and accurately noted and analyzed.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed.

Participant’s Signature: __________________________ Date: ______________