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# BICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS IN A DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Quinn J. Wulbecker

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of

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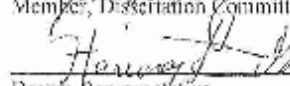
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Quinn Wulbecker  
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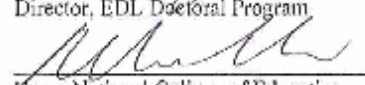
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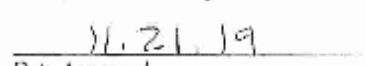
  
Chair, Dissertation Committee

  
Member, Dissertation Committee

  
Dean's Representative

  
Director, EDL Doctoral Program

  
Dean, National College of Education

  
Date Approved

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## **ABSTRACT**

Dual language programs are often viewed as enrichment programs for students of various language backgrounds. This study evaluated the long-term bicultural impact on students who participated in the Hawkins School District (pseudonym) Spanish-English dual language program. The participants in this study were graduates of the Hawkins Spanish-English dual language program who were in college or beginning their careers. These graduates participated in an interview to offer their perceptions on their current level of biculturalism and the extent to which their participation in the dual language program shaped it. The results of this study revealed that biculturalism is a possible outcome for dual language students. Through the implementation of a Bicultural Instruction Policy, an increased prioritization of the bicultural development of dual language students can have long-lasting implications that increase future career opportunities, develop cultural proficiency and prepare students to be global citizens.

## **PREFACE**

Educational systems are designed to provide students opportunities to develop into successful adults. This is often referred to as helping students become college and career ready. Educational institutions serve a need in the community to develop youth to be responsible contributors in society. With the shifting landscape of the job market, it is becoming increasingly imperative for schools to help cultivate additional skill sets in students beyond academics. These skill-sets include social-emotional skills, executive functioning skills, and cultural proficiency. Teachers and schools can play a vital role in shaping these skills at a young age to support students on their lifelong journey to success.

I accepted the role of principal in an elementary school that housed one track of a Spanish-English dual language program. Every winter, I would present to prospective parents a tour of our dual language classrooms. During the tour, I explained the design of the program and the intended benefits. Often, I would list the benefits for students participating in the program as a way to become bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural. After several tours, I found myself questioning my own statements. What is biculturalism? Moreover, how do we know that students develop a sense of biculturalism?

Instead of blindly accepting this statement, I conducted a research study to understand what biculturalism is, how it develops in students who participate in a Spanish-English dual language program, and whether a bicultural identity persisted through adulthood. Through this study, I learned that dual language programs are a possible setting for bicultural development to occur. The structure of a dual language program lends itself to bicultural development because language and culture are intertwined. This study showed me how districts could take intentional steps to provide a richer bicultural experience for students in a dual language program.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This process has been a journey requiring much support along the way. I thank God for blessing me with this opportunity, and for placing people in my path who provided encouragement, honesty, and grace.

I sincerely thank Dr. Jason Stegemoller, my chair, for pushing me to do my best. His wisdom regarding this work allowed me to finish, and his kindness towards me as I figured things out kept me motivated. Dr. Jack Denny was a great sounding board for me as we met to discuss the progress of my research. His enthusiasm for my work energized me throughout the three-year process.

I also want to thank each of the professors that spent time with us during our program. Each professor brought a unique perspective that challenged me to be a better leader. Thank you to Dr. Harrington Gibson who coordinated our program and was a constant source of guidance throughout. I feel privileged to have been among the cohort members, each of whom helped me see what great leadership looks like.

I owe more than thanks to my family. It is a debt of gratitude that I owe my wife Jenny, who allowed me to pursue my dream. My kids, siblings, and parents were a great source of encouragement to me, even when I had a long way to go! I would not have been able to complete this work without their love and support.

## **DEDICATION**

To my family – my wife Jenny, and my kids Emerson, Weston, and Brooks. This project reflects our belief that we can bring change to the world and that we are never finished learning.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

Educational efforts in the United States focus primarily on developing students to be college and career ready. Twenty-first-century skills are often referenced as necessary elements of a child's education that differ from traditional content areas such as math and literacy. In order to grow students in twenty-first-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication, teachers must design experiential learning opportunities where students can implement these skills (Rotherham & Willingham, 2010). Schools consider a variety of programs to provide students rich experiences that allow them to develop twenty-first-century skills. One such program is the dual language program. Guzman (2007) refers to a dual language program as an enriching bilingual and multicultural education in which language equity is structurally defined as equal time exposure in two languages.

The growth of dual language programs has been on the rise since a swift increase during the early 1990s (Loeb, 1999). Collier and Thomas (2004) demonstrate significant success for students in dual language programs, as they reach proficiency in content areas as well as in two languages more rapidly than their peers in non-dual language classrooms do. Cultural experiences are an integral part of a dual language experience, ultimately leading to friendships across social classes (Collier & Thomas, 2004). The possible impact of a dual language program on students extends into their cultural identity. As I evaluated the dual language program, I specifically targeted the bicultural impact of the program on students. I compared the long-term impact on students who began the program as native Spanish speakers, otherwise referred to as L1 Spanish speakers, and the long-term impact on students who began the program as native English speakers, otherwise referred to as L1 English

speakers. This research has the potential to influence programmatic changes at the earliest levels in kindergarten, and it can help shape a more accurate message to the community about the bicultural benefits of a dual language program.

My path as an educator has been a rich experience. I began teaching in a Japanese-English dual language classroom in an Illinois suburb. After being a part of this dual language program, I saw how beneficial learning two languages could be for students. I became interested in understanding how students would be able to apply their skills in the future. After teaching in the dual language program, I became the principal of an elementary school in the same district that houses a Spanish-English dual language program. Similarly, it has shown to be very successful for the students in my elementary school. As part of a diverse school district in Illinois, I became increasingly curious to know how the dual language program was influencing the cultural development of our students and potentially developing their biculturalism. As I pursued the study of the overall effectiveness of the Hawkins School District Spanish-English dual language program, I focused primarily on the connection to increased biculturalism.

Hawkins School District is the largest elementary school district in Illinois and is comprises 21 kindergarten through sixth-grade elementary schools, five seventh- and eighth-grade junior high schools, one kindergarten through eighth-grade school, and one early-childhood school. The district encapsulates roughly 15,000 students spanning five towns. Almost one-third of the families in Hawkins qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program. The families district-wide represent almost 90 different languages spoken at home. The staff of approximately 2,200 employees works across the 28 buildings to provide high-quality education to each child.

Historically, Hawkins School District continues to be a top district in regard to achievement scores. Currently, Hawkins is recognized as one of the top 50 districts in the state of Illinois, based on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR). This ranking has increased consistently over the last 10 years, as the state switched from the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and most recently to IAR. Recently, *Chicago Magazine* ranked suburban schools across four areas: statewide assessment scores, attendance rates, money spent per student, and the 5 Essentials Survey, which is a survey given to parents, staff, and students to determine how well schools are organized for improvement (Illinois, 2017). Hawkins School District represented 11 of the top 20 schools across the northwest suburbs in a recent issue of *Chicago Magazine* (2016).

These data trends can be attributed to the strong coherence to a viable curriculum and programmatic structures that support all students. Specifically, the dual language program in Hawkins school district offers an opportunity for students to become proficient in two languages. The dual language program is one form of a Transitional Bilingual Education model and it allows L1 Spanish speakers to become proficient in English and transition from state-mandated English Language (EL) services. Simultaneously, the dual language program allows L1 English speakers to develop a second language, starting in kindergarten. The program aims to provide opportunities for students to become bilingual, biliterate and bicultural. Bilingualism is the ability to speak in two languages, and biliteracy is the ability to read and write in two languages. Students complete assessments in both languages to determine their learning, and an attachment to the report card indicates progress in both languages. Research has definitively shown that quality bilingual programs, such as dual

language programs, yield higher levels of academic achievement, proficiency in two languages, and more positive social outcomes (Holm & Holm, 1990). However, as the district thoroughly analyzes the development of biliteracy and bilingualism in students, there is far less accountability for the development of biculturalism.

Biculturalism is defined in several ways. In one sense, biculturalism refers to the identification with and belonging to two cultures, possessing a dualism in cultural identity (DuBois, 2008). Diaz-Rico and Weed (1995) define biculturalism as being able to function successfully in two cultures. Gollnick and Chinn (1986) extend the definition of biculturalism to include bilingualism and recognize the educational programs that demonstrate the value and worth of both the dominant culture and the culture of a student's family, enhancing the development or maintenance of a positive self-image. Baker and Wright (2015) add that bicultural competence tends to relate to knowledge of language, cultures, feelings and attitudes towards those two cultures, behaving in culturally appropriate ways, awareness and empathy, and having the confidence to express biculturalism. As the district enhances its dual language programming and monitors its effectiveness, it is also critical to assess the development of biculturalism in students.

Currently, the Spanish-English dual language program is offered in four of Hawkins' twenty-one elementary schools and is now offered in all five junior highs. While the program is presented in nine separate school buildings, it operates under a consistent model of instruction and is coordinated by an assistant superintendent of language and culture. Several instructional coaches, which are teachers that have been released from the classroom, support the dual language schools with planning, resources, and teaching. Dual language teachers meet in district-wide meetings several times a year to collaborate across schools and clarify

expectations regarding lesson design and assessments. This cohesion has allowed teachers to be more collaborative and consistent in their instruction.

While each of the four Spanish-English dual language programs has an identical structural model, several unique qualities are evident in each school. The reason that four schools offer the same program is due to the high demand from the community. Over time, one school will become too full to expand the program, so the only option available to accommodate the growing interest is to open the program in a new school. One school has since become a fully dual language school, which means that every student in the school participates in the dual language program and no application is needed. Since Hawkins is a public school district, a student who does not want to be part of the dual language program will be bussed to a neighboring elementary school. The other three Spanish-English dual language programs are housed in elementary schools that also provide general education classes. For instance, one school has one kindergarten dual language class and three general education kindergarten classes. This provides a unique opportunity for the dual language teachers and the general education teachers to collaborate on items that they have in common and to share experiences on items that are unique to each setting.

Each year, parents of enrolling kindergarten students have the opportunity to apply for a position in the dual language program. Typically, each kindergarten dual language class accepts twenty-four students each year and additional applicants are placed on a waiting list. The make-up of each class varies, but the goal is to maintain a balanced combination of L1 English and L1 Spanish speakers. My research will allow Hawkins to communicate a clearer message of bicultural influence to these prospective parents in the community. Furthermore,

the extent to which a dual language program influences a child's biculturalism can guide current dual language educators to provide relevant cultural experiences through schooling.

### **Purpose**

The Spanish-English dual language program has existed in Hawkins School District for 25 years. They are now able to monitor Hawkins dual language students exiting college and beginning their careers. As I understand how the kindergarten through eighth-grade dual language program influenced these students, I gained insights into how Hawkins' current instructional practices can be adjusted, the realistic expectations of long-term bicultural impact, and the possibility of students becoming bilingual, biliterate and bicultural.

I intended to examine systematically the dual language programming for schools in Hawkins. I know that several models of dual language programs are presented in many districts across the country, most of which differ in the amount of teaching in each language. Hawkins utilizes the 50/50 model, thus 50% of the teaching is conducted in English and 50% in the target language (Spanish). Nearby districts use various models, including those that begin as 90/10 in kindergarten, where lessons for 90% of the day are taught in the target language and only 10% are taught in English. Each successive year thereafter, the proportion of English increases until it reaches a 50/50 model (80/20 in second grade, 70/30 in third grade, and 60/40 in fourth grade).

As I researched the overall bicultural impact of the dual language program in Hawkins, I was able to correlate the 50/50 program model with long-lasting biculturalism in graduates. I was then able to recommend a plan that increases public awareness and better answers questions from prospective parents about the long-term impact of a dual language program for their child. I wanted to inform all stakeholders accurately about the outcomes of

the program, not just the intended outcomes, and specifically bicultural outcomes.

Furthermore, I recommended possible adjustments to current instructional practices and staff behaviors to make the dual language program more effective in creating bicultural students.

Biculturalism offers an advantage to students as they broaden their opportunities for college and careers. In order to provide a bicultural experience for students, it is imperative that teachers and schools are prepared to do so. Effective schools have staff that are committed to equality, thus providing an equitable education to students with different ethnic, social and language backgrounds, and who have been trained to use multiethnic materials (Levine & Lezotte, Lindholm & Molina, 2000). Dual language students have access to a culturally diverse experience due to the composition of the other students, teachers, and curriculum.

### **Rationale**

My interest in this research centered on the bicultural impact of a dual language program, specifically a 50/50 model. As a teacher in a Japanese-English dual language program and a principal of a Spanish-English dual language program, I have been very impressed by the development of the bilingual and biliterate skills of dual language students, but I continued to wonder what the long-term bicultural impact is for these students. It is relevant for students and educators to know the success rate of dual language students through college and beyond, and to assess how the bicultural components of a dual language program served them.

Schools track the success of dual language students during their time in our program in terms of language proficiency in Spanish and English. They see how they are performing

on common and district-wide assessments and compare them to their peers in general education classes. Over the years, the assessments used include Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), the Illinois Assessment of Readiness, Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) and the ACTFL Assessment of Performance towards Proficiency in Language (AAPPL). The MAP, PARCC, IAR, and ACCESS assessments help determine students' literacy abilities in English. The AAPPL test determines the level of proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in Spanish. The collective achievement scores from these assessments are very positive, often demonstrating that dual language students are on par with, or even slightly ahead of, their peers in normed tests. However, despite the monitoring of language proficiency, there is insufficient evidence to show how these students have been influenced biculturally and how that prepares them for college and a career.

### **Goals**

As I explored the overall effectiveness of a dual language program and sifted through several models being utilized, I hoped to glean insights into how current practices can influence students in the dual language program, which includes opportunities for students to become more bicultural, to apply their knowledge in authentic ways, and to inform instructional practices of teachers. Primarily, I aim to better assess how a dual language program affects participants in the long-term. This information can shape current practices at the elementary level and open conversations for parents and families who are interested in the program, or for those in the program that may be wondering how they can continue to pursue and utilize their language abilities.

I wanted to explore the success of dual language students over time and discover how their sense of biculturalism plays a role. First, I desired to know whether L1 English-speaking students identified with the culture of surrounding L1 Spanish speakers after their education in a dual language program. If not, I aimed to explore potential steps that schools in Hawkins School District can take to help students become bicultural. A goal of the research and program evaluation was to adjust the current elementary dual language program in Hawkins to more deeply instill values of biculturalism in the students.

To better understand the historical impact of the dual language program on student levels of biculturalism, I explored how graduates of the program select a college and career. More specifically, I determined whether dual language graduates continue identifying as bicultural through college and/or select careers in which they can utilize their biculturalism along with bilingualism and biliteracy. Another goal of the action research project was to provide students and teachers with a deeper understanding of how the dual language program prepares students to participate in a globally connected world by emphasizing bicultural development.

### **Research Questions**

My research questions address the relationship between students' biculturalism and being part of a dual language program. Secondary research questions began to specifically address instances where a dual language student may be more inclined to participate in second-language speaking cultural activities, which would indicate a sense of belonging in two cultures.

**Primary Research Question:**

- To what extent does a dual language program develop long-lasting biculturalism in dual language students?

**Secondary Research Questions**

- To what extent will L1 English-speaking students identify with the culture of surrounding L1 Spanish speakers after their participation in a dual language program, and vice versa?
- Are there specific actions that schools and dual language programs can implement to promote biculturalism in dual language students?
- To what extent does the development of biculturalism through participation in a dual language program influence graduates as they select a college and their field of study?
- To what extent does the development of biculturalism through participation in a dual language program influence the type of career that graduates will select?

**Conclusion**

The exploration of biculturalism in a dual language program helped determine to what extent it exists, how dual language programs can improve elementary instructional models to better serve students, and how former students utilize their biculturalism. In the next section, I review the literature pertaining to biculturalism through the lens of culture, dual language programming, and the transition of dual language graduates to adulthood.

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

A dual language program offers students an experience that promotes bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism. These three characteristics are prevalent in the literature surrounding dual language programs, and teachers, parents, and students often describe them as positive benefits. Schools and districts often track bilingualism and biliteracy through multiple assessment measures and observational feedback from teachers and students. An increasing curiosity exists in the dual language program's development of bicultural competencies in students. A dual language program can help develop the cultural identity and sense of biculturalism of students, which will be beneficial in their transition to adulthood.

To understand biculturalism in a dual language context, it is helpful to first determine what culture is. My literature review thus begins with a thorough exploration of culture. While various interpretations of culture abound, it is clear that culture is shaped by the collective experiences of a group and is ultimately a personal interpretation of the group dynamic (Madarova, 2015; Jiang, 2000; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2012). Importantly, researchers agree that culture and language are intertwined (Kramsch, 2013; Madarova, 2015; Jiang, 2000; Ennis, 2015). Dual language programming provides an intersection for language and culture to meet in a school system, which could optimally lead students to achieve biculturalism.

Following an exploration of culture, it is essential to determine the context in which biculturalism can flourish; the dual language program itself, therefore, I continue my review of the literature surrounding dual language programs. Dual language programs have existed for over 60 years and have gained popularity in the past 30 years (Block, 2011). Through the

years, the programmatic structure has evolved and currently displays several instructional models (Whitacre, 2015). Regardless of the specific structure, the dual language program aims to instruct students in two languages to promote high levels of bilingualism and biliteracy. Programs also attempt to promote biculturalism through peer interactions, teacher backgrounds, and cultural experiences.

Once a concept of culture has been determined and explored in the context of a dual language program, it is essential to then examine how dual language students transition to adulthood. I conclude my literature review by exploring the enduring impact of the program on students, and I specifically target bicultural development. Research now tracks graduates to reflect on the many benefits of participating in a dual language program, and it recounts the ways in which it shaped them as adults (Reyes & Crawford, 2012; Dworin, 2011; Whiting & Feinauer, 2011; Lindholm-Leary, 2000).

My literature review helped shape my understanding of culture and how people form their cultural identity. With a clearer understanding of cultural development, I was able to better understand how schooling can affect cultural and bicultural development in students. My literature review also helped me understand the multiple benefits of participating in a dual language program. In addition, my literature review sheds light on the extent to which a dual language program influenced students in the long-term. I reviewed the literature on the ways in which graduates of the dual language program transitioned to adulthood. Together, the three parts of the literature review (culture, dual language programming, and transition to adulthood) helped me design a strategy to increase bicultural development within a dual language program.

## **Culture**

Culture is a broad term that can refer to a wide variety of definitions. Erich Mistrick (1999) claims that more than 200 definitions of culture have been proposed. Researchers, sociologists, and educators define culture in ways that help understand groups of people and how they interact. Culture can include broad sweeping generalizations of a group of people – the Big ‘C’, or it can refer to their behaviors, eating, talking, beliefs, and values – the little ‘c’ (Kramsch 2013). Moerman (1988) focuses on the broader organization of interactions within a group, stating that culture is a set, perhaps a system, of principles of interpretation, together with the products of that system. Guiterrez and Rogoff (2003) caution that a too simplistic view of culture can be misleading and minimize the breadth of culture in a community of people, stating that equating culture with race, ethnicity, language preference, or national origin results in overly deterministic, static, weak, and uncomplicated understandings of individuals and the community practices in which they participate. While educators have access to demographic information of students, it falls short of completely interpreting the culture that is present in any given classroom or school.

Craig Storti (1999) focuses on the qualities most essential to any group of people, highlighting that culture comprises the shared assumptions, values and beliefs, which directly result in the behaviors of those in the community. This definition of culture can be applied to all groups of people, including individual classrooms in a school. Furthermore, culture is learned, not inherited, and is acquired through interactions in society. In essence, culture is not experienced in isolation but must take place in groups (Oatey & Franklin, 2012).

Since culture is a social construct that is learned through group experiences, individual classrooms could create a unique cultural setting. In particular, dual language

classrooms have an added component of second language acquisition, which promotes a strong connection between language and culture. Without language, culture would simply not exist in its entirety (Kramsch, 2013; Jiang, 2000). Language is used to describe and represent human experiences and human understanding of the world, thus making it an essential ingredient for shaping culture (Madarova, 2015). Jiang (2000) states that language simultaneously reflects culture and is influenced and shaped by it. He furthermore states that language is the mirror of culture, people can see culture through its language, and that language and culture form a whole. To know a culture is to understand it through the language.

The environment in which languages are learned and taught are often research grounds in which the impact of culture can be investigated (Hinkel, 1999). Dual language classrooms serve as optimal conditions to study culture and its impact on student learning. During the school day, dual language students are acquiring skills in two languages, which further promotes the possibility of developing students' sense of biculturalism. Michael Ennis (2015) argues that language should be at the core of intercultural education. While some argue that culture should be at the center of language instruction and the ultimate goal of second language acquisition is cultural awareness and intercultural communication (Ennis, 2015). Regardless of which side of the debate one is in terms of language or culture first, it is broadly accepted that the two are intertwined.

However, some educators separate language and culture when they deliver cultural experiences and information in the student's first language instead of the language of the culture they are experiencing (Ennis, 2015). For instance, a dual language class may visit a Mexican restaurant but only speak English to the chef when they ask about traditional dishes.

This teaching strategy may promote better comprehension of the content, but it fails to provide the fullness of the cultural experience. The psychologist Jean Piaget contended that humans learn by interacting with their environment (Wadsworth, 1996). The dual language classroom is an environment that fosters social interactions that include a focus on second language acquisition. Participation in social interactions, such as typical events in a dual language classroom, allows the dynamic cultural community to be distinguished from individuals simply being a member of an ethnic group (Gutierrez, 2003). Ennis (2015) concludes that if students do not experience the target language, in this case, Spanish, and culture in the dual language classroom, it is likely they will not experience much at all, at least not in a supportive educational environment. In some dual language programs, most of the language learning and cultural experience then takes place outside of the classroom, within the context of homework assignments, study abroad, travel, and life-long dedication to language and culture. This, then, begs these questions for dual language teachers: how could these elements be incorporated into the school day, and how does the dual language program propel students to engage in this life-long pursuit of language and culture? “The goals of foreign language teachers should be to help students become learners that have come to accept foreign culture as equally valid alternatives to their own so that they are prepared for life-long autonomous study”(Ennis, 2015).

Since culture is attained through schooling in its written, literature tradition, and through its social exchanges, a dual language classroom can be structured to increase both language and culture simultaneously (Kramsch, 2013; Ennis, 2015). Byram’s (2002) integrated model of teaching language and culture accomplishes just that by requiring instructors to prepare students to learn from real encounters. Lessons are structured in

hierarchical order: language awareness, cultural awareness, cultural experience, and finally language learning. This organization weaves together language and culture throughout lessons, combining language acquisition through an authentic cultural experience.

Distinct cultural benefits emerge from a dual language program structure. Language learners may not necessarily change their identity through foreign language studies, but they do find it easier to change subject positions (Kramsch, 2013). The ability to see cultural perspectives that are different from one's own perspective is a useful framework for students in a dual language classroom, and it could serve them in future endeavors at college or in a career.

Furthermore, foreign language studies, such as in a dual language program, broaden students' perspectives to a more global mindset.

Global challenges necessitate global thinking and international cooperation, and foreign language education is in the best position to develop and implement pragmatic tasks, courses, and curricula that attain the goals of multilingual and multicultural societies and translingual and transcultural global citizens (Ennis, 2015). There is a positive societal impact when citizens are not only multicultural and multilingual but also transcultural and translingual.

Without language, culture would not exist in its entirety (Kramsch, 2013; Jiang, 2000; Madarova, 2015). Language and culture are intertwined, and benefits exist in societies that prioritize intercultural communication (Madarova, 2015). Similarly, researchers believe that language should be at the core of intercultural education, thus promoting the cyclical nature of developing culture through language and language as an essential component of all cultures (Ennis, 2015; Jiang, 2000; Kramsch, 2013). Since culture is learned and is a social

and shared experience, a dual language program can serve as an optimal setting to promote both bilingualism and biculturalism.

### **Dual Language Programming**

Dual language programs refer to an educational model that divides the instructional minutes between two languages, most frequently English and Spanish in the United States. Dual language programs were introduced in the United States in the 1960s and gained popularity in the late 80s and 90s (Block, 2011). Dual language programs have flourished for decades outside of the US, particularly in countries where two languages are commonly used, such as English and French in Canada (Murphy, 2016). School districts across the US continue to utilize dual language programs amidst other models of bilingual education.

While the goal of the programs is the same, to produce bilingual and biliterate students, some logistical differences can be present within the structure of a dual language program. These include the division of instructional minutes, such as a 90/10 model where 90% of the academic content is taught in the target language and 10% of the academic content is taught in English, or the 50/50 model where instruction is delivered in each language for half of the academic day. Leo Gomez and Richard Gomez initially developed the 50/50 model, which was most appropriate for use in areas with high numbers of English Language Learners (ELs) (Whitcare, 2015). Specifically, the 50/50 model has several flexible features, such as using one classroom or two classrooms to separate language instruction, grouping students homogeneously or heterogeneously based on language, and using a one- or two-teacher model (Murphy, 2016). A one-teacher model requires the teacher to be bilingual, teaching half of the day in English and the other half in the target language. A

two-teacher model allows the teachers to share students, as they learn English from one teacher and the target language from the other.

Regardless of the program model, several attributes indicate a successful dual language program. Whitacre (2015) suggests that a common factor among effective and successful school environments is the emphasis on high achievement expectations for all students and high expectations among experienced and new staff. These expectations should be based on rigorous curriculum and challenging objectives that affect academic achievement (Murphy 2016).

In addition to high expectations, Whitacre (2015) outlines several vital components that relate to attitudinal perspectives. He argues that there must first be a favorable attitude toward bilingualism and language minority students from all stakeholders: community, administration, and staff. Murphy (2010) adds that the ultimate goal of a dual language program is to create a learning environment that promotes bilingual development in two languages and fosters positive attitudes for each language group and its surrounding culture. Positive attitudes provide some evidence for the development of biculturalism as an immersion effect among dual language students (Block, 2011).

Other vital components include a focused and clear mission, effective teacher training, strong instructional and faculty leadership, well-defined instructional practices, and a parental and community involvement plan (Whitacre, 2015). One vital element of a successful dual language program is a rigorous curriculum. While there is local control as to which curriculum is used, certain, more beneficial ways, may be used to implement it. Effective dual language classrooms have English- and Spanish-speaking students engaged in learning that is meaningful, cooperative, and content-focused (Hood, 2011). In addition, it is

important to provide more focused attention to the utilization of additive linguistic and cultural strategies during the implementation phase of a dual language program (Whitacre, 2015).

Through the implementation of these foundational elements, clear goals emerge for schools and districts utilizing dual language programs. The goals of two-way bilingual education are commonly stated to be academic achievement, bilingualism, and biculturalism (Block, 2011). The most successful bilingual programs aim to develop bilingualism and biliteracy (Heinrichs, 2015). Lindholm-Leary (2016) discovered that many dual language students mentioned the advantages of being bilingual, even in social settings, such as being able to help others, to learn about other people, and to communicate with others in the target language.

Research indicates that dual language programs provide students with a multicultural education (Lindholm-Leary, 2000; Whiting & Feinauer, 2011; Reyes & Crawford, 2012; Thomas & Collier, 2003; Heinrichs, 2015; Block 2011). Multicultural education relates more to the experiences created by the educational institution, whereas biculturalism is a personal characteristic shaped by experiences (Ennis, 2015). Dual language programs offer a multicultural context for students to participate in, thus creating an environment where biculturalism can be developed. Biculturalism is a worthwhile exploration, as noted in the social justice standards produced by the Southern Poverty Law Center and published through the Teaching Tolerance website (2018). One of the anchor standards states that students will develop language and historical and cultural knowledge that affirm and accurately describe their membership in multiple identity groups.

While studies demonstrate that these programs indeed influence students in developing positive cross-cultural attitudes, biculturalism has not been studied with nearly as much rigor as the other two goals have (Block, 2011). Heinrichs (2015) suggests that dual language programs lead to greater respect for multiculturalism, but they do not necessarily describe a true sense of biculturalism in participants. In Hood's (2011) research, one dual language teacher expressed, "I think [a dual language program] is a way to bridge two cultures. I want kids to realize that they each have something very valuable to share, and that is their language and culture and own identity". Lindholm-Leary (2016) found that dual-immersion students had more favorable attitudes toward children who were different from themselves. Based on Block's (2011) study, dual-immersion students responded to survey questions with significantly higher means to questions concerning whether they would like to be friends with someone who speaks a language different from their own.

There are three key findings in research on dual language students' social and cross-cultural attitudes: dual language students enjoy having classmates from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, dual language students tend to have more positive social and cross-cultural attitudes than non-dual students do, and these positive attitudes extend to secondary school (Lindholm-Leary, 2016). Social and cultural development is an important feature in the dual language program, especially as it relates to opportunities outside of school. Gail Tompkins (2014) developed a framework that describes a community of learners, which includes 10 characteristics of a successful classroom, including providing meaningful and authentic learning opportunities and feeling safe enough to take risks. Guiding principles for dual language classrooms also include the importance of community building (Howard, 2007).

Dual language programs provide integrated, inclusive, and unifying educational experiences for students (Thomas and Collier, 2003). Once students step outside of a dual language program, they are encircled by a community that separates itself by language and culture (Hood, 2011). Students with a dual language background are more likely to bring their bilingual skills to the worldly context around them. The respect for and nurture of multiple cultural heritages and the two main languages present in the school lead to friendships that cross social class and language boundaries (Collier, 2004). Nonminority students expand their worldviews to include knowledge and respect for the customs and experiences of others (Thomas and Collier, 2003).

While working together in partnerships and studying together, the L1 English-speaking students and L1 Spanish-speaking students learn about each other's language and culture, becoming bilingual and biliterate, which is a valuable commodity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Murphy, 2010). Overall, the dual language program structures and practices were shown to develop twenty-first-century skills (Heinrichs, 2015). Students who participate in a dual language program gain cultural understanding, which increases their ability to think globally. Thinking globally increases dual language students' cultural capital and the likelihood of their success in a globally connected world (Heinrichs, 2015). L1 English-speaking children receive many benefits regarding travel to and life in other countries, in addition to an increased understanding of other cultures (Thomas and Collier, 2003). Educators and parents have become increasingly aware that bilingualism is a valuable skill for all in a rapidly globalizing world, and that we should strive to have as many students as possible educated in multiple languages (Murphy, 2016).

Beyond becoming globally connected, researches have documented numerous benefits of participating in a dual language program. Perhaps it is related to the idea that a dual language program should be regarded as an enrichment or gifted program (Murphy, 2010 & 2016). The structure of the dual language program is optimal for the utilization of the 4 Cs: creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. Students communicate in two languages and must often collaborate on work. Through the cognitive stimulus of schooling in two languages, students are led to enhanced creativity and analytical thinking (Thomas and Collier, 2003). Students reported that being bilingual helps them to think more creatively, to think about information across languages, and to sometimes think about how the languages are similar or different (Lindholm-Leary, 2016). In addition, parents reported that – in addition to increased executive functions – their children think differently, more flexibly, and more creatively due to the multiple avenues in which they can express themselves (Heinrichs, 2015).

Dual language programming is also shown to positively influence academic achievement in students. The impact of a dual language program transcends language learning to include extending modes of cognition (Heinrichs, 2015). The high level of cognition relates to the structure of the dual language program. Strategies taught in two or more languages contribute positively not only to the acquisition of the second language but also to a student's overall academic development (Murphy, 2016). Dual language students regularly develop language proficiency skills in both languages by fifth through eighth grade, rate themselves as somewhat or very bilingual, and perceive cognitive benefits from being bilingual (Lindholm-Leary, 2016). In addition, dual language participants were found to be

the most likely to reach the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile on test scores in both languages and the least likely to drop out of school (Murphy, 2016).

A closer examination of the sub-groups of students represented in the dual language program also reveals unique academic benefits. Dual language programs were the only programs that narrowed the achievement gap for English Learners between fifth and seventh grade (Heinrichs, 2015). This may be due to the research that recognizes that, in general, L1 Spanish speakers learn more English than L1 English speakers learn Spanish in dual language programs (Palmer, 2009). English learners are also afforded opportunities to display their abilities through a variety of alternative assessments that are typical in a dual language program, such as checklists, interviews, and autobiographies (Murphy, 2016).

L1 English speakers in a dual language program also benefit. English-proficient students who had participated in the dual language program over the years outperformed their English-proficient peers who had participated in a regular English-only instructional setting (Murphy, 2010). The academic benefits continue even after a student exits the dual language program. English-speaking students who previously participated in a dual language program continue to outperform their peers who were educated in a standard, English-only instructional setting (Murphy, 2016). Since the dual language program is classified as an enrichment program, native English speakers already on grade level can exceed the achievement of their monolingually educated peers (Thomas & Collier, 2003).

In addition to academic benefits for students, research also documents social benefits that exist within the dual language structure. One such benefit is that L1 English-speaking students are placed in the position of learning language from their Spanish dominant peers, which disrupts the status quo in American classrooms, reversing the typical role where

English-speaking students are the helpers and Spanish speakers are getting helped (Palmer, 2009). Even so, L1 English speakers' language and identity are not threatened, because English is the power and status language, so they have a significant advantage in their confidence that they can succeed at school, from a sociocultural perspective (Collier & Thomas, 2004). Palmer (2009) suggests that this dynamic overcomes the potential negative influence of English-speaking students and their tendency to assert a symbolic dominance over the classroom community.

The dual language program provides multiple benefits to participants and is an enrichment program model to enhance the learning of students in two languages (Murphy, 2016). The structure combines content, language, and cultural development in one setting and it is an optimal place to explore the impact of biculturalism.

### **Transition to Adulthood**

School districts need to monitor the transition to adulthood of students who have participated in a dual language program. The success of a dual language program can be evaluated regularly for current students and should include the success of its graduates. School districts track students' success during their time in the program through multiple measures and assessments, as well as beyond their time in the program through circumstantial indicators. In today's climate of test-based accountability, it is easy to forget that what matters most for children is not how they score in the early grades, but how their schools prepare them for life (Reyes & Crawford, 2012).

When parents choose to enroll their child in a dual language program, they often consider how the skills acquired in the program will benefit their child as they enter adulthood. A survey given to parents explored their reasons for enrolling their child in the

dual language program, and six themes emerged. These themes include the following: bilingualism and biliteracy, educational opportunities, future and career opportunities, cultural immersion and diversity, preserving heritage, and proximity to home (Whiting & Feinauer, 2011). The highest response, 97% of parents, enrolled their child in a dual language program in the hope that they would become bilingual and biliterate (Whiting & Feinauer, 2011). In summary, successful program indicators include continued language and cultural studies in high school, undergraduate and graduate levels, employment in careers that utilize both languages, and an increased level of biculturalism that manifests itself in relationships and experiences.

Many parents who choose the dual language program for their children are optimistic that the schooling experience will influence them culturally. Parents choose the dual language program for multiple reasons, and 27% of parents state that one reason is to increase their child's cultural diversity (Whiting & Feinauer, 2011). To some parents, multicultural education is a priority. Some majority language parents will make considerable sacrifices in order to provide a diverse cultural and linguistic education for their children. In fact, English-speaking parents with high levels of education, relatively high income, and who live farther from the school are more likely to enroll their children in a dual language program for exposure to culture and diversity (Whiting & Feinauer, 2011).

Another popular reason for participating in a dual language program is the promise of broader career opportunities. In a study conducted with dual language parents, 46% of parents stated that they enrolled their child in the program for future and career opportunities (Whiting & Feinauer, 2011). Students surveyed also believe that being bilingual will help them find a better job (Lindholm-Leary, 2000). Studies of former dual language students

indicate that students use Spanish in the US workplace as translators, community advocates, business people, or bilingual teachers (Reyes & Crawford, 2012). Dual language students have also been documented to return to the dual language program as teachers.

Beyond employment opportunities, dual language programs influence students' overall acculturation. As students learn in two languages, with social diversity in fellow students and teachers, students are more likely to transition to adulthood with a sense of cultural diversity. Findings regarding the language ideologies of the participants indicate the influences of schooling may be part of a larger set of social and cultural dynamics that inform the language practices of former bilingual students (Dworin, 2011). Former students commented on the multiple benefits, which included feeling culturally, artistically, politically, and emotionally attached to Latin America (Reyes & Crawford, 2012).

Graduates of the dual language program reflect on multicultural competencies learned while in the program. As adults, they have positive perceptions and are willing to interact with others who have different physical characteristics (looks, skin color, etc.) or language background (Lindholm-Leary, 2000). In addition, former students believe that speaking another language could help them interact better with other people, and they indicate that they enjoy meeting people who speak another language. Lindholm-Leary (2000) concludes that most dual language students report important benefits related to being bilingual.

Former dual language students engage in the Spanish language in two main ways. Dworin (2011) reports that two language ideologies address how people use a second language, in this case, Spanish for L1 English speakers. These include a functional language ideology, in which Spanish is used to accomplish a specific task, and a cultural language ideology, in which the person has a cultural affinity with native Spanish speakers. Former

dual language students reported linguistic and cultural affinities with Spanish speakers and Spanish speaking communities through their use of Spanish, and they participated in cultural activities that were in Spanish (Dworin, 2011).

As dual language students exit schooling and transition to adulthood, they recount multiple benefits and positive attitudes about the dual language program. Lindholm-Leary (2000) documents these reflections of students who had participated in a dual language experience (2000). The dual language program provided students with improved education, challenged them to do better, and gave them a sense of accomplishment. Students valued the program enough to recommend it to others (Lindholm-Leary, 2000).

In addition, 94% of dual language students said that education is important, 91% stated they would go to college, and 100% of the students never felt the urge to drop out of high school (Lindholm-Leary, 2000). Students' attitudes toward the dual language program and their achievement in it are very positive. Former dual language students fared better in school, could think better, and felt that being bilingual gave them confidence (Lindholm-Leary, 2000). Many benefits of being in the dual language program were identified and supported students as they exited schooling and transitioned to adulthood. Ultimately, many students and parents concluded that being bilingual provided more opportunities and influenced their multicultural perspectives.

As dual language students exit schooling and transition to adulthood, school districts look for evidence that former students utilize the language and cultural lessons learned during their time in the program. Extensive tracking of biculturalism would serve school districts well to prepare students while in the program and it would afford graduates more opportunities as globally minded citizens.

## **Conclusion**

Dual language programs are an enrichment model of education by providing an academic and social experience that promotes bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism. Teachers, students, and parents report on the benefits of participating in the program, which includes academic achievements, social belonging, and increased opportunities in adulthood (Whitacre, 2015; Murphy, 2016; Heinrichs, 2015; Thomas & Collier, 2003). Through the years in the program, students receive a multicultural education that solidifies their understanding of multiple cultures. Upon leaving the program, most students have positive attitudes regarding the program and they express a deeper connection to Latin America, culturally and emotionally (Reyes & Crawford, 2012). This connection to Latin America is solidified during the years in a dual language program and students acquire a clearer identity across multiple cultures. A dual language program can create a cultural experience for students that promotes a level of biculturalism that will be beneficial during the transition to adulthood.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### Research Design Overview

In my exploration of the concept of biculturalism related to a dual language program, I used qualitative methods to gather perceptions of former students to glean insights into the role of the dual language program. In Patton's (2008) book *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, he describes using qualitative methods when program outcomes are highly individualized. Patton (2008) states that from a utilization-focused evaluation perspective, qualitative data capture personal meaning and portray the diversity of ways people express themselves. I believe that interviewing participants and including a variety of questions, one of which is a questionnaire, generated insightful conversations about their own perception of biculturalism. Culture itself can be explained and interpreted in a variety of ways, and I wanted to allow for the most flexibility in responses by utilizing interviews. Interviews can have a powerful effect on people and cause them to bring up thoughts, feelings, knowledge, and experiences (Patton, 2008).

This research design utilized active interviews to gain insights from former dual language students and the extent to which the dual language program developed their level of biculturalism. Active interviews are designed to be less structured and to allow participants to share more freely about their experiences. Holstein and Gubrium (1995) state that active interviewers converse with respondents in such a way that alternate considerations are brought into play. This allows the interview to explore more than would have been likely if the interviewer only asked a set of structured questions. DeVault (1990) claims that active interviewers may encourage participants to develop topics in ways that are more relevant to their own experiences, even if those ideas are incomplete. The active interview gives less

structure than a typical interview, allowing participants to make connections with grander topics versus answering specific, narrow questions. Through the interviews, participants were more inclined to share personal experiences and their involvement with multiple cultural influences. Participants had multiple opportunities during the interview to discuss freely their experiences in the dual language program and how they influenced their biculturalism.

### **Participants**

I interviewed five former students who participated in the Hawkins School District Spanish/English dual language program. These graduates of the program were college-age and older, between 18 and 25 years of age. I targeted this group of graduates specifically to gather evidence regarding the long-term influence of the dual language program. The basis for inviting these students related solely to their involvement in the Hawkins dual language program and was not because of any additional criteria regarding academic success (Appendix B).

All participants were organized into two groups: L1 English speakers, those who began the program in kindergarten as dominant English speakers, and L1 Spanish speakers, those who began the program in kindergarten as dominant Spanish speakers. The diversity of participants between these two groups allowed me to discern how their sense of belonging in two cultures is affected by their schooling experiences. It is important to factor in that the dominant U.S. culture is in play in both school and community settings, whereas the culture of represented Spanish speakers may only be a factor during the school day for some students. The responses were compared across the two groups to understand initial perspectives on being immersed in two cultures, whether that is viewed as positive or

negative. Results gathered from the interviews may lead to further questions surrounding the affect that the outside culture has on one's bicultural development.

In order to establish a basis on which to draw sound conclusions, I interviewed five graduates of the Hawkins dual language program. Three respondents were L1 English speakers, and two were L1 Spanish speakers. The number of respondents allowed me to interview several ages represented between 18-25, as well as a similar sample size from both groups of dominant languages. Patton (2008) states that qualitative inquiry involves small, purposeful samples of information-rich cases. Latham (2013) describes several factors in selecting sample sizes for qualitative studies, citing that saturation occurs at 12 participants. Crouch and McKenzie (2016) also state that including 20 or fewer participants allows the interviewer to maintain a close relationship allowing the exchange of information to be frank and honest. With these statistics in mind, I interviewed five participants to gain deeper insight from each representative group, allowing each interview session to be robust.

### **Data Gathering Techniques**

My primary source of data arose from the evidence gathered during interviews of former Hawkins dual language participants. The active interview setting allowed participants to share their cultural experiences and influences in a dual language program, as well as allow me, the researcher, to develop emerging themes more thoroughly through an open-ended conversation (Appendix C). I formed patterns of participant responses into emerging themes regarding biculturalism and dual language programs. Utilizing active interviews (Appendix D), I posed questions that allowed participants to share their experiences with the dual language program, their perception of the cultures represented in the program, and the influence of culture in their adult decisions (college, career, family, travel, etc.).

Embedded within my interview, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire (Appendix E), on which they scored themselves on a continuum of cultural indicators. For example, participants were asked to select their comfort level and likelihood in regards to listening to music in English and in Spanish (music is a cultural indicator). Participants scored themselves on a scale of one to five, with one being very uncomfortable and very unlikely, and five being very comfortable and very likely. The cultural indicators included additional items that participants are comfortable with and likely to do in both languages (Spanish and English). These included watching television and movies, reading assorted texts, traveling to different countries, cultivating relationships, choosing courses in college, obtaining a job and participating in new cultural experiences.

Responses to the questionnaire were used as quantitative data. Results of the questionnaire appear as a separate section in the findings and they were disaggregated to better understand trends in the respondents. The data was represented as an average rating for the five participants on a 5-point scale. The quantitative results from the questionnaire illuminated discrepancies between L1 English and L1 Spanish speakers.

Together, the questionnaire and interview questions appear as appendices. Utilizing qualitative methods (interviews) with an embedded questionnaire provided evidence that reinforced emerging themes. The emerging themes are outlined in the findings section and are organized according to interview responses first and questionnaire responses second.

### **Ethical Considerations**

As I involved participants, I ensured that the research process was conducted ethically. Prior to conducting any interviews, I collected informed consents from each

participant, in which I explained the process of the interview (Appendix A). As I gathered responses from participants, I made sure that all information was kept confidential by changing all names and indicators. In addition, the recordings, notes, and transcriptions were saved on a password-protected drive that only I had access to.

While the responses were subjective, they could be sensitive in nature depending on the participant's involvement with the dual language program and their own cultural experiences. All participants attached a positive connotation to growing up bicultural. It was important for me to note how the process of acculturation differs from assimilation prior to beginning the interview sessions. Acculturation refers to the transfer of cultural values from one group to another and can be seen by many in a positive light. However, assimilation can be viewed negatively, as people adopt the values of the dominant culture but feel less connected to their culture of origin. Participants were assured that the risk involved with sharing their experiences was outweighed by the future benefits for students in the Hawkins dual language program. The benefits include a greater awareness of preconceived notions about biculturalism, support for dual language teachers through professional development, additional district-wide opportunities to share bicultural experiences, and increased bicultural elements integrated into the dual language curriculum.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

As I interviewed the participants, I used several methods to analyze the data I received. First, I coded the interview sessions to organize the main ideas and pull out emerging themes. I coded the interviews based on keywords in responses, as well as central themes. Using an excel spreadsheet, I organized the participants' responses per question, allowing me to see the mode of each question and the range in responses. Second, I utilized

this coding system to identify the patterns in participant's responses. By highlighting keywords, phrases, and ideas, I noted similarities across several areas in the majority of participants' responses. These themes include dual language participation as a positive experience, the program's impact on future decisions, and positive relationships with dual language teachers. These themes informed my work and helped lead me to conclusions about how participants view biculturalism and to what extent the dual language program influenced it.

In addition to coding interviews and looking for themes, I analyzed the quantitative data that was collected from a questionnaire embedded in the interview. These specific questions asked participants to rank themselves on a scale, thus giving quantifiable data that reflected their participation in cultural activities as an adult. The data gathered from these questions was organized and computed to help find the range in responses, the mean, and the mode. The average response helped affirm emerging themes and commonalities among the participants' perspectives.

### **Conclusion**

As I researched biculturalism as a product of dual language programs, I conducted interviews with former Hawkins dual language students to understand the impact of their schooling experience. Through active interviews, participants were asked to describe their experience in the dual language program, their understanding of biculturalism, where they saw themselves on a scale of several cultural indicators, and their insights into how their cultural experiences in schools did or did not help them become bicultural.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

In this section, I will present the interview and survey findings using systems theory (Wagner, 2012). Systems theory focuses on understanding the relationship of an organization as a whole, and component parts that constitute the organization. Wagner explicates four specific organizational components that I will use to describe areas of change that are needed in Hawkins school district's dual language programs (paint a picture of the current reality of the district's dual language programs). First, I define the four arenas of change, which are context, culture, conditions, and competencies, and I describe factors that need to be changed in relation to how the bilingual program promotes a long-lasting bicultural experience. Then I present interview findings and questionnaire findings that shed light on how to influence the four arenas of change and thus create bilingual programming that facilitates the development of biculturalism.

### **Four Arenas of Change**

The four arenas of change are outlined by Wagner et al. (2012) as the context, culture, conditions, and competencies of an organization. I use these four arenas to analyze Hawkins School District's current reality and to suggest areas in need of change. Changes to each of the arenas entail improvements needed to ensure and sustain a bicultural impact on dual language students.

#### **Context**

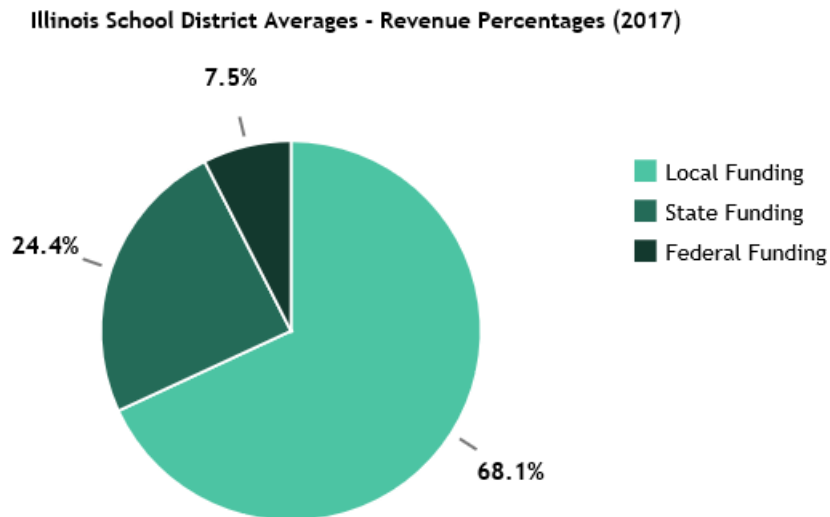
Wagner et al. (2012) define context as the skill demands all students must meet to succeed as providers, learners, and citizens and the particular aspirations, needs, and concerns of the family and community that the school or district serves. With the broader context of Hawkins School District in mind, I believe that they should emphasize the

development of biculturalism. All students participating in a dual language program should be afforded the opportunity to develop their own sense of biculturalism. HSD should promote a bicultural education, thus creating a new reality in the dual language program and in the community, which recognizes that bicultural experiences, curriculum, and education are worth investing in. To accurately know the extent to which biculturalism can be cultivated in this context, Hawkins must determine the effectiveness of the current 50/50 dual language program model.

To understand the dual language program in its entirety, it is important to be acquainted with the broader context of the Hawkins School District. HSD is a large public elementary school district in Illinois consisting of twenty-eight schools: one early childhood center, twenty-two elementary schools, and five junior high schools. As a public school in Illinois, a variety of external contexts influence the operations of HSD. In particular, Illinois is often embattled in a debate over school funding and how larger districts can distribute resources to smaller districts. Beginning in 2018, the distribution of General State Aid (GSA) to Illinois public schools was replaced with the Evidence-based Funding for Student Success Act. General State Aid historically provided for different methods of funding allocation, dependent primarily on the local property wealth within each school district. Evidence-based funding (EBF) comprehensively changes the way in which school districts receive the bulk of state funds. EBF sends more resources to Illinois' most under-resourced students. Districts are categorized based on their local property wealth. Hawkins was originally designated to Tier 3, which receives only 0.9% of the state funding. Through changing property wealth, Hawkins is now categorized as Tier 2, and it receives substantially more funding from the

state. On average, more than two-thirds of school district funding comes from local funding, primarily property taxes, and a quarter of funding comes from the state (see Figure 1).

*Figure 1: Illinois School District Averages of Revenue Percentages in 2017*



While school funding bills continue to be debated, it is clear that some districts struggle financially and often cut programs to save money. Hawkins is currently experiencing a balanced budget, and it has maintained a balanced budget for the past twenty years. This stability has allowed programs such as the dual language program to exist without interruption. In actuality, the program has grown over the last twenty years and is now offered in four of the district's twenty-two elementary schools.

The wide reach of the district creates a broad diversity within the student population. Hawkins is a majority-minority school district, meaning that white students constitute less than 50% of the overall student demographic. Of the 15,200 students, 41% are white, 26% Asian, and 24% Hispanic. Furthermore, approximately 18% of the students in Hawkins are classified as low income, as their families fall below the poverty line.

The level of diversity is a primary reason that special programming, including the Spanish/English dual language program, was created. First seen as an effective approach to bilingual education for Spanish-speaking students, it has blossomed into a thriving program across four elementary schools, and it serves to promote biliteracy and bilingualism to native Spanish and native English-speaking students. White and Latino parents have favorable attitudes toward the dual language program, as demonstrated in an annual survey conducted by HSD asking parents to rate their overall experience with the program. According to feedback, white and Latino parents recognize that learning two languages is beneficial for several reasons: to be comfortable conversing with other Spanish speakers, to be involved in activities with students from other cultures, and because of the social implications for bilingual people.

Lindholm-Leary's (2001) research echoes the sentiments typically communicated by parents in HSD, that they select the program for their children for instrumental and integrative reasons, in other words, they believe the program will enrich their academics/career options as well as their cultural awareness. Set within this context, Hawkins should promote the benefits of biculturalism within and beyond the district.

## **Culture**

Culture is defined as the shared values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and behaviors related to students and learning, teachers and teaching, instructional leadership, and the quality of relationships within and beyond the school. Culture refers to the invisible but powerful meanings and mindsets held individually and collectively throughout the system (Wagner et al., 2012). The culture of Hawkins School District is shaped by high expectations for student achievement, the belief of the importance of social/emotional well-

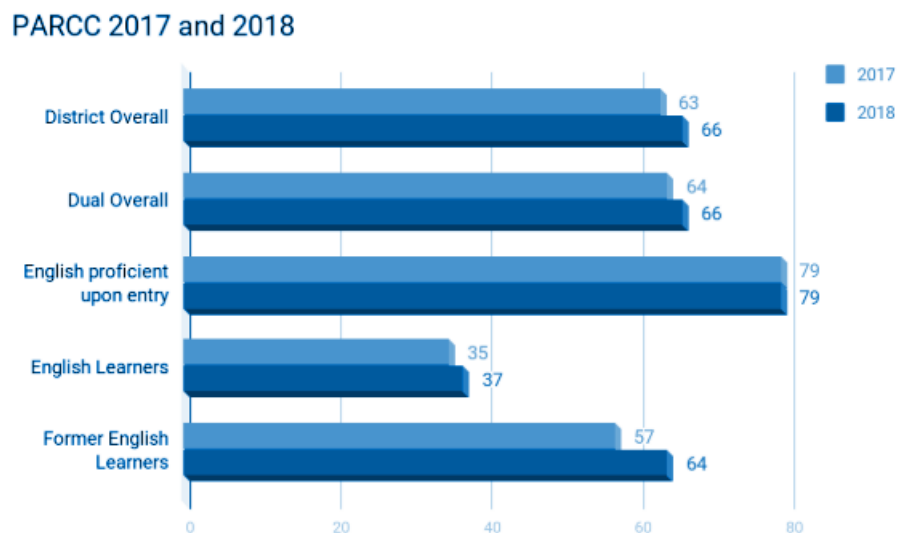
being, and the assumption that participating in a dual language program will organically lead to biculturalism. A critical area requiring change in HSD is the assumption that student biculturalism will develop simply through participation in the dual language program. Dual language staff must adjust their mindset to ensure that students exit the program with a firm bicultural perspective. Teachers' mindsets affect the degree to which students develop biculturally through their participation in the dual language program. In order to accomplish this, HSD must regularly gather feedback from students, teachers and families to determine the current reality of bicultural development,

The current culture in Hawkins is shaped by the consistent level of high expectations for student academic success. The marked success of students has been widely communicated to parents and the community as a source of pride. Based on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers PARCC assessments (administered in English) and the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) assessments (administered in Spanish), HSD is able to show that dual language students are performing at high levels. One of the commitments made to dual language parents is that students will perform commensurately with their peers in the general education program. Dual language student results in the PARCC assessments indicate that 66% of dual language students met or exceeded standards in English Language Arts, which is equal to 66% of District 54 students overall in grades 3-8 (see Figure 2). This trend is corroborated by additional research that suggests that achievement gaps have been erased in dual language programs, success rates on exams are high even with dense populations of lower socio-economic groups, and achievement scores for students in dual language

programs are equivalent to or higher than their monolingually educated peers (Thomas & Collier, 2003).

When the data is disaggregated by subgroup, 79% of students who entered the program as proficient in English and 64% of students who entered as English learners are meeting or exceeding standards. A student can meet or exceed standards on the state assessment by scoring a four or five. The state average of students meeting or exceeding standards on PARCC is currently 37% in English Language Arts (ELA). Hawkins School District dual language students nearly double the state average. Furthermore, HSD is able to show comparative data from neighboring districts with similar demographics, as well as across the state, which demonstrates that the students are reaching high levels of success compared to similar-aged peers. Hawkins School District scored in the top 5% of all Illinois districts in PARCC results for all students during the past three years.

*Figure 2: PARCC 2017 and 2018 scores for Hawkins School District*



The AAPPL language proficiency assessments for dual language students in grades 3-8 measures reading, writing, speaking, and listening proficiency through an online interactive format. The Spanish language proficiency scores are reported using the proficiency benchmarks related to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) levels (see Figure 3). The AAPPL assessment provides students, teachers, and administrators with additional information to monitor progress and set goals for student learning. After the testing window, parents and students receive a report that displays the student's benchmark level in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in Spanish with recommendations for the student. Each year, dual language program parents receive a guide that lists the learning performance indicators for each level of language proficiency in Spanish. These are aligned with the *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages* and reflect the continuum of language learning from Novice through Distinguished Levels. Each grade level, kindergarten through eighth grade, is assigned a target goal related to the ACTFL continuum. Based on several years of comparative data, Hawkins set the goal at Intermediate High for eighth-grade students as they exit the dual language program. According to the College Board, students who demonstrate Intermediate Mid to Intermediate High proficiency on the AAPPL assessment are likely to function successfully in an Advanced Placement (AP) course. In the Spanish dual language program, 93% of eighth-grade students are at the intermediate mid or intermediate high proficiency levels overall (see Figure 4).

Figure 3: ACTFL Proficiency Levels

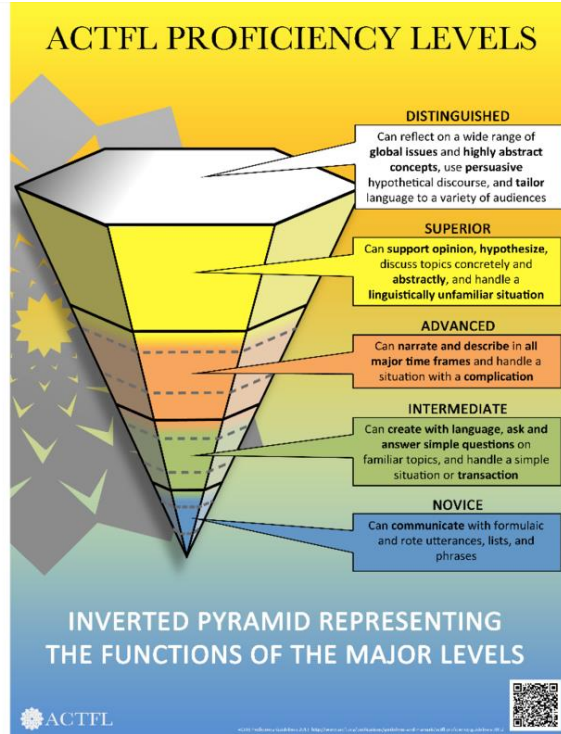
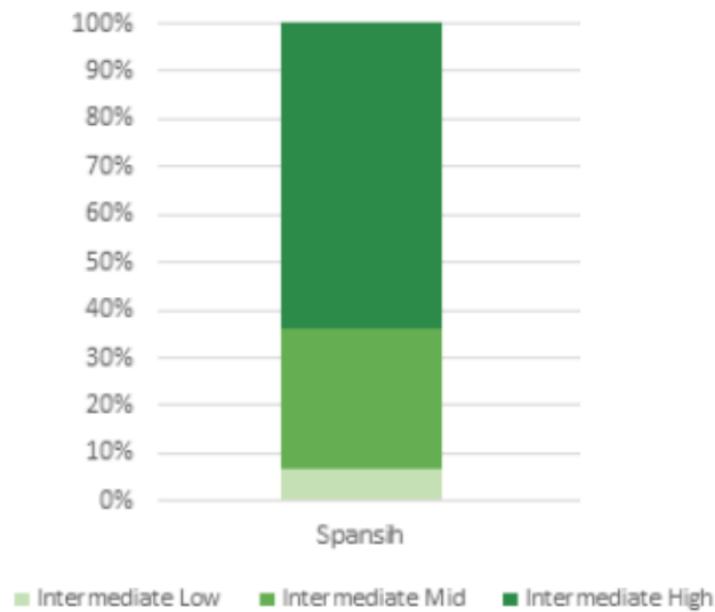


Figure 4: AAPPL Proficiency Scores for Eighth-grade Students in Hawkins School District



The publicized success of students in the district, and specifically the dual language program, is a source of pride for the district, and it has shaped the belief that academic achievement equates to student success. Each year, the dual language program in Hawkins has a waiting list because a growing number of families want their child to learn in two languages. This has created a cyclical culture in which high academic success across the district has attracted new families and developed an anticipative parent community. District-wide data is continually revisited and presented to the board of education to discern whether growth is taking place year after year, and changes are frequently considered in order to accelerate learning, intervene for those students not learning, and to enriching learners with new experiences.

More recently, HSD reflected on the culture of the district and how to better educate the whole child. Teachers and parents have a renewed belief in the importance of social and emotional intelligence. After several years of focusing on academic success, the district aims to infuse the culture with a broader definition of success – one that includes the social/emotional well-being of staff and students and substantial investment in positive psychology. The district recently compiled social/emotional lessons for all grade levels based on the Illinois State Standards. In addition, the three board goals were recently adjusted to demonstrate the priority of addressing the needs of the whole child, beyond mere academics. The culture will continue to be shaped by the new focus on educating the whole child, which will overlap with the dual language program's goals of creating a pro-social, bicultural experience while maintaining high levels of academic success.

Dual language teachers have a common assumption that participating in a program aimed at acquiring a second language infers that students are receiving a multicultural

education, which leads to a bicultural outcome. Biliteracy and bilingualism are measured through multiple assessments, but biculturalism can be seen in a similar light as cultural competencies, which are more subjective in nature. Because of the lack of measurement and reflection regarding students' biculturalism and how it is influenced by their schooling experience, dual language staff and parents assume bicultural development is taking place. Some people associate language acquisition with acculturation. It is true that without language, culture could not exist in its entirety (Kramsch, 2013), but they are not interchangeable. As Hinkel (2009) states, the environment in which languages are learned and taught often serve as research grounds where the impact of culture can be investigated. To expose the common assumption that biculturalism occurs organically for students in the dual language program, HSD can measure biculturalism, reflect on program features, and deliver cultural activities in the classroom that are more experiential and not solely academic.

### **Conditions**

Conditions can be defined as the external architecture surrounding student learning, the tangible arrangements of time, space, and resources (Wagner et al., 2012). To improve the conditions of the dual language program in Hawkins, staff must implement data measures that accurately reflect the effect of biculturalism on its students. Data gathered on the biculturalism levels of current and former students should be analyzed to determine the influence of participation in a dual language program. Hawkins needs to identify measurable goals to determine the dual language program's bicultural impact.

Over time, HSD has adjusted some instructional practices, for example, the minute allocations designated to each content area. Currently, in order to provide cohesion to the program, it is overseen by the Department of Language and Culture. An assistant

superintendent heads this department, which includes a team of five staff members that fulfill the various roles of specific school and teacher support, mentoring, professional development, student assessments, curriculum writing, and additional resources. The Department of Language and Culture provides ongoing support to dual language teachers.

The oversight of the Department of Language and Culture has created program-wide performance standards for students. These standards are measured by multiple English and Spanish assessments, such as MAP, PARCC, and AAPPL. Teachers are directed to use this data to make instructional decisions related to student groupings, interventions, and enrichments.

In order to fully utilize data and plan for instruction, Hawkins commits to providing common planning time for teachers. Teachers receive 240 minutes of planning time each week, and much of it is spent working in teams. The dual language program in HSD utilizes a two-teacher model, allowing students to work with two teachers during the course of a school day, one of which is responsible for teaching the English content and English language development, while the other teacher is responsible for teaching the Spanish content and Spanish language development. The two-teacher model also allows dual language teachers to spend planning time discussing student progress in both languages, planning lessons that cover the same skills, and analyzing data.

The oversight of the Department of Language and Culture, data-based expectations and decisions, and a collaboration structure that supports dual language teachers in delivering a bicultural education for students. These conditions facilitate the sharing of ideas and allow individual student's needs to be considered. To increase the bicultural impact of the dual language program, teachers can incorporate data measures to track students' bicultural

development. Through the existing structures of planning time, teachers can analyze the data and plan lessons related to biculturalism.

## **Competencies**

Wagner et al. (2012) define competencies as the repertoire of skills and knowledge that influence student learning. Teachers across Hawkins School District are expected to be collaborative and to take initiative as leaders. Through analysis of the current competencies in HSD, further professional development is needed for staff that increases their understanding of biculturalism and their role in delivering a bicultural experience. This ongoing teacher development would have a direct impact on the students' cultural competence and bicultural development.

Existing structures of regular professional development in HSD afford teachers the opportunity to grow their competencies in instructional practices. Through ongoing collaboration and an emphasis on teacher leadership, dual language teachers can grow their competencies in providing a bicultural experience for students.

First, Hawkins School District values collaboration among educators. HSD has been recognized as a PLC model district through the *All Things PLC website* inspired by Rick and Becky DuFour (2019). These teaming practices have created a culture of collaboration for roughly twelve years. These practices include multiple team meetings during the school day each week, staff meetings weekly and dual language department meetings each trimester.

The district has also released teachers to be full-time mentors and coaches, supporting staff that are new in their role as well as in specific content areas, including the dual language teachers. Each year all staff members in the district (roughly 2,200 people) take a cultural survey to assess the overall culture of the district. Repeatedly, the district has over 80% of the

staff declaring they are highly engaged and highly satisfied, most recently reaching 89% of all HSD staff. That is nearly double most cultural survey results from other workplaces. High levels of collaboration have contributed directly to academic success for students across the district and in the dual language program.

Beyond these characteristics, teachers need to be highly qualified and show that they have expertise in content and pedagogy. Dual language teachers must additionally have bilingual and ESL endorsements since they are providing the afforded ESL instruction to the designated EL students in the program, as well as second language acquisition to native English-speaking students. English language learners in the dual language program are typically native Spanish speakers who have not yet met the exit criteria for ESL services as determined by the annual ACCESS test given in Illinois. The ACCESS test measures a student's English language proficiency in the four domains of language: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Any student is subject to take the ACCESS test starting in kindergarten if another language is spoken at home. Students who do not meet the necessary exit criteria set by the WIDA Consortium are mandated to receive instructional support from a teacher with an ESL endorsement. WIDA is the acronym for "World-class Instructional Design and Assessment", which is a consortium of states dedicated to the design and implementation of high standards and equitable educational opportunities for English language learners. In addition to an ESL certification, dual language teachers also need a bilingual endorsement because they are responsible for teaching a second language to English-speaking students.

Beyond their focus on language acquisition, teachers also have a focused priority placed on pacing and content delivery, emphasizing cohesion in their instructional delivery. The

district has adopted guaranteed and viable curricula for all subjects, and it has brought teachers together from across the district for professional development to enhance their overall teaching capacity. Teachers are invited to join their grade-level or content-area teammates for one-day summer planning sessions or to attend the Summer Symposium where they can learn new strategies from their district colleagues. Again, providing structures for teachers to strengthen their collaborative practices further speaks to the high value of the team mentality and competency of the staff.

HSD features in the development of teacher leaders. First, at the building level, every school has a school leadership team (SLT) with representatives of each grade level or specialty area. The SLT meets regularly and makes decisions that affect the school and community. The coaching and mentoring programs indicate that leadership is a focal point. Typically, some of the best classroom teachers are asked to serve as district coaches and mentors to assist first- and second-year hires.

HSD is also known for promoting leaders from within. Most of the current principals and assistant principals were teachers in HSD. In order to equip teachers intending to move to administration, the district created an Aspiring Leaders Cohort to provide meaningful experiences to those seeking additional leadership opportunities. This program has developed aspiring leaders through group sessions and mentorship with a current administrator.

With collaboration and leadership as the driving competencies, dual language teachers have high expectations to help each child succeed. Dual language teachers, together with the Department of Language and Culture, have developed a dual language program staffed by highly competent teachers that focus on collaboration and leadership. Teacher competencies can be further developed to promote biculturalism for dual language students. Systems

thinking emphasizes that nurturing the competencies of teachers influences each of the other areas: conditions, culture, and context (Wagner et al., 2012). As dual language staff increase their capacity to deliver a bicultural education, the conditions, culture, and context will adjust accordingly.

## **Findings**

In this section, I explore the extent to which dual language program graduates perceive themselves as bicultural by presenting interview and questionnaire data. Wagner et al. (2012), states “systems thinking is about trying to keep the whole in mind, even while working on the various parts”. The findings from the interviews, combined with general observations of current dual language practices in HSD, paint a picture of the current reality regarding the competencies, conditions, culture, and context.

### **Interview Findings**

In this section, I present the major finding from the interviews: former dual language students believe their participation in the program enhanced their biculturalism. In addition, I present three components related to the major finding: 1) positive experience, 2) impact on future decisions, and 3) positive relationships with peers and teachers. Participants’ responses offer insight into the four arenas – competencies, conditions, culture, and context – in order to determine how the program can provide experiences that increase the extent to which graduates view themselves as bicultural.

### **Major finding: bicultural development**

Interviews were conducted with five former Hawkins dual language students to discover to what extent, if any, the dual language program instilled a sense of biculturalism in them. Participants expressed their beliefs on how the dual language program positively

influenced their own biculturalism. Prior to determining whether the dual language program shaped their bicultural development, I first invited participants to describe their thoughts about biculturalism.

I asked each participant to describe what biculturalism means to them. A former L1 English dual language student shared a definition of biculturalism by stating, “Biculturalism means I have an identity in both cultures.” Another L1 English participant defined biculturalism through the role of the dual language program.

I would say biculturalism means having a background, at least some sort of informational background, on two cultures. I’d say that traditional biculturalism is moving from one country and living in another and combining those two cultures.

The untraditional format is being thrown into learning another culture and maintaining that in some way. It’s not very traditional, when you think about the dual language program.

All five participants shared similar definitions of biculturalism, expressing that it meant having an understanding and a sense of belonging within two cultures. One L1 Spanish speaker succinctly stated, “both cultures make up one identity.”

Two former dual language students, one L1 English and one L1 Spanish, expressed their view that biculturalism extends beyond second language acquisition. They explained how participation in the dual language program provides opportunities for acculturation, which is not limited to a particular place of origin. The L1 Spanish participant describes how biculturalism is broader than language acquisition or knowing about a Spanish-speaking country.

You are involved in not just the learning of language, but you are aware of the culture aspect and what that means to that place. We had a large population of students from Mexico, but that doesn't mean it's just Mexico and you're done, it's all over Latin America. So being aware of everything, not just one group of people.

An L1 English participant shared a similar belief about biculturalism and its extension beyond speaking two languages.

Biculturalism means I have an identity to both cultures – not a culture to American and Mexican – it's a culture of English speakers and Spanish speakers. I can converse with people who speak Spanish and feel comfortable in that setting. They could be Mexican or Hispanic or from all different countries, but also be comfortable being in an English setting and speaking English predominantly. Being able to code switch and converse in both cultures. It's less for me a language thing, and more about how I relate to you.

Each former dual language student who participated in the interview credits the program for developing their sense of biculturalism, suggesting that the conditions they experienced during their elementary years supported their continuing bicultural development. When asked whether the dual language program was a bicultural experience, all five participants responded positively. One L1 English speaker said, "I guess I would call myself bicultural because I have a background on one other culture, and I do make that part of my life some way." An L1 Spanish speaker said, "Both cultures and traditions are now a part of my identity."

All participants agreed that the dual language program was a bicultural experience and that they had grown their biculturalism through their participation in the program. One

L1 English former dual language student expressed how he believes the structure of the dual language program is responsible for his bicultural development.

My experience being bicultural, I would say, is that it has been so influential to speak Spanish and understand culture a lot better than most people would because I had the experience with language and their culture. I would not have learned as much about their culture if I had not been in the dual language program and just learned Spanish as a second language.

Participants shared similar sentiments that the dual language program served as a setting in which students could develop bilingually and biculturally. All agree that they are now bicultural and their participation in the program helped shape them.

#### ***Component 1: positive experience***

All five participants recall that their overall experience in the dual language program was positive. One L1 English former dual language student expressed how she “loved the program” and another stated, “I am who I am today, without a doubt, because I’ve been exposed to other languages and cultures.” Participants shared how they had fun learning two languages, experiencing cultural activities, and developing a positive classroom culture that shaped their dual language experience.

Research suggests that participating in a dual language program positively influences the growth and achievement of members of both language groups (Esposito & BakerWard, 2013; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Takahashi Breines, 2002). Specifically, Thomas and Collier point out that “the cognitive stimulus of schooling in two languages leads to enhanced creativity and analytical thinking” (2003). This high-level thinking is seen in the evidence of academic success for students in dual language programs. As one L1 English-speaking

participant stated, “it (the dual language program) was hard work, but at the same time really fun because we got to learn in two languages.”

In addition, each former dual language student expressed how developing a second language positively framed their schooling experience. Specifically, L1 English participants express how acquiring Spanish language skills was a source of enjoyment and pride. The levels of Spanish language proficiency are noticeable in a participant’s response.

The level that I can speak Spanish now is so much higher than those that took it in high school. For example, a lot of students in my classroom have great vocabulary, but compared to me, it’s lacking. I can speak it comfortably with anyone. If there’s vocabulary that I don’t know about a specific subject, I’m excited to learn that vocabulary so I’ll know it for the future.

Learning two languages simultaneously was an important part of how these former dual language students viewed their overall experience in elementary school.

Four participants, two L1 English and two L1 Spanish, recall culturally based projects that they completed during their elementary school years while learning in two languages. The projects were academic in nature and explored a particular culture of a Spanish-speaking country. One L1 English participant recalled a project that included a variety of products and cultural activities in the classroom, such as making a movie. Other participants recall creating a travel brochure to a Spanish-speaking country and exchanging the information with other classmates. Several of the other activities included learning to dance the merengue, singing traditional songs, and celebrating cultural holidays. These activities added to their positive experience and their overall bicultural development.

Another feature of the program that is viewed positively by these former dual language students is the opportunity to develop a definitive classroom culture and strong bonds with classmates. As one L1 English participant recalls, “It was the same 20 kids, so I became really close with everyone there.” Students in dual language classes typically remain together for the duration of the program, kindergarten through eighth grade, which allows for deeper connections among peers. All participants reflect that the familial nature of the dual language program shaped them positively.

### *Component 2: impact on future decisions*

Participants were asked how their participation in the dual language program influenced their decisions as a young adult. Each participant noted that their involvement in the dual language program has influenced future decisions after leaving HSD. One L1 English participant indicated that her involvement in the dual language program has played an “influential role in all of [her] decisions” regarding advanced schooling and career choices. Another L1 English participant felt as though her dual language experience “prepared [her] to be successful in life” regardless of what she chose to do and she recognized that “if you have language skills, you become marketable.” Three individuals interviewed had trained to become dual language teachers, two of whom are L1 English speakers and one who is an L1 Spanish speaker. One of the L1 English former dual language students was still in college training to be a teacher when interviewed, and she was recently hired as a dual language teacher in Hawkins School District.

Another L1 English former dual language student in Hawkins, who is now a dual language teacher in another school district, expressed his thoughts,

I think I'm a perfect example of how the program has directly affected me and my decisions. When I got to college, I knew I wanted to double major and first was Spanish. And I knew using my Spanish through teaching would be a better route for me.

The graduates described the role of two cultures in their lives. Both L1 English and L1 Spanish graduates have studied abroad during college, traveled to Spanish-speaking countries, and work in jobs that utilize both languages.

Two of the L1 English participants described their experiences while studying abroad in college in Spanish-speaking countries. One traveled to Argentina and selected cultural studies as his academic course during his semester there. The other studied in Spain, and she has since returned to Spain because she claims that studying abroad for two months was “the best experience.” She intentionally chose to live with a host family to be immersed in Spanish culture. Thomas and Collier correlate travel opportunities with dual language participation, stating that Native English speaking children receive many of the benefits of travel to, and life in, other countries, in addition to an increased understanding of other cultures (2003). Both participants state that traveling to Spanish-speaking countries helped solidify their bicultural identity.

Beyond studying abroad, several participants shared how their participation in the dual language program helped them be open to cultural experiences, which included travel. One L1 English graduate shared how the dual language program influenced her decisions:

It has 100% influenced my decisions. Half of the battle with anything new is just doing it the first time. A good example is traveling alone. I went to Madrid by myself. I was running in the train station- even in a foreign country there are always people

willing to help. After doing that- I feel like I could do anything. I'm definitely open to meeting people who are Spanish speakers. It's not so scary anymore, but after being forced into it, it's not so daunting. It might be hard, I might have some roadblocks, but I can do it.

In addition, several participants credit the dual language program with influencing their career decisions. An L1 Spanish participant shared his perspective of how the dual language program influences his biculturalism and his efforts to make a global impact.

Both cultures and traditions are a part of my identity. Both cultures make up one identity. I think that when I decided what to study in school I chose international business. I decided that no matter what I do, I have to use my second language. I have to be broad; I have to be global. I consider myself and I try to be an open-minded person in everything. I try to consider other people's perspective. If it's a new experience and I'm welcomed, I would try it. I think biculturalism is a part of that. Now especially as the world is developing now, being able to speak two languages and understand two cultures is fundamental.

He currently works in the marketing department of a large tool company, helping to create bilingual marketing tools with his international team. An L1 English participant works for an insurance incentive company, and while she is not required to use Spanish in her position, she has sought ways to use her bilingualism, such as proofreading Spanish translations from the marketing department. Both former students are in a position to communicate effectively with a solid identity in two cultures and fluency in two languages.

Participants concur that their participation in the dual language program has influenced their decisions as adults. This includes a multitude of life choices, such as

studying and traveling abroad and seeking employment that utilizes both English and Spanish.

***Component 3: positive relationships with peers and teachers***

All participants feel that their participation in a program based on dual language acquisition brought them closer. Specifically, the L1 English participants felt a deeper bond with Spanish speaking classmates and teachers through structured second language acquisition and cultural activities, which helped them identify with the Spanish cultures early in their schooling years. One participant commented that his classmates felt that they were a “unique group”, and another stated that they were a “tight group” as the only class at that grade level learning in two languages. This allowed dual language students to have inside jokes in Spanish and forged a stronger connection as people, which led to better acculturation to the culture of surrounding Spanish speakers. One native English-speaking participant commented on his strong identity in the surrounding culture in elementary school and his contrasting experience in high school, which is in a separate school district that does not have a dual language program. “I made really, really strong bonds and friendships, especially in Spanish. Being the only white person in the native Spanish speaking class in high school was a new experience for me.”

When asked to reflect specifically on their teachers, participants recall that their dual language teachers had a varied background, and some originated from Spanish-speaking countries and others were native English speakers. Collectively, the participants recalled having teachers from Spain, Mexico, and Argentina. One former dual language student commented on the diversity of teachers’ backgrounds. “It varied wildly. The different backgrounds was awesome. Hearing about their background was fascinating.” Participants

also recognized the influence of their dual language teachers on their overall experience. One shared that “the teachers that we had were incredible, making it fun to do activities in both languages.” Through the conversations with participants, a common thread emerged in regard to the cultural influence of the teacher himself or herself. One former dual language student expresses that each of her native-Spanish speaking teachers had a positive influence on her. One native Spanish-speaking participant states:

There was definitely always that respect – the teachers that we had were incredible.

They made it fun to do activities in both languages. One was from Argentina but raised in the US, so she handled both languages really well. We were open to learning and embraced that.

Participants feel that their dual language teachers demonstrated the competencies necessary to provide enriching learning experiences that led to their success and bicultural development.

The consensus in the interviews shows that participating in the Hawkins’ School District dual language program was a generally positive experience that prepared participants for future decisions and formed positive relationships with peers and teachers. These findings shed light on the impact of a dual language program on providing long-lasting biculturalism. The participants feel that their dual language experience shaped them to be bicultural.

### **Questionnaire Findings**

In this section, I present the findings from a questionnaire that five former Hawkins dual language students completed during the interview session. The questionnaire data aims to expand upon the major finding of the interview sessions, that dual language programs can influence a student’s level of biculturalism. Specifically, the questionnaire data supports one

of the components of the major finding: the impact on future decisions. Participants' responses on the questionnaire offer insight into the four arenas – competencies, conditions, culture, and context – in order to understand how the program can provide experiences that increase the extent to which graduates view themselves as bicultural.

Participants completed a questionnaire that ranked their comfort level and likelihood to participate in cultural activities in both Spanish and English, such as watching TV, traveling to new countries, and obtaining a job in either language. The results are scored on a scale of 1, which is very unlikely or very uncomfortable, to 5, which is very likely or very comfortable. Table 1 summarizes the comfort level of all participants in regards to participating in cultural activities in either Spanish or English.

Table 1

*Comfort Level of All Participants: L1 English and L1 Spanish Speakers*

<b>COMFORT LEVEL OF ALL PARTICIPANTS: L1 English and L1 Spanish Speakers</b>		
	In Spanish	In English
Listening to music	4.8	5
Watching tv/movies	4.6	5
Reading books/magazines/newspapers	4.6	5
Traveling to language speaking countries	4.8	5
Maintaining relationships with language speakers	5	5
Studying language in college	5	5
Obtaining a job that requires second language	4.8	5
Participating in a new cultural experience	4.8	5

Table 2 summarizes the likelihood that a participant will engage in cultural activities in either language.

Table 2

*Likelihood to Participate for All Participants: L1 English and L1 Spanish Speakers*

<b>LIKELIHOOD TO PARTICIPATE FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS: L1 English and L1 Spanish Speakers</b>		
	In Spanish	In English
Listening to music	4.8	5
Watching tv/movies	4	5
Reading books/magazines/newspapers	4.2	4.8
Traveling to language speaking countries	5	4.8
Maintaining relationships with language speakers	5	5
Studying language in college	4.8	5
Obtaining a job that requires second language	5	5
Participating in a new cultural experience	4.8	5

The responses in Tables 1 and 2 indicate that, regardless of the native language spoken by the students or families, there is a slightly stronger comfort level and likelihood to participate in each activity in English. One L1 English participant responded 4 for the likelihood “to read books/magazines/newspapers in English” and “to travel to an English-speaking country.” The U.S born participant who scored these responses as 4 is a native-English speaker, which indicates that it was a matter of preference and not related to her proficiency level in English or lack of belonging in the American culture.

The aggregate results also indicate a high level of comfort and a strong likelihood that participants would participate in all of these activities in Spanish, regardless of their native language. It represents a theme that former dual language students gain a strong sense of

belonging in the Spanish-speaking culture as it influences their lives into adulthood.

Graduates scored Spanish and English cultural activities relatively equally, providing support that the dual language program fosters biculturalism in its students.

Tables 3 and 4 represent responses from participants who are native Spanish speakers. Table 3 disaggregates the responses for native Spanish speakers and native English speakers.

Table 3

*Comfort Level of L1 Spanish Speakers*

COMFORT LEVEL OF L1 SPANISH SPEAKERS		
	In Spanish	In English
Listening to music	5	5
Watching tv/movies	5	5
Reading books/magazines/newspapers	5	5
Traveling to language speaking countries	5	5
Maintaining relationships with language speakers	5	5
Studying language in college	5	5
Obtaining a job that requires second language	4.5	5
Participating in a new cultural experience	5	5

Table 4 disaggregate the data to show the likelihood of participants based on their identified native language.

Table 4

*Likelihood to Participate for L1 Spanish Speakers*

<b>LIKELIHOOD TO PARTICIPATE FOR L1 SPANISH SPEAKERS</b>		
	In Spanish	In English
Listening to music	5	5
Watching tv/movies	5	5
Reading books/magazines/newspapers	5	5
Traveling to language speaking countries	5	5
Maintaining relationships with language speakers	5	5
Studying language in college	4.5	5
Obtaining a job that requires second language	5	5
Participating in a new cultural experience	5	5

Both tables 3 and 4 show that every activity receives the highest mean of five, except for one activity from each table. Native Spanish speaking dual language students are able to feel comfortable in both the dominant and surrounding Spanish speakers' cultures. While the dual language program influences the balanced nature of these former students' biculturalism, it should also be noted that the context in which the school district is set might play a role in their bicultural acquisition. One native Spanish-speaking participant recognized that while his family embodied the Spanish speaking culture of Colombia, he felt like the surrounding neighborhood and community he grew up in was predominantly an American culture, thus providing another bicultural experience beyond schooling.

Tables 5 and 6 reflect the comfort level and likelihood that native English speakers would participate in cultural activities in either English or Spanish. Table 5 disaggregates the responses for native Spanish speakers and native English speakers. While the likelihood scores are lower for entertainment activities (3.3 and 3.7), the comfort level for native

English speakers to watch television and movies and to read books, magazines and newspapers is higher (4.3). Overall, the scores show a strong connection to the culture of surrounding Spanish speakers for native English speaking participants. This confirms that the dual language program provides experiences that create a sense of belonging in two cultures.

Table 5

*Comfort Level of L1 English Speakers*

<b>COMFORT LEVEL OF L1 ENGLISH SPEAKERS</b>		
	In Spanish	In English
Listening to music	4.7	5
Watching tv/movies	4.3	5
Reading books/magazines/newspapers	4.3	5
Traveling to language speaking countries	4.7	5
Maintaining relationships with language speakers	5	5
Studying language in college	5	5
Obtaining a job that requires second language	5	5
Participating in a new cultural experience	4.7	5

Table 6 disaggregates the data to show the likelihood of participants based on their identified native language.

Table 6

*Likelihood to Participate for L1 English Speakers*

<b>LIKELIHOOD TO PARTICIPATE FOR L1 ENGLISH SPEAKERS</b>		
	In Spanish	In English
Listening to music	4.7	5
Watching tv/movies	3.3	5
Reading books/magazines/newspapers	3.7	4.7
Traveling to language speaking countries	5	4.7
Maintaining relationships with language speakers	5	5
Studying language in college	5	5
Obtaining a job that requires second language	5	5
Participating in a new cultural experience	4.7	5

While the likelihood scores in Table 6 are lower for entertainment activities (3.3 and 3.7), the comfort level noted in Table 5 for native English speakers to watch television and movies and to read books, magazines and newspapers is higher (4.3). Overall, the scores indicate a strong connection to the culture of surrounding Spanish speakers for native English-speaking participants. This confirms that the dual language program provides experiences that create a sense of belonging in two cultures.

It is interesting to note the slight difference in results for L1 Spanish speakers on English-speaking activities and L1 English speakers on Spanish-speaking activities. The data suggests that L1 Spanish speakers emerge from the dual language program with a high capacity to speak English and relate to the dominant culture. L1 English speakers emerge from the dual language program with a slightly less pronounced capacity and relationship to the culture of surrounding Spanish speakers. The discrepancy in the data speaks to the influence that the dominant culture has on students beyond school hours. L1 Spanish

speakers are immersed in the dominant culture outside of school, allowing their sense of belonging to develop more thoroughly than L1 English speakers who access the culture of surrounding Spanish speakers only while in school.

The quantitative data gathered suggests that former dual language students in HSD are very comfortable and likely to participate in cultural activities in both English and Spanish. This is significant because participants exited the dual language program in eighth grade. After more than 10 years removed from the program, the data suggests that their dual language experience shaped them in ways that continued to influence their decisions as high school students, college students and now as independent adults.

### **Interpretation**

Five former participants in the Hawkins School District dual language program shared similar sentiments in regards to the influence of the dual language program. Each believes that they are bicultural and their participation in the Hawkins dual language program contributed to their bicultural development. In addition, their overall experience in the dual language program was positive, the program influenced their current and future decisions, and they formed positive relationships with peers and teachers. These results show that it is possible to influence a student's level of biculturalism through a dual language program. More broadly, the results mean that schooling can play a part in developing a person's biculturalism.

First, all five graduates indicated that they are bicultural and were influenced biculturally by the dual language program. I interpret this major finding in part due to a common association of biculturalism with bilingualism. Madarova (2015) affirms that the environments in which languages are learned and taught often serve as a research grounds

where the impact of culture can be investigated. Dual language students access the ability to communicate in two languages, which brings them closer to feeling as if they belong in two cultures. All participants identified as being bilingual and are actively using both languages in their personal and professional lives, as indicated in the questionnaire data.

Additionally, dual language graduates view themselves as bicultural because they participated in cultural activities during their elementary and junior high years. All five participants recalled learning about multiple Spanish-speaking countries through a variety of projects. These projects broadened their cultural understanding of countries outside of the dominant American culture. Both L1 English and L1 Spanish participants referenced these types of cultural activities as being influential their level of biculturalism. Through the delivery of cultural experiences in a bilingual program structure, the Hawkins dual language program served as a means for these five graduates to develop their sense of biculturalism.

As a component of the major finding, these five graduates described their participation in the dual language program as positive. The participants were positive about their time in the dual language program because they saw the relevance of learning two languages and its formative possibility. When speaking about their time in the program, all participants did so fondly, recalling specific memories, activities, and people that made their experience pleasant. I interpret these responses to indicate that these graduates had a positive experience with school due to factors that are common for most students. These factors of having quality teachers, being interested in the topics they were learning and feeling a sense of belonging are common for all students regardless of program placement and were referenced in both L1 Spanish and L1 English participant's responses.

Several participants reflected on their experience as being positive in part because they were inspired to pursue a career in education. An additional component of the major finding is how the dual language program influenced graduates' future decisions. Three of the L1 English participants fulfilled their aspirations of becoming a dual language teacher. These former students associated their positive experience as a student and connection with their teachers with a major influence in their college and career decisions.

Participants also recounted that they made friends that have lasted into adulthood and had good experiences with their teachers. The pattern of building positive relationships with peers and teachers emerged in part due to the nature of the program. Since the dual language program is housed in a larger general education setting, dual language students are a minority group in any given grade level. Responses from all participants can be interpreted as feeling special, unique and more closely bonded to one another because they were learning in a different way than the majority of their grade-level peers. Learning in two languages gave dual language students a different set of priorities than the other general education classes, as well as a common skill set that most of their peers did not have or were not developing. Thomas and Collier (2003) discovered after ten years of researching dual language program effectiveness that there was a strong influence on students' collective identity and culture through the program.

Dual language programs also provide integrated, inclusive, and unifying education experiences for their students. The atmosphere of inclusiveness is the dual-language milieu meets the cultural needs of minorities and provides opportunities for them to experience the world of their nonminority peers. Just as important, nonminority students expand their worldviews to include knowledge of and respect for the customs and

experiences of others. Native English-speaking children receive many of the benefits of travel to, and life in, other countries, along with an increased understanding of other cultures. Many dual-language students value these early experiences, and, as high school graduates, they actively seek opportunities for international travel and employment that uses their second language.

The significance of these findings for the dual language programs in the Hawkins School District is that offering a dual language program has the potential to influence students' overall sense of self and culture. HSD can further affect students' biculturalism through intentional actions that expand upon their overall positive experiences and relationships.

### **Judgments**

Prior to conducting any interviews, I established several research questions. These questions guided the interviews and helped shaped my observations. The primary research question aims to understand biculturalism in dual language students:

- To what extent is a dual language program related to biculturalism in dual language students?

Based on the five interviews conducted, biculturalism is a possible outcome for Hawkins' students participating in the dual language program. Conclusively, each participant stated that he or she felt that their dual language experience from kindergarten to eighth grade was a bicultural experience, and furthermore, they believe that they are now bicultural because of their involvement in the HSD dual language program. They each had positive experiences as students in the program, and they credit it with producing high levels of biculturalism and influencing their decisions as adults. While the degree to which the dual language program influences biculturalism varies among participants, each interviewee states that their

experience in the dual language program played a part in growing their sense of biculturalism.

The secondary research questions illuminate how students determine their level of biculturalism.

- To what extent will an English-speaking student identify with Spanish speaking cultures after his education in a dual language program and vice versa?
- Are there specific actions that schools and dual language programs can be doing to promote biculturalism in dual language students?
- To what extent does a dual language education have on students as they select where they attend college?
- To what extent does a dual language program have on what type of career dual language students will select?

Three of the four secondary questions seek to understand to what extent the dual language program influences students' long-lasting biculturalism. As described in the questionnaire findings, L1 English and L1 Spanish participants felt comfortable participating in cultural activities in both languages, and are likely to continue participating in these activities long after their involvement in the Hawkins dual language program. In addition, there is a connection between participation in a dual language program and college and career choices for these five graduates. The data summarized in the findings positively associate participation in the dual language program with choosing what to study in college. These areas of study include education (with an EL endorsement) and international business studies. These areas of study have resulted in career choices that L1 English and L1 Spanish participants believe were influenced by their dual language experience.

The data gathered through these five interviews with dual language graduates from Hawkins School District shows a positive relationship between participation in the program and the development of biculturalism. To some extent, their participation in the dual language program influenced their college and career choices, as well as had a lasting bicultural impact. The extent to which the dual language program develops an individual's sense of biculturalism is still unclear due to surrounding factors that shape one's sense of culture, including family and place of origin.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings through my research, there are still areas for improvement in regards to creating a long-lasting bicultural experience within the Spanish/English dual language program. While participants agreed that their experience was bicultural, there is still an opportunity to enhance the experience and provide better programmatic structures to ensure biculturalism. The main area that needs to be addressed is the intentionality in which biculturalism is developed through the dual language program model.

The dual language program in Hawkins has many positive attributes and notable successes. Utilizing the current structure of the dual language program, Hawkins can be more intentional about bicultural experiences and measurements for its students. A thorough analysis of the interviews conducted shows that students feel bicultural, but did not describe any intentional bicultural development that occurred during their time in the dual language program in Hawkins. Participants could easily point to their bilingual development through structured curricula, cultural activities and the administration of multiple language assessments. However, it is important not to conflate biculturalism with bilingualism. Graduates recalled positive experiences in the dual language program, but they fell short of

an immersive experience that is embedded with everyday curricula, extension activities, bicultural measurements, and family involvement.

As an organization, Hawkins can promote bicultural development to be as important as bilingual and biliterate development. This would change the way in which teachers designed lessons, measured students' biculturalism and involved families. This would also change the way in which Hawkins approached hiring teachers for the dual language program. Once hired, Hawkins can develop teachers through professional development that more explicitly targets bicultural outcomes. Being intentional about students' bicultural development begins with enhancing the capacity of dual language teachers to understand biculturalism and develop their pedagogy to provide such instruction. To date, bicultural development has been unmeasured, leaving room for growth through intentional action steps.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: TO-BE FRAMEWORK**

The Hawkins School District dual language program has demonstrated success in supporting students, as displayed through multiple assessments, such as MAP, PARCC, IAR, ACCESS, and AAPPL. The evidence of success is largely related to two of the program's goals, bilingualism and biliteracy. Based on the findings of this study, biculturalism is also attainable through participation in a dual language program. Block (2011) states that biculturalism has not been studied with nearly as much rigor as bilingualism and biliteracy, the other two goals of the HSD program. With further emphasis on bicultural development, HSD is poised to deliver a long-lasting impact on dual language students. I envision Hawkins School District enhancing the current strengths of the program with a more focused effort on delivering a long-term bicultural impact. Wagner et al. (2006) remind us that districts are a complex system in which many interrelated features produce the results we are getting.

With sound programmatic elements currently in place, Hawkins School District is in an advantageous position to provide a long-lasting bicultural experience for students in the dual language program. To heighten the level biculturalism in dual language students, I envision several key features going forward for the Spanish-English dual language program in Hawkins School District. These features include hiring dual language teachers with Spanish-speaking backgrounds, providing targeted professional development, integrating cultural elements into the existing curriculum, monitoring bicultural outcomes of current and former students, and evaluating the effectiveness of the 50/50 dual language model. First, I will discuss the communication plan that is important to put into place in order to carry out the proposed vision for success. Then the five features will be addressed across the four

arenas of context, culture, conditions, and competencies in Hawkins School District to enhance bicultural results for dual language students.

### **Envisioning the Success To-Be**

In order for these envisioned features to become a reality, a strong district-wide communication plan is imperative to facilitate coherent action steps in the dual language program. Heifetz (2009) states that strong communication plans nurture interactions across formal and informal boundaries by regularly bringing together groups of people that may not get the chance to collaborate in order to increase learning opportunities. He instructs leaders to identify your loyalties to surrounding people and proceed in accordance of colleagues first, then the community. Hawkins' communication plan begins with a series of professional development meetings to equip dual language staff to better provide students with a bicultural experience. The communication plan continues with messaging to families and community members about the importance of biculturalism and the ways in which HSD is facilitating a long-lasting bicultural impact.

The Hawkins department of language and culture can work with stakeholders to communicate the envisioned future. The focus of these communications will be to discuss the effectiveness of each action step and gather evidence to support these recommendations, as well as collectively determine best practices in providing a bicultural education. The recommendations include areas in need of change across the four arenas of context, culture, conditions, and competencies.

### **Context**

As Hawkins School District develops a plan to strengthen bicultural education, it must consider the broader context in which they exist. Wagner et al. (2006) describe the

context of a district to include the particular aspirations, needs and concerns of the family and community that it serves. In the envisioned future, the broader context of HSD will be consistent in regards to size and demographics. The context of the dual language program itself can be reviewed to better understand how it impacts biculturalism. In order to prioritize bicultural education, HSD must consider how the 50/50 program model affects the bicultural development of its students.

To ensure bicultural development, HSD can evaluate the current 50/50 model. This model divides the academic day evenly among English and Spanish content. Teachers and Hawkins leadership can reflect on if the cultural development is also evenly divided between the dominant US culture and the cultures of participating Spanish speakers. Evaluating the dual language program through the lens of bicultural development will allow Hawkins School District to better understand how to adapt the program to reach the goal of biculturalism.

### **Culture**

Hawkins School District can influence the overall culture by making an intentional decision to monitor factors that shape students sense of biculturalism. In order to provide a bicultural experience for dual language students, staff must intentionally gather feedback to help shape lessons that are experiential, culturally based and explicitly connected to language development. Bicultural attitudes will develop as students see more clearly how the district is striving to understand the factors involved. The culture of Hawkins School District will evolve into one that recognizes biculturalism as an essential characteristic of its students, and intentionally seeks to develop it through the schooling process.

A common misconception is that students who participate in a dual language or foreign language course will naturally grow their biculturalism as they develop their bilingualism. Language and culture are inexorably linked, as culture would not exist in its entirety without language (Kramsch, 2013). We would not be able to know, express, or learn about culture without the use and common understanding of language. However, one can learn a second language without developing a sense of belonging in a second culture. Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2012) state that culture is best learned through shared experiences in a group, and it is not something that is inherited. Hawkins School District can begin reshaping the culture by monitoring the specific factors that support bicultural development instead of assuming it will happen.

Hawkins leadership and teachers can develop multiple surveys that target current and former students to gather longitudinal qualitative data that shows evidence of biculturalism. Questions can be similar to ones posed in this research study, including:

- What does biculturalism mean to you?
- Would you describe your experience in the dual language program as a bicultural experience?
- What cultural activities took place while in the dual language program?
- What else about participating in the dual language program made the experience bicultural?
- How has your participation in a dual language program influenced your decisions as a young adult?

Additionally, HSD can regularly gather feedback from teachers and parents in the dual language program to understand its influence on biculturalism. A vital component of a

successful dual language program is a family and community involvement plan (Whitacre, 2015; Lindholm-Leary, 2016). Whiting and Feinauer (2011) confirm that parents are hopeful that their children graduate the dual language program with a heightened sense of biculturalism. One of the six themes that emerged in their research was that minority and English-speaking parents applied for the dual language program so their child could be immersed in cultural diversity. Since most dual language parents expect cultural immersion to be a component of their child's experience, it is critical for Hawkins to regularly seek both minority and English-speaking parents' feedback, as both groups offer valuable insights about the bicultural development of their children.

Heinrichs (2015) reports that dual language parents have traditionally been asked to share their insights in regards to their child's thinking abilities, creativity, executive functioning skills and language production as a way to monitor the effectiveness of the program. Hawkins can gather supplementary feedback from parents to also monitor the level of biculturalism in their children. Parental insights are valuable in that they provide supplementary evidence to a child's cultural development that may occur outside of the school day. This perspective, along with teacher's commentary on the way they see biculturalism in their current students, would provide a more complete analysis of how the conditions in Hawkins are influencing biculturalism.

Once collected, survey and feedback data can be utilized to influence bicultural learning for students. Dual language staff can adjust instructional outcomes, lesson design and learning opportunities for its students based on the emerging themes from the data. Teachers can begin with prioritizing biculturalism as an intended outcome for their lessons.

From there, dual language teachers can design lessons and experiences that foster bicultural development, starting with the curriculum and resources currently available.

### **Conditions**

It is important to note that maintaining the current structures of instruction in the dual language program is beneficial for Hawkins to move forward with providing a bicultural experience for students. Building upon solid instructional practices already in place that serve students well to gain second language skills and multicultural perspectives, the vision for the dual language program is to better monitor conditions for its bicultural impact. Wagner et al. (2006) states that the conditions of a school district include the tangible arrangements of time, space, and resources. As the conditions evolve over time with new events, new leadership, new teacher, and student dynamics, Hawkins must understand to what extent students are becoming bicultural and then shape its instruction to provide improved opportunities for students.

Hawkins currently utilizes a variety of curricular resources to support language and cultural development for its students. The current curriculum in HSD provides sporadic opportunities for students to study other cultures and countries, utilize authentic texts, and partake in cultural activities. Current resources help provide a baseline education about culture. The language arts curriculum provided by Benchmark publishers has a direct Spanish translation, which is utilized by dual language teachers during the Spanish language portion of the academic day. Teachers also have access to authentic texts, which are not translated versions of English texts, rather written by L1 Spanish speaking authors. While the social science curriculum follows the general education scope and sequence, there are several

points in the program when students study the history and culture of Mexico, Spain, and Latin America.

To enhance these current cultural lessons in the classroom, Hawkins dual language staff can provide authentic learning experiences for student. Through these projects, students can research authentic texts related to places of origin that have significance in their own families or traditions. Students can be strategically grouped for projects to have both the dominant US culture and cultures of Spanish-speakers present. Murphy (2010) states that these partnerships, which include sharing their backgrounds, help both EL's and English-proficient students learn about each other's language and culture, ultimately becoming bilingual and bicultural.

One way to facilitate further student sharing is through digital connectivity. Student groups can include representatives from multiple schools, thus creating an even more diverse group dynamic. Student-selected, heterogeneous groupings that extend across the four dual language schools in Hawkins will add a deeper connection to culture, promoting a better sense of ownership in their bicultural development. Increased connectivity also allows project tasks to include different types of research. Research can be conducted through interviews. Students can interview other students, teachers, and family members to develop a more complete understanding of the associated countries and cultures. While becoming experts on a particular Spanish speaking country, students would have the opportunity to hear stories from other students, teachers, and family members.

To increase the bicultural experiences within the school context, schools can invite families in more frequently to partake in cultural activities. For many children, their family is the most influential social construct and is where together they form shared assumptions,

beliefs and values (Madarova, 2015). Both L1 English and L1 Spanish students are shaped by their family's place of origin, customs and culture. Allowing families to play a bigger role in cultural activities in the school setting can help play a primary role in students' bicultural development. These activities will be informational as well as experiential, and include cultural traditions, celebrations, interviews, fairs, etc. Broadening the context of these activities to include family participation makes them a more formative cultural experience. One example is to utilize a current dual language activity where students make Calaveras, or human skulls, as they participate in the traditional Mexican celebration of Day of the Dead. Allowing families to be part of the activity and share authentic connections to this tradition would connect school and home cultures in a powerful way to provide a more relevant bicultural experience to students in a dual language program.

The conditions of Hawkins School District can be further influenced by district leadership as they coordinate events spanning beyond individual schools. One such way the leadership in Hawkins could influence dual language students is to facilitate district-wide events coordinated across the four dual language schools. Currently, HSD exhibits a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) showcase where each school in the district invites students to share current projects and learnings. A new event for the district-wide Spanish/English dual language program would similarly bring together a wider array of backgrounds and traditions, allowing for authentic connections across the program. In addition, a dual language publication would allow students, teachers and families to gain insight into one another's cultures as well as encourage continued cultural activities and experiences at home. This includes sharing culturally specific phrases in communication, sharing unique perspectives, histories and traditions, and highlighting similarities among

Spanish and English speaking cultures. Events and publications for the community targeted at promoting biculturalism will continue to reshape the context of Hawkins School District.

Furthermore, the dual language program in Hawkins can extend these cultural activities to include more experiential opportunities that take place outside of school. Ennis (2015) concludes that most language learning and cultural experiences take place outside of the classroom. Beyond bringing in enriching experiences through digital connectivity, HSD can also enhance opportunities outside of school. Dworin (2011) reminds us that schooling may only be a small part of a larger set of social and cultural dynamics that influences students in bilingual programs. These include activities such as field trips, travel opportunities, partnerships with the Education Office of Spanish-speaking countries, and local events that display multicultural perspectives. Another opportunity entails pursuing an International Spanish Academy status through the Education Office of Spain, which qualifies schools for access to additional authentic resources, teacher trainings, and teacher exchange programs.

### **Competencies**

In order for Hawkins School District to provide a long-lasting bicultural impact for dual language students, it must grow the competencies of their teachers. Wagner et al. (2006) define competencies as the repertoire of skills and knowledge that influence students learning. HSD can take specific steps to build the knowledge base and skill set of its teachers, which will then affect the bicultural learning opportunities for students. Specifically, HSD can adjust hiring practices and provide targeted professional development to dual language teachers.

To start, HSD can provide more bicultural insight to students as they actively recruit and hire teachers with a variety of Spanish-speaking backgrounds. Teachers could provide a richer learning environment grounded in their own upbringing and traditions, in which students would feel accepted as a member of that particular culture. The overall competencies of the dual language program will improve as the teaching force includes a variety of teachers with Spanish-speaking backgrounds.

In order to advance teaching competencies, Hawkins would become a district that demonstrates a heightened prioritization of biculturalism through intentional professional development efforts, resulting in better-equipped teachers to deliver a bicultural education. Currently, professional development for HSD staff is categorized in two ways: hard competencies, which include technical skills, and soft competencies, which include teaching and communication styles. Dual language teachers in Hawkins can grow their competencies first through relevant lessons on biculturalism, which would be considered a soft competency. Developing a deep understanding of biculturalism, how it forms in children and how it matures through adulthood is the first step in moving forward as a district.

Once understood, HSD can develop trainings that cultivates the dual language teachers' role in providing a bicultural education, which would be categorized as hard skills. Training can be grounded in the work of Wayne Thomas, Virginia Collier, Kathryn Lindholm-Leary and Audrey Murphy, all of whom describe pedagogically sound practices and their associated benefits. In addition, teachers can grow their understanding of other cultures through guided studies. It would serve dual language teachers well to increase their understanding of cultures represented in their classrooms. This will lead to more culturally competent communication and a culturally inclusive classroom.

Beyond teacher trainings, Hawkins can utilize its coaching structure to be present in the dual language classrooms, providing feedback for teachers specific to the presence of bicultural elements. In order to gauge how dual language teachers influence biculturalism, it is imperative for principals, coaches and assistant superintendents to gather real-time, continuous evidence of effective teacher behaviors, curriculum, and student experiences. Evidence collected can provide an accountability measure for the lessons occurring in professional development sessions. Real change occurs when teachers feel informed through targeted development and are held accountable for adjusting their pedagogy. Heifatz (2009) states that a commitment to individualized professional development comes from understanding that the courage to make needed changes resides in people who have a long-term perspective and a stake in the organization's future.

Another competency in Hawkins School District is its commitment to teacher collaboration. A significant reason for the district's continued success with multiple measures is their commitment to collaboration. Hawkins has created more opportunities for teachers to collaborate with other teachers from different schools through grade-level trainings and digital connectivity. Envisioning even stronger collaborative practices, this same collaborative approach can be applied to promoting increased biculturalism. One area Hawkins can address is the frequency with which the dual language teachers will share cultural experiences. With four schools housing a dual language program, teachers have access to a great number of cultural experiences beyond their own buildings. Through increased collaboration utilizing digital platforms, teachers can experience professional development across all four dual language schools with a focus on biculturalism in the classroom. This would emphasize the current strength of collaboration and collegiality

present in HSD, while moving towards a more connected approach across buildings and with a focus on biculturalism.

Hawkins can grow the competencies of the dual language teachers and staff through targeted professional development on biculturalism, deeper understandings of the surrounding cultures of Spanish speakers represented in their classrooms, and increased collaboration across the four dual language schools. This would lead to improved relationships among teachers, students and families, more productive collaboration, and an increased focus on bicultural education within the dual language program.

### **Conclusion**

Drawing on the current strengths of Hawkins' dual language program, it is poised to offer a more enriching and long-lasting bicultural experience. A focused effort on reshaping the competencies, conditions, culture, and context of Hawkins through intentional efforts involving hiring practices, targeted professional development, authentic cultural experiences, surveys of stakeholders, and a program evaluation will support students with bicultural experiences that are more relevant and frequent. Clear opportunities exist for Hawkins School District to emphasize a bicultural experience within its current dual language framework. In the next chapter, I will outline specific strategies and action steps that HSD can take to achieve the envisioned future.

## **CHAPTER SIX: STRATEGIES AND ACTION**

### **Introduction**

When I created my As-Is Chart (Appendix F) and To-Be Chart (Appendix G), I took a broader look at the bicultural impact the dual language program had on students in Hawkins School District. I propose several strategies and action steps to achieve the goal of increasing the long-lasting bicultural impact on dual language students. Based on the findings of my interviews with graduates of the dual language program, it became evident that bicultural attainment is possible through schooling experiences. Through more focused efforts, I believe biculturalism can be further developed in students.

To spur on organizational change in HSD, the first step is proper diagnosis of the system. Ronald Heifetz (2009) states that challenges that prevent change can be categorized as adaptive or technical. Leaders must show discernment when determining challenges that are adaptive and require staff to change their behavior, and when challenges are technical and require staff to increase their aptitude and procedural knowledge. Hawkins School District is presented with an adaptive challenge in regards to biculturalism as an outcome of dual language participation. In order to increase the bicultural impact on students in the dual language program, Hawkins will need implement several strategies and action steps.

Strategies span from curricular updates to extracurricular offerings and hiring practices. Hawkins School District can have a more pronounced bicultural impact on dual language students by targeting specific elements related to the overall cultural experience of being in a school setting. The strategies include:

- hire dual language teachers that have a cultural background from a variety of Spanish speaking countries,

- provide targeted professional development for teachers to grow the bicultural competency,
- integrate cultural elements and activities into the existing curriculum,
- monitor the bicultural experience by regularly surveying students and former students,
- evaluate the effectiveness of the 50/50 dual language program mode as it relates to biculturalism,

Hawkins School District must be strategic in how they move from their current reality to their desired future. Tony Wagner (2006) states that the change process has three distinct phases: preparing, envisioning, and enacting. In the preparing phase, HSD develops a common understanding of the current practices in the dual language program and the needed changes, starting with the most urgent. In the envisioning phase, HSD begins to communicate with and include all potential stakeholders involved in any forthcoming changes to the dual language program. In the enacting phase, changes are executed and continuous reflection and adjusting exists as the ultimate goal of increasing the level of biculturalism among the dual language participants is realized. Each of these phases specifically outlines action steps that support the overall strategies. Wagner et al. (2006) continues saying that as leaders attend to these three phases of the change process, they can lay the groundwork that moves the district towards the greater purpose, which in this case is biculturalism for dual language students.

To continue to grow in the area of biculturalism, HSD can implement several strategies and actions steps that will affect the current context, culture, conditions, and competencies. I organized the strategies and action steps around Wagner's 4C's framework to ensure that I assessed the critical arenas in need of change (Wagner, et al., 2006). Each of

the arenas of change (context, culture, conditions, and competencies) serve as a framework in which strategies and action steps are proposed to increase the bicultural impact for dual language students in Hawkins. Specifically, the action steps are described in terms of phases: preparing, envisioning and enacting.

### **Context**

The context of a school district refers to the expectations placed on those within the organization as well as the expectations from the larger organizational systems, such as the state and federal governments (Wagner, et al., 2006). A school district must understand the surrounding community and the larger context in which it is located in order to accurately diagnose how their context influences particular trends. In this case, Hawkins School District must consider how their unique context influences bicultural development. To improve the context of the dual language program, HSD can evaluate the overall effectiveness of the 50/50 dual language program model as it relates to biculturalism.

### **Strategies and Actions**

In order to ensure bicultural development for students, HSD must evaluate the effectiveness of the current dual language program model. Over the years, HSD has altered the program structure, and now believes that the 50/50 model better serves all students regardless of language background as noted on the state and local assessments. Participants in this study recall a division of language similar to a 50/50 model, however, the subject areas designated for Spanish and English were slightly different among their responses. Standardizing the program model will be helpful for HSD to understand how the dual language structure influences biculturalism. Hawkins School District continually reflects on achievement data and the structure of the program, but are yet to evaluate how the current

program model influences the students biculturally. The start, HSD is to evaluate the effectiveness of the 50/50 dual language program model as it relates to biculturalism.

In the preparing phase, Hawkins can pull recent and historic data from a multitude of assessments (MAP, PARCC, ISAT, AAPPL, ACCESS, and STAMP) to document trends for all dual language students. To create a larger context, the results should be compared to other dual language models in other school districts, as well as non-dual language students in HSD. The information garnered from these comparisons will allow the district to discern how the program model best suits their student population and if it affects bicultural development positively, negatively, or indifferently. In the envisioning phase, HSD can communicate the effectiveness of supporting bicultural development through the 50/50 dual language model.

Once the effectiveness of the program model is determined, Hawkins has the opportunity to adjust minute allocations for each subject area, introduce new curriculum, and provide supplemental resources in the enacting phase. These changes can reframe the context of the dual language services as they may impact the structure of the program. Hawkins School District can understand the context in which bicultural development can flourish by evaluating the effectiveness of the dual language program and making adjustments to increase the opportunities for a bicultural experience.

### **Culture**

The culture of any organization is a powerful, albeit invisible, force that shapes the mindsets and beliefs about the entire system. Wagner et al. states that culture is the “shared values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations and behaviors within and beyond the school” (2006). HSD can positively shape the culture in the district to value biculturalism. In order to

do this, HSD can monitor the bicultural experience by regularly surveying students and graduates of the dual language program.

### **Strategies and Actions**

In order to ensure bicultural develop, Hawkins School District can survey students, graduates, teachers, and families in the dual language program to better monitor the long-lasting bicultural development. To date, no qualitative measure is given to students or graduates that allow them to comment on the bicultural development within the dual language program. This is one reason why HSD is unable to definitively prove if dual language participants exit as bicultural. In the preparing phase, HSD can develop a survey that asks students and graduates to reflect on their bicultural experience in the dual language program. Survey questions should aim to gather information about how students develop their sense of identity and biculturalism inside and outside of school. In addition, HSD can develop a survey for teachers and parents to reflect on the bicultural development of their students and children. In the envisioning phase, HSD can develop messaging to stakeholders in the dual language program about the need for an annual survey and its prioritization of bicultural development.

In the enacting phase, HSD can administer an annual survey to current students. It would serve HSD well to also survey graduates of the program at three hallmarks in their lives: graduation from high school, graduation from college and five years after graduation. Students and graduates can comment on how specific elements of their dual language experience is shaping biculturalism.

In addition, the survey could make inquiries to see how students spend their free time, for instance, as students enjoy music, movies, books in both languages, as well as if students

choose to spend their free time socializing with students from other language backgrounds. These questions were asked to participants in this research project to help illuminate elements of bicultural development. Block (2011) also surveyed dual language students to see how they socialize outside of school and reports that English-speaking students expressed more enjoyment speaking in Spanish and listening to music in Spanish, as well as greater comfort speaking the language in public. A survey of this nature would help HSD know to what extent the dual language program is promoting students to live biculturally. Students' bicultural development could then be measured more regularly at different stages of their schooling experience. The qualitative data would also show how competent the district is in reaching the goal of promoting biculturalism.

Similarly, inviting teachers and parents to participate in a survey would provide meaningful insights for Hawkins staff. Teachers and parents can comment on how they see their students and children developing a sense of biculturalism. They can point to the most effective and influential strategies. Together, teachers and parents can provide a more holistic perspective on bicultural development, which occurs both in school and in the home.

With more accurate information on hand, Hawkins can continue to reshape the culture of the district. Insights gleaned from these surveys will allow HSD to know the bicultural impact of the program, provide opportunities to make changes that support bicultural development, and create messaging to stakeholders about the prioritization of biculturalism.

### **Conditions**

The conditions of a school district include the external structures that surround student learning (Wagner, 2006). These can include the physical conditions of the school, the

conditional expectations placed on student outcomes and the investment of the surrounding community. Hawkins School District can positively shape the conditions of the district by integrating more cultural activities into the existing curriculum, thus making biculturalism an expected student outcome.

### **Strategies and Actions**

Hawkins School District can integrate cultural elements and activities into the existing dual language curriculum. In the preparing phase, HSD can determine the extent to which cultural elements and activities are already included in curricular resources. An analysis of literacy and social studies units will be helpful to determine units of study that contain cultural histories, activities and research projects. In the envisioning phase, dual language teachers and students can be involved in planning the cultural elements to include in their academic content.

In the enacting phase, HSD can deliver these learning experiences to students. supplement their current curriculum by including more cultural activities, such as field trips, virtual field trips, research projects, simulations, and guest speakers. Joel Dworin (2011) tracked graduates of a K-12 dual language program and determined that the influences of schooling may only be a small part of a larger set of social and cultural dynamics that inform language practices of former bilingual students. Providing cultural experiences such as a guest speaker broadens the schooling experience for students. HSD can also utilize activities from the weeklong Language and Culture summer camp and find connections to the existing curriculum throughout the school year. During my interview sessions, graduates of the dual language program referenced cultural activities as a factor in their bicultural development. Expanding the conditions of the dual language program to incorporate even more authentic

opportunities will have a great bicultural impact on the students. Students will be exposed to the benefits of biculturalism by learning about possible future areas of study and employment opportunities, which was beneficial to the graduates interviewed for this study.

Hawkins is poised to improve the conditions of the dual language program to better develop biculturalism by introducing a variety cultural experiences to students. Teachers can plan for multiple experiences that broaden students' perspectives, such as field trips, guest speakers, and cultural activities that are integrated into the curriculum.

### **Competencies**

School districts spend significant time and resources developing the set of skills and knowledge necessary for their teachers to influence student learning. This is known as the district's competencies (Wagner, et al. 2006). In Hawkins School District, it is important to consider how hiring practices and ongoing professional development could increase a bicultural experience for students in the dual language program, which will be discussed in the next section.

### **Strategies and Actions**

In order to further develop students' sense of biculturalism, Hawkins can implement two strategies to grow the dual language program's competencies. First, Hawkins can hire dual language teachers that have a cultural background from a variety of Spanish speaking countries. Second, Hawkins can provide targeted professional development for dual language teachers to grow their bicultural competency.

First, HSD can adapt hiring practices in order to recruit and hire more diverse candidates. As Hawkins School District aims to make the dual language program a more authentic bicultural experience, they cannot overlook the impact the teacher has on the

students. Former participants in the HSD dual language program referenced that the teacher's background provided a unique classroom environment and insight into Spanish-speaking cultures. In the preparing phase, HSD can take inventory of the cultures currently represented among the dual language teachers. In the envisioning phase, HSD can research the extent to which teachers' cultural background impacts their students. John Hattie (2008) documents the affect of numerous factors on the student learning outcomes. He concludes that having a positive view of one's own ethnicity has a positive effect on student learning. Students' view of their own ethnicity is more impactful on their learning than class size, homework, and summer school, to name a few (Hattie, 2008). Likewise, a teacher's nationality, ethnicity, and culture can have an impact on the student learning experience, as it creates a culture of acceptance and positive identity.

In the enacting phase, Hawkins School District can take an active role in recruiting teachers with a variety of backgrounds from Spanish-speaking cultures. This initiative includes developing partnerships with teacher exchange programs, such as with Spain and Mexico, which will allow more diversity in the teaching force of HSD. It also includes partnerships with local colleges and universities to recruit Spanish-speaking students into the teaching profession earlier in their higher education experience. Developing a streamlined system that allows student teachers to work in dual language classrooms during their internships gives HSD a better chance to hire these teachers once they have graduated. In a competitive market for dual language teachers, this can be quite beneficial.

The second strategy that Hawkins School District can implement is to provide targeted professional development for teachers to grow their bicultural competency. Specific professional development on biculturalism will enable teachers to deliver a bicultural

experience for students. In the preparing phase, HSD can reflect on the professional development structures and content currently in place to support dual language teachers. Once inventoried, HSD can move to the envisioning phase and develop a plan within the current professional development structure that supports teachers' understanding and development of biculturalism.

Currently, HSD releases students thirty minutes early every Wednesday to facilitate a weekly professional development session that lasts one hour and fifteen minutes. The first Wednesday of every month is titled 'Job-alike', allowing staff members in similar roles across the district to gather for professional development. With this structure already in place, the department of language and culture in Hawkins can utilize the first Wednesday of each month to gather dual language teachers across the four dual language schools and provide targeted professional development on biculturalism. Teachers can continue to collaborate in weekly team meetings and through virtual meetings with teachers in other dual language schools.

In the enacting phase, HSD can utilize these meetings to provide professional development relevant to biculturalism. Topics include developing an understanding of biculturalism, understanding how biculturalism is developed in people, and how teacher pedagogy enhances a long-lasting bicultural outcome. Strategies to foster deeper learning in dual language teachers include book studies, guest speakers, testimonials, and discussions of bicultural teaching practices. A key action step of the professional development plan will be to gather regular feedback from dual language teachers to know if they are experiencing success with the proposed strategies. Allowing teachers to provide insights and collectively

share their experiences will enhance the overall professional development and create a continuous learning cycle.

In order to sustain their professional development efforts, Hawkins can layer in support and accountability measures. A primary form of support comes through the coaching model. Coaches from the department of language and culture can support dual language teachers by being involved in planning meetings and present during instruction. Coaches can share feedback in regards to specifically agreed upon strategies discussed during professional development sessions. Doug Reeves (2009) states that performance coaching includes focused exploration of a learning agenda, experimentation with new strategies, feedback on effectiveness, and a relentless comparison of the present to the ideal state. Teachers will find support in this model of coaching as they implement new strategies aimed at promoting bicultural development.

Hawkins can take several action steps to increase the competencies of the dual language teaching staff. Specifically related to biculturalism, HSD can revisit hiring practices to actively recruit a representative group of teachers with a variety of Spanish-speaking cultural backgrounds and provide monthly targeted professional development. These efforts will support the goal of delivering a long-last bicultural impact.

## **Conclusion**

Hawkins School District has a strong dual language program that has exhibited academic success over the years. However, HSD can take several steps to ensure that dual language program experience provides a long-lasting bicultural impact for students. These strategies consider how the 4 Cs – context, culture, conditions, and competencies influence

the current reality and pose challenges for future changes. Monitoring measureable outcomes for biculturalism, providing targeted professional development for teachers, delivering heightened cultural experiences for students, changing mindsets about biculturalism, and promoting biculturalism in the broader community are several strategies that will help Hawkins increase the level of biculturalism in their dual language students. In the next chapter, I propose a policy that encompasses these strategies and action steps.

Table 7

*Strategies and Action Chart*

STRATEGIES AND ACTION CHART

Arena of Change	Strategies	Actions
<b>Context</b>	Evaluate the effectiveness of the 50/50 dual language program model as it relates to biculturalism	<p><b>Preparing:</b> Pull recent and historic data from MAP, PARCC, ISAT, AAPPL, ACCESS, and STAMP assessments to document trends for all dual language students to monitor progress compared to other dual language models and non-dual language students.</p> <p><b>Envisioning:</b> Provide rationale as to why the 50/50 model is the most successful model for both native English and native Spanish speakers through school and department presentations, task force meetings, and grade level planning sessions.</p> <p><b>Enacting:</b> With the consultation of teachers, principals, and the</p>

		<p>department of language and culture, refine the program by adjusting minute allocations for each subject area, introducing a new curriculum and providing additional resources to supplement the curriculum.</p>
<b>Culture</b>	<p>Monitor the bicultural experience by regularly surveying students and graduates.</p>	<p><b>Preparing:</b> Develop surveys that ask stakeholders to reflect on their bicultural experience during the program.</p> <p><b>Envisioning:</b> Develop messaging about the importance and benefits of biculturalism.</p> <p><b>Enacting:</b> Administer a cultural survey to current students yearly, as well as reflective surveys to former students as they graduate high school, graduate college and five years post-graduation.</p>
<b>Conditions</b>	<p>Integrate cultural elements and activities into the existing curriculum</p>	<p><b>Preparing:</b> Determine to what extent cultural elements have been included in curricular resources. Analyze how many current literacy and social science units contain cultural histories, activities and research projects.</p>

		<p><b>Envisioning:</b> Allow teachers and students to be involved in planning cultural elements to include in the academic content. Determine which elements from the summer Language and Culture Camp would fit well with the existing curriculum.</p> <p><b>Enacting:</b> Deliver lessons that include a variety of cultural experiences, such as field trips, research projects, simulations and guest speakers.</p>
<b>Competencies</b>	Hire dual language teachers that have a cultural background from a variety of Spanish speaking countries.	<p><b>Preparing:</b> Take inventory of the culture represented within our current dual language teachers.</p> <p><b>Envisioning:</b> Utilize John Hattie’s work that iterates one of the most influential pieces of student learning is the quality of the teacher. Correlate teacher influence on student learning with the cultural impact teachers have on their students.</p> <p><b>Enacting:</b> Recruit, interview and retain teachers that add to the cultural diversity in the program.</p>
<b>Competencies</b>	Provide targeted professional development for teachers to grow the bicultural competency.	<p><b>Preparing:</b> Reflect on professional development content and structures currently in place that</p>

		<p>support dual language teachers.</p> <p><b>Envisioning:</b> Develop professional development sessions that support teachers' understanding and development of biculturalism.</p> <p><b>Enacting:</b> Bring dual language teachers together for monthly installments of professional development related to biculturalism. Develop teachers through digital connectivity throughout the month. Take inventory of teachers' learning through feedback forms to determine how effective the professional development is.</p>
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## **CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Introduction**

All educational institutions must decide how fully they are convinced that all students, regardless of language and culture, can and will learn. Culturally proficient educators provide environments in which students are accepted and supported, based on their individual and unique needs. Culture and language are intertwined, so much so that without language, culture would not exist (Kramsch, 2013). Beyond cultural proficiency, dual language programs aim to create a lasting bicultural impact for students. This venture requires policies that protect and support the educational needs of English learners, both linguistically and culturally.

### **Illinois Context**

Beginning with language, public schools are required to provide additional and specific services for children who are classified as English language learners (ELs). In Illinois, parents complete a home language survey when registering their child at school. When another language is spoken in the home, children are screened to determine their level of English proficiency. A screening assessment includes the four domains of language: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Hawkins School District uses the WIDA Screener (World-class Instructional Design and Assessment). WIDA is a consortium of states dedicated to the design and implementation of high standards and equitable educational opportunities for English language learners. The WIDA Screener is an English language proficiency assessment given to new students to help educators identify whether they are English language learners. It is a flexible, on-demand assessment that can be administered at any time during the school year. Each category is scored, and a composite score is calculated.

This composite score determines whether a child receives English language support from a qualified teacher who has English as a Second Language (ESL) and /or a bilingual endorsement.

The Illinois School Code dictates that students designated as English language learners through home language surveys and English language proficiency testing receive instructional support from qualified ESL and/or bilingual teachers, specifically, 23 Illinois Administrative Code 28. Transitional Bilingual Education outlines the requirements for bilingual services, including identification of students, acceptable programs, and elements of instruction. When 20 or more ELs who speak the same language enroll in a school, the school is required to provide a transitional bilingual education (TBE). If 19 or fewer students enrolled in a school speak the same language, the school is required to implement a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI). A two-way Spanish/English dual language program surpasses the requirements for a TBE, as it enrolls more than 20 Spanish-speaking students and offers at least 50% of daily instruction in Spanish.

The main distinction between the two programs revolves around the native language support given. While both programs offer ESL support to boost proficiency in English, a TBE requires that native language instruction be made available for core subjects. In a Transitional Program of Instruction, native language support may be given as needed to support students but may occur less frequently. Often, schools and districts may not have staff who are able to provide native language support across all languages spoken by the ESL population.

When parents initially register for schooling in Hawkins School District, they are given a home language survey. If they denote that a different language is spoken in the home,

their child is screened by the HSD department of language and culture using the WIDA (World-class Instructional Design and Assessment) screener. Each category of reading, writing, listening, and speaking is scored on a scale of one to six. If the composite score of the four categories is five or higher, the student does not qualify for ESL services. If the student scores lower than a five composite, there are several services available to ESL students. These include push-in, when an ESL teacher supports students in the general classroom; pull-out, when the ESL teacher supports a small group of students separate from the general classroom; and E+, when the classroom teacher is qualified to provide ESL services within the general education classroom; and consultation, when the ESL teacher supports ELs on an as-needed basis (Roberts, 1995). Dual language programming is an additional option offered to students that satisfies all of the ESL requirements through teacher that are both highly qualified ESL and bilingual teachers.

The Illinois School Code states several instructional practices that must be included in any transitional bilingual education program model, including dual language programs.

These include the following elements:

- instruction in subjects which are either required by law or by the student's school district, to be given in the student's home language and in English; core subjects such as math, science, and social studies must be offered in the student's home language,
- instruction in the language arts in the student's home language,
- instruction in English as a second language,
- Instruction in the history and culture of the country, territory, or geographic area that is the native land of the students or of their parents and in the history and culture of the United States.

The final bullet point, which discusses instructing students in the history and culture of their place of origin, is an attempt to foster biculturalism in dual language programs.

Patricia Gándara (2015) argues that a lesson for American schools is that while transitional bilingual education is practiced in some schools and districts as a means to quickly transition speakers of other languages into English, it is in maintaining their primary language that both individuals and the society will reap the greatest benefit. I argue that this approach also allows bicultural development to form more deeply in dual language students, thus creating the potential for a long-lasting bicultural impact.

### **Hawkins School District Context**

Hawkins School District utilizes these multiple program structures to service EL students, including a Spanish-English dual language program. Two-way dual language instruction is one of the acceptable ESL programs outlined in *Framing Services for English Learners* (2016), which outlines the variety of dual language program structures. Research suggests that dual language programs offer an inexpensive pathway to academic excellence, bilingualism, and multicultural awareness, all of which are priceless commodities in the twenty-first century (Murphy, 2016). Furthermore, based on longitudinal data, dual language programs were the only programs that narrowed the achievement gap for ELs between fifth and seventh grade (Heinrichs, 2015).

Hawkins School District currently has administrative guidelines and procedures for collecting home language surveys, administering language screenings, and delivering ESL services through multiple program models, including TBE, TPI, and dual language programs. However, no governing policy or administrative guidelines emphasize the portion of the Illinois School Code that specifically addresses instruction in the culture of the students’

place of origin. The objective of dual language programs is to emphasize both languages and cultures equally, but not all districts implement it with a highly structured instructional model (Cortina et al, 2015). While the school code was written with the intention of supporting ELs, creating a coherent policy that prioritizes cultural studies of Spanish-speaking cultures in the curriculum of the dual language program would benefit English-speaking students as well in supporting a bicultural experience.

### **Policy Statement**

The Illinois State Board of Education outlines the requirements for ESL services and distinguishes two-way dual language programs as one program model for supporting EL students. Hawkins School District is devoting more resources and effort than legally required by the state by providing dual language education to ESL and non-ESL students. Currently, in Hawkins, a policy specifically related to biculturalism through a dual language program does not exist. ESL services are currently administered through the dual language program, TBE and TPI programs from qualified bilingual teachers. Each of these models follows state guidelines for identification of students, regular instructional support from qualified teachers, and ongoing monitoring of academic progress. Adding a current policy outlining biculturalism in dual language programs would provide fidelity to the program and delivery of comprehensive ESL services.

Hawkins has sustained a dual language program for over 20 years. However, there have been inconsistencies in the execution of the cultural components outlined in the Illinois School Code, which are specifically related to relevant curriculum and teacher training. The proposed policy will actually put into practice the cultural components of the state policy and further the expectation to deliver a bicultural experience through the Spanish/English dual

language program. The Bicultural Instruction Policy would expand upon existing practices in HSD and enforce more consistency in bicultural elements of the dual language program.

The proposed Bicultural Instruction Policy would reinforce beliefs already held by Hawkins School Board and administration. The Hawkins School Board has maintained a commitment to bilingual education as an effective vehicle for providing English Learners (ELs) with a full measure of access to an equitable educational opportunity as required by federal and state law. In addition, the Hawkins School Board acknowledges that cultural identity is inseparable from language and recognizes bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism as desirable goals of the dual language program. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students in kindergarten through eighth grade who participate in the dual language program have a formative bicultural experience. The proposed Bicultural Instruction Policy strengthens the Board's commitment to recognizing the cultures of students and teachers as assets to build upon and to support academic success while they acquire two languages in preparation for success in college, career, and life.

I recommend that a Bicultural Instruction Policy be created through the Hawkins department of language and culture, with the approval of the board of education. The policy outlines how the district can successfully implement and monitor the bicultural impact of the dual language program.

### **Bicultural Instruction Policy**

The Hawkins School Board shall offer a bicultural instructional program to students participating in the Spanish/English dual language program in the district. It shall be the responsibility of the district to provide a bicultural education for children residing within its boundaries in kindergarten through eighth grade. The total educational program will

emphasize the development of individual and collective biculturalism through high-quality instructional practices, including problem-solving, decision-making skills, research, and discourse. Organized student activities shall be encouraged to instill the ideals of biculturalism. Continuous effort will be made to maintain the instructional program in such a way that each student can achieve biculturalism to the fullest potential. Dual Language Education will serve as a program model for delivering bicultural education services in addition to bilingual and biliterate benefits.

The Bicultural Instruction Policy emphasizes:

- Research-based instructional practices and services for dual language students,
- Bicultural curricula in core subject areas (math, language arts, science, and social studies),
- Cultural studies of Spanish speaking countries, and
- Continued teacher training, including cultural studies and cultural competencies representative of student demographics.

### **Research-Based Instructional Practices and Services for Dual Language Students**

Dual language teachers shall utilize instructional techniques outlined by the department of student learning and the department of language and culture. These techniques include opportunities for student discourse, collaborative assignments, heterogeneous groupings of students and research methodologies.

### **Bicultural Curricula in Core Subject Areas**

Students will be subject to core curricula that emphasize biculturalism. Each subject area will promote diverse cultural examples, cultural connections, histories, and

traditions. Curricula shall be supplemented with authentic texts and immersive experiences.

### **Cultural Studies of Spanish Speaking Countries**

Students shall be granted a yearly opportunity to study a Spanish speaking country.

Efforts shall be made for cultural studies to include places of origin most relevant to the student body.

### **Continued Teacher Training, Including Cultural Studies and Cultural Competencies**

#### **Representative of Student Demographics**

Twice yearly, dual language teachers will be trained in cultural studies and cultural competencies. Training will include globally broadening perspectives, bicultural educational practices, and cultural studies of students' places of origin.

### **Educational Analysis**

The goals of two-way bilingual education are often stated to be academic achievement, bilingualism, and biculturalism (Block, 2011). The creation of a Bicultural Instruction Policy will have a positive impact on the overall educational experience for dual language students and teachers in Hawkins School District. U.S. News and World Report recently argued that maintaining and teaching languages other than English will be essential to the success of the nation's schools in the coming century (Suárez-Orozco, 2013). A bicultural experience is worth pursuing because students can gain a cultural understanding that increases their understanding of how to think globally. Thinking globally increases dual language students' cultural capital and increases the likelihood for success in a globally connected world (Heinrichs, 2015). A global perspective allows students to consider broader career opportunities even outside of the United States.

Currently, the dual language program utilizes Spanish translations of English curricula for language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. With the creation of the new policy, dual language curricula would include more comprehensive cultural studies, thus leading to an expanded bicultural experience. Cultural studies would include historical and cultural information about the Spanish-speaking places of origin of the students. Further opportunities to research countries, interact with classmates in cultural activities, and share knowledge with the broader community would derive from the adoption of a Bicultural Instruction Policy. Language-based programs provide rich opportunities for students to also experience other cultures. Jiang (2000) states, “between language and culture there is always an interactive influence: the two cannot exist without each other.” Ennis (2015) further explains that some argue that culture should be at the core of language instruction, where the ultimate goal is cultural awareness as well as intercultural communication.

Enhancing the dual language curriculum is one way to increase biculturalism while adhering to the Illinois School Code. In order for teachers to facilitate these cultural opportunities, professional development must align with these expectations. Dual language teachers will receive ongoing, yearly, and targeted training on Spanish-speaking countries and their cultures. These training will not only be informational, but they will include specific pedagogical recommendations on how to best dispense this information to students. Best practices include the use of discussion techniques, cultural projects, presentations, guest speakers, field trips, authentic texts, and other educational opportunities. In conjunction with a comprehensive curriculum, teachers will be trained on how to best provide meaningful, bicultural experiences in the dual-language classrooms.

In regards to curriculum, Hawkins School District will supplement the existing dual language curriculum with additional resources directed at providing a bicultural education. These resources include a variety of authentic texts written by native Spanish speakers from multiple countries. Authentic texts are not mere translations of English texts, and they include cultural features that can be noticed in the characters, setting, and plot. In addition, funds will be utilized to purchase information texts that inform students about Spanish speaking countries. Online subscriptions to the reading websites will also be useful as students research countries and cultures.

HSD will ensure that the curricular resources are being utilized most efficiently by providing teachers regular staff development on best teaching practices. Teacher training will be conducted by the Hawkins department of language and culture, and allow dual language teachers to learn about Spanish speaking cultures as well as instructional practices to deliver this information.

The Bicultural Instruction Policy will have a significant educational impact on Hawkins. Gándara's (1995) findings demonstrate that having language and cultures on an equal level promoted by dual language programs not only enhances the self-perception and well-being of students but also supports academic achievement. The creation of a policy of this nature further promotes the idea that biculturalism is a worthwhile goal. To attain bicultural student outcomes, the policy influences both curricular adjustments, including authentic texts, and professional development focal points, including how to best utilize resources in a coherent manner.

## **Economic Analysis**

The Bicultural Instruction Policy emphasizes the development and delivery of instruction that includes cultural elements. To fully analyze the economic impact of a new policy, it is important to note how students participating in the program will be impacted economically, as well as how the district implementing the policy will be economically impacted.

First, a bicultural education provides a positive economic impact on students as they enter the workforce. Orhan Agirdag (2014) concludes that young Spanish-speaking bilingual individuals earn more than their monolingual counterparts who share immigrant roots. A wider variety of professions are possible for Spanish bilingual individuals because they are also more likely to attend four-year colleges than their monolingual counterparts are (Santibañez & Zárate, 2014). There is an economic advantage to entering the workforce as bilingual, and there also continues to be an increasing benefit to being. Bilingual individuals' linguistic and cultural background is becoming more commonplace, and employers increasingly prefer employees who can reach a wider client base and work collaboratively with colleagues across racial, ethnic, and cultural lines (Gándara, 2015). Beyond bilingualism, biculturalism plays an ever-increasing role in employment decisions.

As students in a dual language program stand to benefit economically from a bicultural education, Hawkins School District must also discern the economic impact of enacting a policy of this kind. In order to implement the Bicultural Instruction Policy, HSD will invest in three areas: curricular resources, teacher training, and cultural experiences. Allan Odden (2000) shares that two of the top twelve proven strategies for utilizing funds include changing curriculum while defining effective instructional practices and investing in

ongoing, comprehensive, and intensive professional development. Together, these investments will utilize existing district funds and require new money to purchase additional resources.

As mentioned, supplementing the dual language program with authentic Spanish-language texts would increase opportunities to infuse cultural studies within current content areas. Further professional development for teachers that supported their efforts to embed these resources while offering guidance to create transdisciplinary lessons is a worthwhile investment.

In addition, the Bicultural Instruction Policy will help staff shape suitable cultural experiences for students. Experiencing a culture is more than simply learning about it and speaking its language. Dual language classrooms are optimal settings for cultural studies to take place due to the demographics of the student population and the emphasis on learning in two languages. The environments in which languages are learned and taught often serve as research grounds where the impact of culture can be investigated (Hinkel, 1999). With increased funding, dual language students could be afforded the opportunity to go on cultural field trips, engage with a variety of people native to Spanish-speaking countries, explore community resources, and develop cultural events.

The economic impact relates to the increased funding of curricular resources, professional development, and related experiences. Each item has a direct impact on the students' overall bicultural experience while fulfilling the requirements of Illinois School Code and the newly created Bicultural Instruction Policy.

## **Social Analysis**

Bilingual programs by nature are a social venture due to the emphasis on language instruction. The addition of the Bicultural Instruction Policy would further enhance the social experience to be cultural as well. Culture is a learned social construct, and often a shared experience in groups (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2012). As a dual language program consists of social interactions in two languages, the Bicultural Instruction Policy will bring social benefits to L1 English speakers and L1 Spanish speakers alike. The L1 designation refers to which language the students are stronger in when entering the dual language program in kindergarten. While learning Spanish, L1 English-speaking students would also be learning and experiencing a variety of cultures where the Spanish language is spoken. Similarly, L1 Spanish speaking students would be preserving the language and culture of their place of origin, while expanding their bicultural education as they learn in a setting where the dominant language is English. The ultimate goal of the program is bicultural affirmation, where individuals in both groups respect, celebrate and feel a sense of belonging in both cultures (Lindsey, 2018).

The Bicultural Instruction Policy also prevents L1 Spanish speaking students from being potentially marginalized. Hawkins School District is set in a dominant English speaking community, of which L1 Spanish speaking students know well but may not feel fully accepted. If Latino/a students in the dual language program are also not exposed to the culture of their place of origin, they could begin to feel that they do not belong in either cultural group. In addition, lack of belonging and acceptance can lead to bullying behaviors that isolate individuals or groups of people because of cultural differences. Huang and Cornell (2019) studied the effects of bullying by surveying 155,000 seventh and eighth-grade

students and concluded that bullying continues to occur because of race and ethnicity. A possible solution is multicultural education programs that serve as a means for increasing understanding and acceptance of individual differences that reduce bullying and teasing (Huang & Cornell, 2019).

Parents and families of dual language students are impacted by the creation of a new school policy. This particular policy focused on how dual language education would positively affect families largely because of the connection with their own heritage and culture. One of the vital components of a successful dual language program includes a parental and community involvement plan (Whitacre, 2015). The social implications include increasing the overall cultural awareness and bicultural attitudes for dual language students as well as their families. The dual language program in HSD would be viewed in the community as more diverse, accepting, culturally competent, and holistic for students.

### **Political Analysis**

Illinois School Code is a governing document that arose from politicians agreeing on consistent services for a particular population of students. Locally, bilingual services are viewed through the lens of the shifting and prevalent demographics of the student population. In a district like Hawkins, the population of students is increasing in diversity with more students speaking other languages. Shifting landscapes has historically made it difficult for the minority to be fully accepted by the majority. The goal of the Bicultural Instruction Policy is to both fulfill the requirements given by state politicians while growing the acceptance of local community members by a focused effort to provide cultural studies through the dual language program.

High-stakes and standardized assessments have become increasingly politicized as legislation is tied to school district funding. Through No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top legislation, school districts were held accountable for maintaining adequate yearly progress on normed assessments by means of increased or decreased funding. While providing a strong sense of accountability for student learning, these initiatives also increased meddling and oversight from politicians across local, state, and federal governments. Through qualitative research on two dual language programs, researchers found that accountability through high stakes assessments has powerful negative consequences for bilingual students (Palmer et al, 2015). The intense pressures brought about by an excessively high stakes accountability system, contributed to an ultimate abandonment of the enrichment-based goals of the dual language program model in favor of monolingual content mastery and success on standardized assessments. The direct connection between dual language programming and high scores on state assessments creates a political connection to the implementation and sustainability of the program.

It is also important to consider how the public will view the creation of policy. Creating a policy for a particular group of students could be viewed by the broader community as an act of favoritism. Politically, it is beneficial to understand public sentiment, as groups can yield political power through public school channels such as the board of education. In this case, the Bicultural Instruction Policy is grounded in the Illinois School Code and provides enrichment to the already existent program structure.

### **Legal Analysis**

Policies govern actions taken by school staff and are approved by the school board. Once approved, policies become actionable in terms of implementation, employment, and

disciplinary steps. The Bicultural Instruction Policy is derived from another legal document, the Illinois School Code. Outlined in section 23, Illinois School Code assures transitional bilingual education for students who qualify according to consistent criteria. The dual language program legally complies with all of the requirements outlined in the school code. The new policy would bolster these requirements by paying particular attention to the cultural components. To date, the bicultural instruction and teacher training is sporadic and uncoordinated. The adoption of a new policy would positively influence the overall dual language experience while adhering to legal expectations.

The Bicultural Instruction Policy addresses the need to be culturally inclusive of its participants, thus creating an environment of cultural proficiency. Without attention to the cultural diversity within the program, bullying behaviors could emerge. The U.S. Department of Education (2010) cautioned schools that bullying could have broader legal significance when it involves race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religion, national origin, or disability status. When bullying in one of these categories is so severe or pervasive that it interferes with the student's ability to benefit from the school's educational services, it constitutes a civil rights violation. Schools receiving federal funding are obligated by law to respond to incidents of harassment and, more broadly, to eliminate any hostile environment, and its effects and to take steps to prevent the harassment from recurring. Specifically, the Bicultural Instruction Policy aims to prevent any bullying related to race and national origin by educating students in the program and creating a sense of biculturalism that affirms and celebrates both cultures.

## **Moral and Ethical Analysis**

Public schools are charged with providing the best possible education to all of its students. Policy surrounding bilingual services help ensure that students below proficiency levels in English are given additional support to help close the achievement gap. The Bicultural Instruction Policy in Hawkins School District would afford all students in the dual language program an opportunity to grow their individual biculturalism. The instructional models and professional development design would include all students and teachers in the program, ensuring equity in services. Dual language programs address inequities in access to education and quality of instruction for naïve English speakers and EL students, as addressed in the civil rights movement in the U.S. and international agreements about the rights of children to learn in a language they understand (Cortina et al, 2015). The Bicultural Instruction Policy would uphold the ethical obligation to treat all students fairly, regardless of language or cultural background. Teachers would provide services that would not be seen as partial to a particular demographic of students.

A current expectation of school districts is to deliver cultural competency training to all staff in order to recognize implicit biases and act culturally responsive to all students. *The Cultural Proficiency: Manual for School Leaders* includes a conceptual framework for culturally proficient practices (Lindsey et al, 2018). This tool encourages teachers to first self-assess their own culture and bias in attempts to fully value diversity and understand how experiences inform our understanding of others, especially students in the classroom. In addition to continued explorations of the conceptual framework for culturally proficient practices, the new policy in HSD would expand on this expectation by adding additional teacher training more specific to the cultures represented in the program. Ethically, the areas

outlined in the Bicultural Instruction Policy are inclusive, culturally competent, and equitable to all students.

### **Implications for Staff and Community Relationships**

The implementation of the Bicultural Instruction Policy in Hawkins School District will have implications on stakeholder relationships. The staff, students, and community will be impacted by adopting this policy. Staff and students will be impacted by the adjustments in instructional expectations, curricular resources, and professional development sessions. The community members will be impacted by the increased focus on bilingualism and biculturalism, leading to stronger messaging out to the community and among families. Even community groups that are not associated with the school district will be influenced as dual language program staff develop a wider network of organizations to possibly provide cultural experiences for students outside the school. Each of these stakeholders will experience an added emphasis on biculturalism in the dual language program.

The proposed Bicultural Instruction Policy in Hawkins establishes expectations for cultural studies and increased teacher training in cultural competencies. Dual language staff will adjust their lessons to include additional cultural studies and experiences. With the addition of authentic texts and resources, teachers will have more resources to infuse cultural elements into more lessons throughout the school year. In addition, staff will notice an impact on their professional development. They will now devote more time to becoming culturally competent and more knowledgeable about Spanish speaking countries. While the policy continues to address expectations for teaching English learners, staff will be able to continue many of their current practices.

As staff members grow in their capacity to teach through development and resources, students will also be impacted by the Bicultural Instruction Policy. The main goal of the policy is to provide dual language students with a bicultural experience while maintaining a strong focus on providing second language instruction and English language support. Students will be influenced by the increase in cultural studies and experiences that will shape their sense of biculturalism more than in a program that only measures language production.

The community surrounding Hawkins School District might not notice the impact of the policy as drastically as the staff and students. However, the Bicultural Instruction Policy will reach both those associated and unassociated with the district. For those groups of parents or community members that are familiar with the dual language program, it will become evident that students are participating in more cultural studies. During curriculum nights, parents will be informed about the topics of study, including topics and experiences related to Spanish speaking countries. Community groups, such as the local libraries, school district advisory group, bilingual parent advisory council, and others will notice the impact of the policy as students and staff lean on them more heavily to provide counsel, resources, and permissions to increase cultural studies.

A new endeavor for HSD is to pursue people and groups in the community that could serve the program as cultural experts. Parents, community members, and organizations will help provide a local example of those that are bicultural and experts on Spanish speaking countries. Fostering a partnership with the Spanish embassy is one example of how HSD can leverage community groups to create more opportunities for dual language students to experience Spanish-speaking cultures in connection with the established curriculum.

The adoption of the Bicultural Instruction Policy will ripple out into the district and community as stakeholders become aware of the emphasis on biculturalism. The infusion of cultural studies, resources, and professional development will affect staff and students. Community groups will be connected in a network of schools and businesses that aim to provide authentic, enriching cultural experiences and resources for students. The growing network will bring more visibility to the dual language program and allow students broader opportunities and experiences now and in the future.

### **Conclusion**

In order to create a bicultural experience for dual language students, it is imperative to adopt a policy that emphasizes a balanced approach to language and cultural studies. The Bicultural Instruction Policy in Hawkins School District maintains high-quality services to English language learners, while growing the cultural focus for all students in regards to Spanish speaking countries. The importance of this policy is found in the need to foster students that are global citizens and can utilize two languages while belonging to two cultures.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION**

### **Introduction**

Dual language programs exist to provide students with an enrichment opportunity. The benefits of participating in a dual language program have been documented for both L1 English and L1 Spanish speakers. These benefits largely reference academic gains in the fields of bilingualism and biliteracy. Known to a lesser extent is the development of biculturalism in dual language students. I explored the impact that a dual language program has on the long-lasting bicultural effect on students. Biculturalism is the identification and belonging of two cultures (DuBois, 2008). In today's global society, belonging in two cultures is beneficial for personal and professional reasons. Dual language programs that prioritize bicultural development will add long-lasting value to participants.

### **Discussion**

Hawkins School District has offered a Spanish/English dual language program for 25 years. Throughout the past 25 years, Hawkins has adjusted the program model based on data trends and instructional outcomes. Program evaluations are conducted regularly by the leadership team in Hawkins to determine the overall success of dual language students. My program evaluation more specifically targeted the current 50/50 dual language model in Hawkins to determine if it was effective in providing students with a long-lasting bicultural impact. Based on the evaluation, I identified several factors that support the development of biculturalism and several areas that require change. The framework for the analysis consisted of four arenas: competencies, conditions, culture, and context (Wagner et al., 2012). Within each of these areas, I discerned that the current dual language model in Hawkins serves the students well and is poised to support further bicultural development. While the dual

language program has many strengths, several intentional steps can be taken by HSD leadership to ensure bicultural development. These steps aim to improve the main areas that need change, which consist of providing bicultural professional development for dual language staff, developing goals and monitoring bicultural outcomes, shaping mindsets around the importance of biculturalism, and promoting biculturalism throughout the Hawkins community.

In order to meet the goal of a long-lasting bicultural impact, I created an organizational plan that addresses each area that needs change. Beginning with careful analysis of the current reality in Hawkins, I then created a plan for Hawkins to reach the envisioned future of developing biculturalism in dual language students. The plan includes action steps along the continuum of three phases: preparing, envisioning and enacting (Wagner et al., 2012), and each step supports improvements across the 4Cs. These steps include monitoring measurable outcomes for biculturalism, providing targeted professional development for teachers, delivering heightened cultural experiences for students, changing mindsets about biculturalism, and promoting biculturalism in the broader community. Each step in the organizational plan allows Hawkins to build on existing strengths and structures while intentionally developing staff, students, and community members in bicultural education.

To further support the changes recommended in the organizational plan, I created a Bicultural Instruction Policy. This policy emphasizes bicultural education within the Hawkins dual language program. Since no specific policy on biculturalism exists, I advocate for creating one that addresses several action steps from the organizational plan. Specifically, the Bicultural Instruction Policy calls for research-based instructional practices, bicultural

curricula, cultural studies of Spanish speaking countries and continued teacher training on biculturalism and cultural competencies. The policy addresses the organizational plan by discussing enhanced and purposeful cultural activities for students, as well as investing in targeted professional development for teachers.

The entire process, including the program evaluation, research, and policy advocacy is tied to the purpose of determining the extent to which extent biculturalism develops in students who participate in the Hawkins dual language program. Each strategy and action step directly correlates with the identified areas that need to change to reach the goal of increasing the bicultural impact in dual language students. While other factors could influence a person's bicultural development, this process supports the belief that participating in a dual language program may positively influence a student's sense of biculturalism.

### **Leadership Lessons**

Throughout this process, I have learned several key leadership lessons. The two main lessons revolve around organizational change and effective processes, a greater understanding of cause-and-effect relationships in education, and the investment needed from leaders to shape and reshape mindsets of stakeholders. Each leadership lesson has shaped me as a leader and allowed me to further explore my influence in my current role.

First, I grew my understanding of the continuous process of organizational change. As I researched the context of Hawkins School District, I discovered that the dual language program model has been altered over the past twenty-five years. Each alteration was based on the results from multiple indicators of the students in the program, as well as research-based practices recommended by experts in the field. Program adaptations include changing language allocations from an 80/20 model to a 50/50 model, as well as from a single teacher

who delivered instruction in both languages to a two-teacher model in which students learned from two language-specific teachers.

Similarly, curricular changes were made during the existence of the program to address specific language and content shortcomings as noted on student results. Hawkins also changed the assessments used to track the success of the program and introduced new assessments to target specific areas of language acquisition, such as the AAPPL test. As I more thoroughly researched how these changes impacted the program and district as a whole, it became apparent that this process involves strong leadership and layers of implementation.

Organizational change requires leadership and communication. Doug Reeves (2009) lays out several action steps critical to leading change in schools. These include recognizing effective practices, emphasizing effectiveness over popularity, and making the case for change compelling. Additionally, Reeves states that many see a change in the school systems as a zero-sum game, meaning that sacrifice in one area must be made to introduce something new. As a leader, it is important to understand how shifting priorities affect the big picture. I believe that an increased prioritization of bicultural experiences in the dual language program would not interfere with the other goals of the program (the development of bilingualism and biliteracy). Leadership in the dual language program can show how these goals are interrelated and promoting bicultural experiences, activities, and curricula further support second language acquisition and overall academic success.

I believe that biculturalism is an asset for people and a worthwhile pursuit for the Hawkins School District. In doing so, HSD would need to move forward from the status quo and adjust instructional approaches and hiring practices. In order to change the traditional forms of thinking, a leader must effectively communicate the vision, gather support from

stakeholders, and demonstrate how the proposed changes are beneficial. As a leader, I understand that each of these components is predicated on building positive relationships with stakeholders and must be continuously revisited.

The second leadership lesson I learned is that narrowing down a cause-and-effect relationship is complex. During my research, each participant declared that they are bicultural and cited their participation in the Hawkins dual language program as a primary factor in their bicultural development. I also recognize that a person's cultural, bicultural, or multicultural identity is complex and multi-layered. The acculturation process takes time, repetition and a sense of belonging. A person's cultural identity is tied to their surroundings, both location and people. To isolate someone's cultural development to only their schooling experience may be incomplete and not take into account important developmental factors outside of school.

I learned that leaders must be careful when diagnosing a cause and effect relationship related to school improvements. When analyzing results, it is important to keep in mind that there is not always a direct correlation from reasons to results, as there may be multiple factors that contribute to the outcomes. In some cases, results may occur even without any intentional actions. In this case, five dual language graduates reported feeling bicultural. Their participation in the dual language program did influence their sense of belonging in two cultures. Further research would need to be conducted to understand how other factors, such as family, traditions, place of origin also contribute to their sense of biculturalism. As a leader, it would be misguided to believe that changing elements of the dual language program would ensure bicultural development for all participants and neglect the importance of outside factors that potentially influence students' cultural identity.

## **Conclusion**

In today's society, demonstrating cultural competency and a global mindset are important skills. Schools must evolve to prioritize the development of these skills in students to prepare them for future opportunities. Biculturalism embodies cultural competencies and extends one's perspective to be more global. Dual language programs serve as an ideal setting for students to access a bicultural experience. The results of my research show that biculturalism is a possible outcome for participants of a dual language program and that it positively affects the decisions of graduates. If we want today's students to grow up to exemplify a sense of belonging in more than one culture, the capacity to relate across two cultures and a heightened sense of inclusivity, dual language programs must prioritize biculturalism.

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## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW INFORMED CONSENT

### Informed Consent

My name is Quinn Wulbecker, and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University. I am asking you to participate in the study entitled, **“Biculturalism in Dual Language Programs”** occurring from December 2017 - June 2018. The purpose of this study is to understand how participation in a Spanish-English dual language program influenced participants’ development of biculturalism. This form outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

Please understand that the purpose of the study is to explore the impact of a Spanish/English dual language program on students’ biculturalism and *not* to evaluate the teaching or the dual language program itself. Participation in this study will include:

- One questionnaire to gain your comfort level and likelihood to participate in cultural activities in both English and Spanish, such as listening to music and reading literature.
- One individual interview to gain insights and understanding about the extent to which in which the dual language program influenced your bicultural development.
  - Interviews will last up to 45 min. and include approximately 10 questions to understand how participants have developed biculturally through their experience in a dual language program.
  - Interviews will be recorded and participants may view and have final approval on the content of interview transcripts.

Your participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time without penalty or bias. The results of this study may be published or otherwise reported at conferences and employed to inform dual language practices in Schaumburg School District 54. Participants’ identities will in no way be revealed. Data will be reported anonymously and bear no identifiers that could connect data to individual participants.

Only I will have access to digital interview recordings and transcript notes. They will be physically safeguarded on my password protected hard drive. Upon completion of the research, I will delete/destroy all recordings and notes from these interviews.

There are no anticipated risks or benefits, any greater than that encountered in daily life. Further, the information gained from this study could be useful to our school district and other schools and school districts looking to document the influence of a dual language program.

Upon request you may receive summary results from this study and copies of any publications that may occur. Please email the researcher, Quinn Wulbecker at [quinnwulbecker@sd54.org](mailto:quinnwulbecker@sd54.org) to request results from this study.

In the event that you have questions or require additional information, please contact the researcher, Quinn Wulbecker at [quinnwulbecker@sd54.org](mailto:quinnwulbecker@sd54.org) or 847-357-5300.

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that have not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact Dr. Jason Steggemoller at [jason.stegemoller@nl.edu](mailto:jason.stegemoller@nl.edu) or Dr. Shaunti Knauth, chair of NLU's Institutional Research Review Board at [shaunti.knauth@nl.edu](mailto:shaunti.knauth@nl.edu) or 312-261-3526. The IRRB chair is located at National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL.

Thank you for your consideration.

By signing below, you are providing consent to participate in a research project conducted by Quinn Wulbecker, doctoral student at National Louis University, Chicago.

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Participant's Signature

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Date

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Researcher's Signature

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Date

## **APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW INVITATION EMAIL**

Dear Former Dual Language Student,

Your input is needed! I am conducting a program evaluation of the school district 54 Spanish/English dual language program. You have been selected because you previously participated in a district 54 dual language program and are between the ages of 18 and 25. I would like to gather former students like yourself to determine how the program influenced your level of biculturalism.

You are invited to participate in a one-on-one interview. It should last approximately 45 minutes. I am interested in documenting diverse perspectives on young adult's level of biculturalism after participating in a Spanish/English dual language program and identifying important patterns across grade levels and school buildings within the district.

The interviews will consist of roughly 10 questions that relate to your experience in district 54, as well as current life choices that may have been influenced by your participation in a dual language program.

Please indicate your willingness to participate using this [online form](#). If you are selected, I will provide you with an informed consent form and a meeting date/time. Please be assured that your identity and interview responses will remain anonymous. Pseudonyms will be used on all transcripts. Recordings and transcript will be held my password-protected laptop and destroyed at the conclusion of my study. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration,

Quinn Wulbecker  
847-357-5289

## **APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. The purpose of this interview is to understand your experience in the district 54 dual language program and how it impacted your development of a bicultural identity. I hope to gain ideas for improving the planning, implementation, and evaluation of cultural elements within the Spanish/English dual language program within the district. Before we begin, I would like to review a few ground rules for the interview.

- a. I am going to ask you several questions; we do not have to go in any particular order and I can repeat a question at any time.
- b. I am interested in your opinions and whatever you have to say is fine. There are no right or wrong answers. I am just asking for your opinions based on your own personal experience. I am here to learn from you.
- c. Do not feel that you need to answer every question.
- d. I am recording the discussion today and also taking notes because I don't want to miss any of your comments. I will treat your answers as confidential. I will not include your names or any other information that could identify you in any reports I write. I will destroy the notes and recordings after I complete my evaluation. In the meantime, the recordings and notes will be kept on my password-protected hard drive.
- e. Finally, this discussion is going to take about 45 minutes. Do you have any questions before we start?

## **APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Describe your overall experience with the Spanish/English dual language program.
2. How would you describe your social interactions with other students in the dual language program?
  - a. Was there a mix of speakers present?
  - b. What predominant language was spoken during free time?
3. How would you describe the predominant culture of the classroom?
4. What does biculturalism mean to you?
5. What is the predominant culture of your family?
6. Would you describe your experience in the dual language program as a bicultural experience?
  - a. What cultural activities took place?
  - b. What else made the experience bicultural?
7. How has your participation in a dual language program influenced your decisions as a young adult?
8. Please rate your level of comfort on a scale of 1 to 5 with your participation in these areas:
  - a. Listening to music in English? Spanish?
  - b. Watching TV/movies in English? Spanish?
  - c. Reading books/magazines/newspapers in English? Spanish?
  - d. Traveling to different countries that primarily speak English? Spanish?
  - e. Having friends/relationships with people who primarily speak English? Spanish?
  - f. Studying English and/or Spanish in college
  - g. Obtaining a job that requires you to use English? Spanish?
  - h. Participating in a new cultural experience in English? Spanish?
9. Please rate your level of likelihood on a scale of 1 to 5 with your participation in these areas:
  - a. Listening to music in English? Spanish?
  - b. Watching TV/movies in English? Spanish?
  - c. Reading books/magazines/newspapers in English? Spanish?
  - d. Traveling to different countries that primarily speak English? Spanish?
  - e. Having friends/relationships with people who primarily speak English? Spanish?
  - f. Studying English and/or Spanish in college
  - g. Obtaining a job that requires you to use English? Spanish?
  - h. Participating in a new cultural experience in English? Spanish?
10. Please expand on your comfort level and likelihood to participate in a new cultural experience different than your predominant culture and/or language.

11. Are there any other issues related to biculturalism in dual language programs that we haven't touched upon that you would like to discuss? Is there anything else that I should consider in my study of biculturalism in our district?

## APPENDIX E: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant:

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire regarding your current comfort level and likelihood to participate in the listed activities in two languages. For each activity, please choose the number you feel best describes yourself now.

COMFORT LEVEL OF PARTICIPATING IN ACTIVITIES IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH					
1 – Very Uncomfortable	2 – Uncomfortable	3 – Neutral	4 – Comfortable	5 – Very Comfortable	
Choose your comfort level for participating in these activities in <b>Spanish</b>					
Listening to music	1	2	3	4	5
Watching TV/movies	1	2	3	4	5
Reading books/magazines/newspapers	1	2	3	4	5
Traveling to Spanish speaking countries	1	2	3	4	5
Maintaining relationships with Spanish speakers	1	2	3	4	5
Studying Spanish in college	1	2	3	4	5
Obtaining a job that requires Spanish	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in a new cultural experience in Spanish	1	2	3	4	5
Choose your comfort level for participating in these activities in <b>English</b>					
Listening to music	1	2	3	4	5
Watching TV/movies	1	2	3	4	5
Reading books/magazines/newspapers	1	2	3	4	5
Traveling to English speaking countries	1	2	3	4	5
Maintaining relationships with English speakers	1	2	3	4	5
Studying English in college	1	2	3	4	5
Obtaining a job that requires English	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in a new cultural experience in English	1	2	3	4	5

## LIKELIHOOD OF PARTICIPATING IN ACTIVITIES IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH

1 – Very Unlikely

2 – Unlikely

3 – Neutral

4 – Likely

5 – Very likely

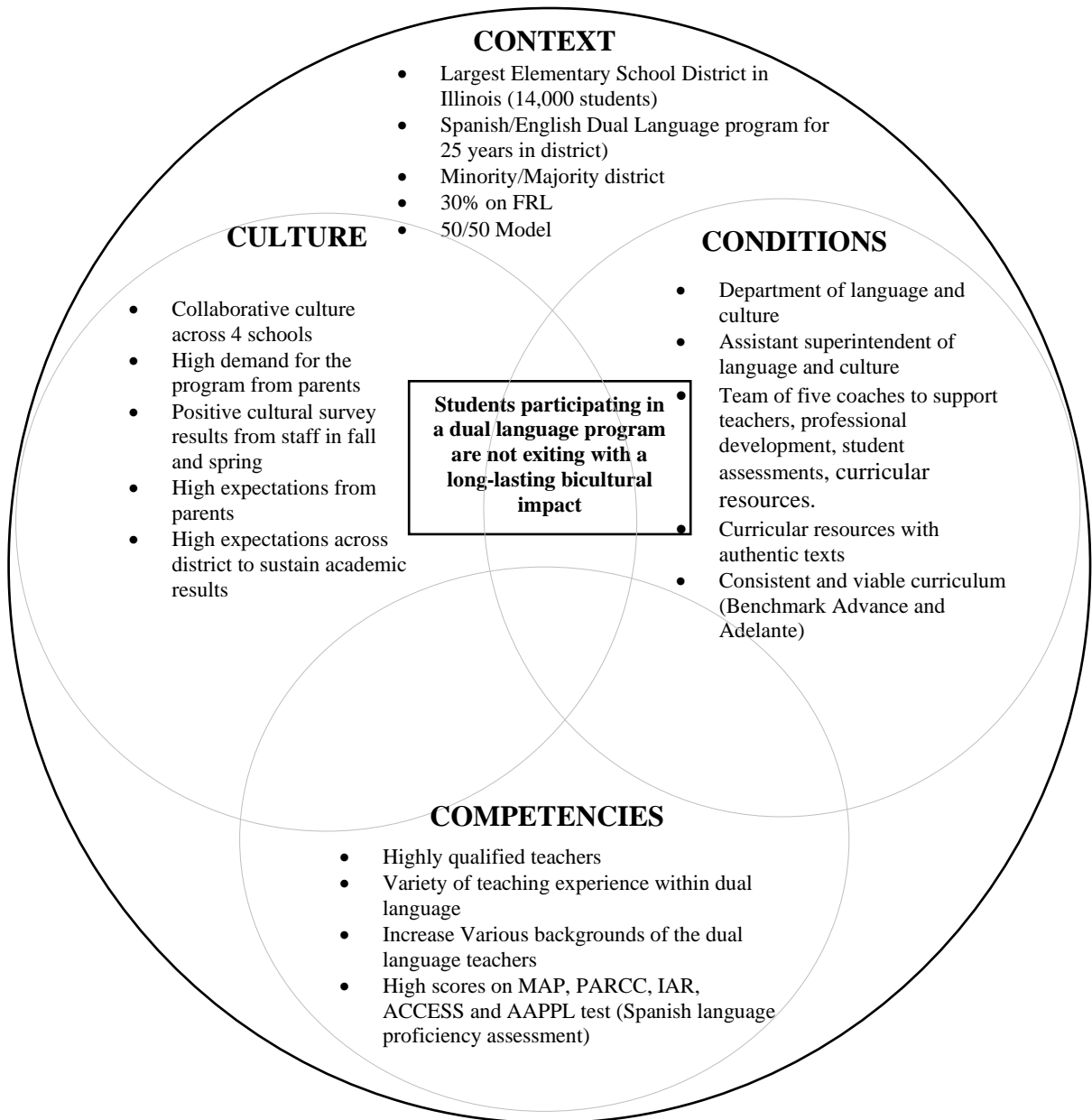
### Choose your likelihood of participating in these activities in **Spanish**

Listening to music	1	2	3	4	5
Watching TV/movies	1	2	3	4	5
Reading books/magazines/newspapers	1	2	3	4	5
Traveling to Spanish speaking countries	1	2	3	4	5
Maintaining relationships with Spanish speakers	1	2	3	4	5
Studying Spanish in college	1	2	3	4	5
Obtaining a job that requires Spanish	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in a new cultural experience in Spanish	1	2	3	4	5

### Choose your likelihood of participating in these activities in **English**

Listening to music	1	2	3	4	5
Watching TV/movies	1	2	3	4	5
Reading books/magazines/newspapers	1	2	3	4	5
Traveling to English speaking countries	1	2	3	4	5
Maintaining relationships with English speakers	1	2	3	4	5
Studying English in college	1	2	3	4	5
Obtaining a job that requires English	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in a new cultural experience in English	1	2	3	4	5

## APPENDIX F: AS-IS ANALYSIS



## APPENDIX G: TO-BE ANALYSIS

