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Success Despite the Odds: Achieving Academic Success with Spanish-Speaking English as a Second Language Students

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Achieving Academic Success with Spanish-Speaking English as a Second Language Students

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ABSTRACT

The changing cultural demographics of many Center City schools have increased the need for English as a Second Language programs throughout the district. In an effort to meet the educational needs of a growing population of non-English speaking students and families, teachers and researchers developed many curricular models. Using language acquisition models developed over the last century, educators in this district and throughout our nation strived to simultaneously teach English Language Learners academic subjects and the English language . However, despite these developments, not all schools with English as a Second Language students, implemented and maintained academically successful programs for these children.

The objective of this study was to first define and identify a curricular model and school within the Center City School district that demonstrated academic success with Spanish-Speaking. Using research based literature that addresses effective schools, school leadership, and effective educational models for ESL students, I established a standard that I could use for comparison. Having accomplished that prerequisite, I examined the factors that contributed to ensuring the academic success of impoverished Latino children in a specific urban school's ESL program.

In this descriptive case study I examine how a Midwestern Urban public school uses its English as a Second Language (ESL) program to achieve academic success with elementary and middle school age Latino, English Language Learner (ELL) students. I acquired the data for this study through observation and interviews of staff and students, analysis of standardized test score data, and personal reflection. Through this process I gained insight as to what curriculum, teaching methods, and other contributing factors made it possible for the students in the English as a Second Language Program to achieve academic success.

During my fifteen years as an educator and administrator I have worked with Hmong, Latino (i.e. students from Latin American countries), Eastern European, and Somali students. Despite their cultural differences most appeared to demonstrate a strong desire to learn English. How these students received their education through an ESL program often varied from school to school, and teacher to teacher. Knowing this, I sought a school with a proven successful program.

I initially focused my effort on one school. Identified by many in the district as a school with a successful English as a Second Language Program, Central City School became the focal point of my efforts. However, after consulting with my supervising professor and reflecting on what I experienced in my career as an administrator versus what I was observing at Central City School, I realized a comparative case study was necessary to help frame the context of this dissertation.

Throughout this work I compare my observations and impressions of Central City School with Eastside, a similarly configured K-8 setting with a significant Spanish speaking English Language Learner population. During the time I collected data for this study I worked at Eastside as the Assistant Principal. My main objective with this comparison is to help the reader understand what made Central City different from Eastside and many other schools like them.

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The point of the comparison is to recognize and explore why Central City works as well as it does. Ultimately the results of this study help us gain a better understanding of how other schools can become more effective at educating their ELLs.

I have been both amazed and dismayed at what gets accomplished with ELLs at the elementary and middle school levels. What I continue to find amazing is the level of commitment to achieving academic success these students demonstrate despite the numerous obstacles they encounter in their quest to perform well in school and learn a new language. However, I am also dismayed by the lack of educator time allocated to teaching these students literacy in either their native tongue or English. The results of this piece-meal approach, as discussed by Baker (2001) in the literature section, leave many students with barely enough communication skills to perform well in either language.

During my time within this same district, I have seen standardized test scores that suggest disparities between school programs in terms of their ability to help students make significant gains toward learning English and becoming academically successful. The reasons for these disparities include socioeconomic differences, teacher competency, a student's prior knowledge of skills in their native language, and the resources devoted to teaching English to non-English speakers. Although I do not argue that standardized test scores should be the standard to which all schools are measured, they are indicators of a student's skills and knowledge and therefore related to what they are taught.

The apparent differences in test scores compelled me to ask, "What is the staff doing at the schools where the ELLs demonstrate success?" I was specifically interested in the gains they made each year since 2003. The students at the school where I worked did not do as well as others from schools with similar cultural and demographic characteristics. After eliminating

some of their commonalities like socioeconomic status, housing, and the amount of time the student and family resided in this country, I examined other factors.

First, I reviewed the literature and was compelled to think that factors like curriculum and instruction, staff interactions with students, and the role of school leadership and parents, must play a significant role in influencing the outcomes of the tests as well as the students overall academic performance. Through this study I examine these factors, determine what may be generalizable or transferable, then implement them at the building where I am currently working or a future site.

Relevance

A quick historical look at the demographics of the United States, and especially Center City, reveals a dramatic shift in the ethnic and cultural composition of our people. The days of one racial or ethnic group representing the vast majority of a given population in a specific area is being replaced by a steady influx of immigrants from other countries as well as other parts of the city and surrounding area. These newcomers bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experiences as well as challenges for the society we were used to thinking of as "normal." Their effort to assimilate is met with national and local attempts to help them communicate effectively in the English language and become productive citizens within the parameters set by our society.

I think we can safely assume that for the foreseeable future, the de facto official language of the United States will continue to be English. At the same time, unless the burden of teaching ELL children the " language of the land" is shifted to private or national government level institutions, the public schools will continue to be the primary place where children will learn academic and social English. I also think that as the population of immigrants grows, and they establish communities within our towns, cities, and states, the need for proven, successful

materials and methods will increase. The success of these future citizens is linked to how well they learn to communicate and ultimately function using the skills acquired in school and the greater community.

Significance

This study is significant because it examines why a particular urban school demonstrates success with ELLs in ways that other schools with similar student demographics and educational resources do not. In attempting to answer this main question, I examined Central City school from a leadership, curriculum and practices, and commitment perspective. While examining these factors and gaining a deeper understanding of their relationship, I tell the story of the building's administrative team, teachers, and support staff. I also show how they collaborate and integrate their functions to service students and families.

I think I contribute to the larger body of knowledge regarding ESL education via the findings of this study. In addition to describing and analyzing the characteristics of Central City School, I provide the reader reason to conclude that he or she could implement some or all of the practices found at Central City, and experience similar success with their students. Viewing the practices of this school through the lens of the people doing the work also adds a level of intimacy to this study that is often missed in meta-analyses or comparisons of various teaching methods.

Unlike many studies that examine topics from a purely theory based, academic perspective, this one views the school setting through a more intimate frame of reference-the staff and students. I think this view adds a level of realism to the study that help the reader comprehend the complexity of this topic, but also realize that their success is not as dependent on having the right resources as it is on effectively using the resources and skills they have.

Research Questions

Many scholars and educators have completed exhaustive research on working with bilingual or ESL programs and ELLs. Their work addresses, via a significant amount of literature, the needs of Latino and non-English speakers in the American classroom. When we consider the numerous obstacles presented to a student who is still learning his or her original language alongside a new language, we must also consider the challenges facing a teacher who simultaneously delivers curricular content while teaching basic vocabulary and language skills. The primary question that this study attempts to answer is, "why does the Central City School staff appear to be more successful with Latino ELL students than other similarly configured schools in this district?"

Study Organization

This study is divided into multiple sections which include an introduction, literature review, methodology, analysis and implication chapters. However, since it is an atheoretical descriptive case study, it lacks a chapter addressing its theoretical basis. Instead, I chose to focus on describing what the staff of Central City School did emphasizing leadership, curriculum and practices, and commitment. Through the lens of leadership and commitment I analyze the data and realize the implications of this study. I also examine key concepts and tie them to ideas addressed in the research literature regarding ESL educational practices.

Some of the key concepts I examine in this study include, teaching practices that lead to academic success, leadership practices that support teaching efforts, and professional development practices. I also address how these ideas are connected to leadership and commitment, and student success. Integrating ELLs into the larger community also has implications in terms of the building's infrastructure and practices.

The implications include, actions for school leaders, definitions of student success, definitions of teacher effectiveness, models of teaching practices, and ideas regarding including ELL parents in the school community. The implications suggest that a supported and resourced staff with committed leaders, whose focus is on developing and sustaining effective teaching practices, can achieve success with most of their students. After reviewing data from other schools, and talking to some of my fellow administrators, I chose Central City School because they seemed to have worked out how to do these things well. While avoiding a "recipe for success" approach to writing about my findings regarding Central City School, I reveal the elements of their success.

While reviewing the literature on ESL education, especially as it pertained to schools with new programs, I noticed three recurring themes. Calderon and Slavin (2001), Gonzalez, Huerta-Macias, and Tinajero (1998) in addressing effective teaching methods and practices insist that extensive professional development for staff was necessary to ensure teacher success. Echevarria and Graves (2003), in their writing about culture and learning styles, emphasize communicating with families and fostering climates that welcome all parents and encourage them to become active school community members. In addition to the above writers, Hulley and Dier (2009), in their writing about effective schools research, insist that there is a strong link between school success and committed leadership. As a result of this revelation, I chose to focus on leadership, curriculum and practices, and commitment as the major themes for this study.

In thinking about how I would frame the research for this work, I explored a number of different types of studies. Quickly realizing that the information I sought resided somewhere between the tangible and intangible, I decided to explore qualitative research methods. I began by examining the work of several researchers to help me develop the process of gathering and

analyzing data and interpret this experience for conveying it to the reader. After examining several theoretical frameworks, I realized this study really did not align with, or show strong characteristics of, a particular theory. With that in mind, I chose to do an atheoretical descriptive case study. This framework and study type allowed me to work without trying to "fit" all that I observed into the parameters outlined in a given theory.

Study Type

Merriam (1998), Bogdan and Biklen (1998), Creswell (2007), Yin (2003), and Maxwell (1996) discuss methods for gathering and interpreting data for this study. I also looked to them for guidance on qualitative research types, methods, and frameworks. Although I will discuss this at length in the methodology section of this study, I introduce the type of study and a sample of the authors who address it.

Merriam identifies the descriptive case study, especially when used in education, as "a detailed account of the phenomenon under study-a historical case study that chronicles a sequence of events." She continues, citing the work of Lijphart (1971) that refers to descriptive case studies as "atheoretical," "They are entirely descriptive and move in a theoretical vacuum; they are neither guided by established or hypothesized generalizations nor motivated by a desire to formulate general hypotheses (p.691)" (p. 38). The descriptive case study allows the researcher to look at what occurs within a given setting relatively free of theoretical categorizing or interpretation. In keeping with this method, I observed and recorded what I saw or experienced without initial analysis or judgment.

Public Policy & Ethics

Within the last two decades many social and political groups as well as politicians worked to ensure English remains the primary language taught in our schools. Their actions did not ban the teaching of other languages but were designed to ensure that all students would become fluent and literate in English. However, according to the literature produced by the English First organization, a group dedicated to preserving English as the dominant language in the United States, legislative results of their actions delivered a variety of outcomes that continues to impact how schools deliver bilingual and ESL education.

Although this topic gets examined in depth in the literature section of this dissertation, I mention it to help establish the context of bilingual education and the subsequent English instruction models that schools currently use. Bilingual education has been a part of this country's fabric since its inception. With numerous language groups brought together via a variety of means, the United States has experienced the turmoil that often accompanies mixing people with cultural and language differences. As years and decades passed we have also tried a multitude of educational models that have ranged from teaching students in their native tongue to banning their native tongue and teaching them English exclusively. Within the past three decades our public education system has landed somewhere in the middle of this ongoing debate regarding English instruction for non-English speakers in our schools. For example, this position was determined by local and national community input via legislation like California's Proposition 187.

According to the web site Ballotpedia.org (2010), California's Proposition 187 made teaching in the English language mandatory in their state schools. Proposition 187 had several

provisions and has been revised numerous times since its inception. For the purposes of this work, I focused on how it affected elementary education.

In many ways it effectively eliminated the public schools role in maintaining the language of non-English speakers within the confines of a classroom. Simply put, it dictated that all students receive instruction in English no matter their first language. Similar legislation throughout the country, often sponsored by groups like English First and U.S. English, resulted in resources being devoted solely to teaching English literacy to non-English speaking children; often at the expense of their first language. Authors like Johns and Torrez (2001) address this topic, as well as some of its effects on educational practices in this country, in the literature review of this study.

Pedagogy

The literature concerning ESL education presents a plethora of approaches and debates regarding teaching a second language. Authors like, August and Shanahan (2008), Calderon and Slavin (2001), and Cummins (1979) focus on how people acquire language skills, and whether new language learners should read and write first or become conversant. They also discuss whether students should develop their language skills in their native tongue before, or while simultaneously learning English. The first part of this chapter will help the reader understand the history and various positions regarding ESL pedagogy in the United States. The rest of the chapter will be devoted to examining the more commonly practiced theories and methods used in the urban setting, specifically the two schools I chose for this study.

Teaching and Teacher Disposition

Freeman and Freeman (1998) write that content, context, and teacher orientation are vital components of teaching new languages. The content is described as the materials that help the

students learn the new language. The context refers to "the different settings and different groups of students a teacher might be working with (p.1)." Teacher orientation addresses the assumptions teachers may have about teaching languages and the ability of their students to learn. In this study I address these three areas via descriptions of teacher interactions with students, interviews of staff, and analysis.

Citing the work of Freeman and Freeman (1998), I examine how the orientation of the teachers influences their methods and actions in the classroom. I examine the difference in practices of the lower elementary, upper elementary, and middle school students. While examining the differences between the grade levels I explore teaching techniques and practices between individuals at this site.

Current Practices

According to Johns and Torrez (2001) the influence of educational and political forces on teaching non-English speakers to become fluent in the majority language of this country is supported by the idea that all students must only speak English in our schools. As a result, most programs in this country are focused on this single goal despite their seemingly different approaches. Johns and Torrez also discuss how this English-Only mindset appears to drive bilingual and ESL curricular content despite the "preponderance of research (p.41)" that supports the fact that true bilingual education is the most effective way to help English Language Learners become proficient communicators. Despite the research, schools in the United States with English Language Learners usually have one of the three predominant language programs: Bilingual, English as a Second Language, and English-Only.

As a means of helping the reader understand some of the differences between the types of programs I provide short descriptions of the three most commonly used approaches. I provide a

more thorough examination of these types in the literature review section. According to Krashen (1991) bilingual programs combine the student's native or home language with English for instruction. These programs are usually employed in districts with large groups of students who share a common language. An example of this was evident in a few buildings of the Center City Public Schools where 30-50 percent of the students spoke a common language other than English and the teachers were proficient in both languages. However, many schools in this district have similar demographics with very few bilingual staff.

Within the framework of bilingual education we also have immersion models. Authors like Ramirez, Yuen, Ramsey, and Pasta (1990), discuss mainly two types of immersion models: full and two-way or dual immersion. In their discussion of the immersion models, the writers describe curricular content being delivered in one language or the other. In the full immersion model students are expected to learn the target language as the teacher uses gestures and cues to help them understand the words concepts, and ideas. This method, also derogatorily called the "sink or swim" method, has lost and regained favor depending on the political winds of the time.

In the dual-immersion model the monolingual teacher provides instruction in his or her native tongue for, as an example, biology and English, while the multilingual educator may teach math, art, and science in Spanish. According to the authors the primary goal of a program like this is to promote bilingualism and biculturalism by supporting learning and communication in both languages.

English as a Second Language programs, are the most prevalent in the United States. The major differences between ESL and bilingual programs are the qualifications of the teacher and the method of service delivery. In ESL programs the teacher is not required to be proficient in the native tongue of their students. ESL programs also have students leave their classrooms for

specified periods of the day to learn English. The rest of the day they spend in the classroom with the majority language students.

The model that Central City school used is a variant of the sheltered instruction approach. The authors cite the Sheltered English instruction model as one of the most prevalent in bilingual education. In this model teachers provide instruction in English but, according to Simons and Connelly "adapt their discourse, instructional strategies, and the language demands of the lessons in a variety of ways (p.91)." Within this instructional approach we begin to see the roots of the model most touted by the Center City School District as well at Central City school officials, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). Central City ESL staff implemented this method several years before I began this study. Their success with ESL students lead me to go to their school in hopes of finding the reasons they have accomplished what other schools in this same district have not.

Why This School

During a district administrators meeting, we all were looking at test score data when a colleague said something about ELLs and Special Education students negatively affecting their scores. While continuing to look at the test data, I noticed one school appeared to have better results with their ELLs than most of us. Realizing I might have found information for my dissertation, I decided to investigate. After making a few phone calls to the district offices and other administrators, I found more information that helped me decide where I should go.

I talked to a district ESL representative and mentor. He told me that of all the programs he worked with, the one at Central City School was doing well. He said he hesitated to say it was the best because of the numerous factors that affect school performance, but he highly

recommended I go there if I wanted to see a "school doing it right." I decided to talk to some of the ESL teachers in our building and find out what they knew about Central City School.

During my preliminary investigation I found one factor that really seemed to set this school apart from others in the district. Unlike the school where I worked, Central City had a specific ESL model that they were using instead of a mixture of language instruction methods and techniques. The principal of my school had worked at Central City school before her current assignment. I asked her what ESL model they were using at her old school. Her reply, "SIOP, they made it part of their whole school's way of doing business." She also told me that it was her intention to bring SIOP to our school if she could get the district to support it and the staff to do it.

Summary

After careful consideration of what I wanted to know, needed to accomplish, and the possible implications of this work, I began researching a topic relevant to many educators throughout this country and many others. The literature on English as a Second Language and related programs provided a sufficient basis for me to understand what an effective program should look like. However, until I began in-depth study of the Central City School program, I did not realize how little I knew about language instruction. I think this work has enlightened me and will do the same for others.

After completing this study I intend to use what I learn from Central City School as a starting point for supporting the teachers and administrators I encounter later in my career. I think, given our ever-changing political climates, combined with increasing global and economic ties, our country will continue to be a place where people of differing cultures and languages will interact. Our national history has shown us that schools are, and will continue to be, the place where the

new arrivals will come to learn the language of their new home. How we accomplish that task will affect how our students effectively interact with the surrounding local and global community.

Doing this dissertation helped deepen my understanding of my role as an educator and administrator. As a school administrator I am responsible for ensuring all students learn academic skills via effective teaching of curricular content. To do this I see my job as one where I ensure the teaching staff know current effective practices, have time to develop their abilities to implement them, and receive sustained support of their efforts to improve their instruction. This support comes via deliberate, informed and intelligent decision making followed by actions.

After examining this work, the educator/reader will be compelled to reflect on educating non-English speakers at his or her school, and implement changes if needed. I would especially encourage a person looking to improve the academic performance of their ELLs to read the works of the authors cited here, as well as research more recent developments, then strategically implement the changes that will get their students on the desired path to success.

II

Literature Review

In this section I provide an overview of the works of many authors in the field of bilingual and ESL education. Their work will help shape this dissertation in terms of its format, philosophical basis, historical perspectives, and a deeper understanding of the topic. An examination of their work provides the reader a better understanding of ideas and concepts connected to leadership, curriculum and teaching practices, language skill development, and the historical and political issues associated with language instruction in this country.

History

According to Faltis and Hudelson (1998) the lineage of bilingual education in this country goes back to the founding of the United States of America. Not long after the English settlers establish a foothold, they also gave birth to movements that attempted to eradicate non-English languages from this country through legislation and schools that only permitted use of the English language. I address both sides of this argument and its impact on our history later in this chapter.

Faltis and Hudelson write that U.S history is full of examples of Dutch, French, German, Norwegian, Swedish, and Spanish speaking immigrants establishing communities with their languages being taught. They write, "For example, German was the language of most private and some public schools in the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas well into the nineteenth century (Leibowitz, 1971)." In addition, they site examples where states like Wisconsin and New Mexico passed legislation allowing communities to provide literacy instruction in the language of their choice, depending on their needs. However, as the nineteenth century neared its end, efforts to bring all groups to a common school system lead to change.

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Faltis and Hudelson (1998), discuss how schools began to offer programs to groups in their native language with the promise of adding English as a second language later. They state that these efforts toward bilingual education lasted into the early twentieth century. The political and social implications of World Wars I and II influenced many communities to also demand English only communication in their businesses. Then, with the continued influx of numerous language groups in the mid-twentieth century, lawmakers enacted legislation that made speaking English an eligibility requirement for American citizenship.

This requirement, coupled with xenophobic-like sentiments toward non-English speaking people, especially during World War I, lead to the United States formally banning all languages other than English from schools. The use of languages other than English was deemed "un American" by many who mistrusted those who did not speak it. This sentiment resurfaced during World War II and frequently resurfaces in communities throughout the United States. However, as with many aspects of education in this country, the political pendulum began to swing in the opposite direction. Evidence of that came with court decisions like Lau vs Nichols.

Faltis and Hudelson (1998) write that the results of the Lau vs Nichols (1974) court case decision "meant that school districts and schools attended by numbers of non-English speaking learners could not ignore the special educational needs of these students. Some educational treatment/services, geared specifically to the situations of these students, needed to be provided" (p. 14). This decision was based on the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 which provided for; the development of special instructional materials for bilingual students, in-service training for teachers and others working in bilingual programs, and implementing and maintaining special programs for ESL students. In short, districts had to do something different for these students.

However, this decision was followed by the Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) of 1974 which reinforced the previous decisions and legislations by requiring schools and districts with any ELLs to "take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs" (20 U.S.C. Sec. 1703[f] p. 14). In short this law gave teeth to the intent of Lau and the BEA because it addressed the issue of discriminatory intent and linked it to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

In other words, Faltis and Hudelson write, "Schools could no longer claim ignorance or other excuses for not providing special services to non-English speaking learners. Not providing special services was tantamount to discrimination on the basis of national origin, whether schools had intended to discriminate or not" (p. 14). However, despite the intentions of these laws and court decisions, as well as the research to substantiate their educational basis, a growing number of people oppose bilingual education and diligently work to defeat its continued implementation via legislative and grass roots venues.

The authors examine the lineage of bilingual education in terms of an ideological and theoretical history. They address how some of the movements or trends that affected the education of non-English speaking people were tinged with racism and ethnocentrism. These authors insist that legal proceedings established English-only instruction laws that ensured all ELL students would be condemned to profound struggle as they worked to overcome the language and cultural barriers. The authors assert that despite the changes in many of these laws, as well as attempts by many schools and their districts to change their practices, the conventional wisdom in many communities is still based on the idea that the dominant language is the first and only language that will be spoken in their businesses and schools.

In practice, bilingual education is about teaching speakers of one language to communicate and achieve fluency and literacy in another. The most ideal bilingual goal is that students become fluent and literate in both languages. However, in most settings in the United States, the student in a bilingual program develops English fluency. In many cases, their native tongue becomes less used as the English skills become stronger. Baker (2001) supports this argument by writing that throughout its history bilingual education, influenced by political and educational forces alike, evolved into an ideal with different forms and a plethora of associated methods designed to help students become fluent in English. Over time, different models of language education emerged where the objective was the same but used different methods of achieving it.

Within the framework of bilingual based ideas, such as immersion and dual language models, we find the roots of the English as a Second Language (ESL) program. ESL programs encompass a variety of methods that set the stage for a smorgasbord-like educational experience for many ELLs. Although this statement may appear to be critical, it is not. I merely point out that as part of the evolution of ESL it functions more as an umbrella title for a plethora of approaches, methods, and practices. This fact proves to be both liberating and problematic depending on the perspective of the practitioner.

ESL practitioners may use a specific method or draw elements from a variety of approaches. They include the Natural Approach, CALLA, and Success for All. Practitioners of language education programs must also consider several other factors when establishing and employing these methods. An examination of other perspectives and the associated politics of bilingual education will help us better understand the associated problems.

The history for language minority people in this country is characterized by struggle. The literature show us that, depending on the era, location, and education of the teachers available,

ELLs can experience a wide variety of educational models and practices. Add to this challenge, people organized in opposition to students receiving their education in any language other than English, then we can begin to see the obstacles to their education.

One Nation, One Language

In 1981 then President Ronald Reagan spoke against bilingual education on the grounds that it prevented new citizens from being able to work in the job market. According to Cummins, via Faltis and Hudelson(1991), President Reagan proclaimed:

It is absolutely wrong and against American concepts to have a bilingual education program that is not openly, admittedly dedicated to preserving students' native language and never getting them adequate in English so they can go out into the job market and participate.

According to the authors, the Reagan and Bush Administrations hired researchers to review current research to prove the ineffectiveness of bilingual education. Keith Baker and Adriana de Kanter (1981) found that transitional bilingual programs were as effective as English-only programs in helping students toward academic proficiency. Despite the fact that the results of their meta-analysis of the research stand in stark contrast to the work of many others, they provided fuel to a movement that advocates banning approaches which encouraged students to learn their native languages before become literate in English.

United in their belief that all citizens of the United States of America should speak English, U.S. English and English First have been staunch opponents of bilingual education and other programs that promote students becoming literate in their native language. These groups, dedicated to making English the *de jure* official language of the United States, have supported

legislation restricting speaking or publishing signs or documents in languages other than English in government and public schools.

According to the English First website, viewers can find information on their evaluations of current bilingual programs and their costs, bilingual issues in various communities, as well as resources for states that have past English-only oriented legislation at (http://www.USENGLISH.org).

U.S. English, a non-partisan educational foundation, has a website where those who are interested can gather information about the organization and its activities. According to it's website, the organization "disseminates information on English teaching methods, sponsors education programs, develops English instruction materials, represents the interest of official English advocates before state and federal courts and promotes opportunities for people living in the United States to learn English" (http://www.USENGLISH.org).

Currently headed by a Chilean immigrant, Mauro E. Mujica, this group's mission is to ensure that all people who wish to become U.S citizens learn to speak English as soon as possible. Through one language, they feel that this country will truly be unified and those who are new are better able to attain economic through their ability to communicate using English. According to their website, they also quote President Theodore Roosevelt regarding the official language of the U.S. "We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans."

According to their website, U.S. English has supported sponsors of numerous bills since 1981. These bills included a variety of approaches to providing services to non-English speaking children and families. These approaches encompassed amendments to former laws and appropriation and use of funds for specific programs. An example of one of these bills,

sponsored by Representative Michael M. Honda introduced in July of 2008. is one titled: H.R, 6617 To strengthen communities through English literacy, civics, education, and immigrant integration programs.

This bill, and its senatorial counterpart sponsored by Senator Hillary Rodham-Clinton, S.3334: was presented as a means to strengthen communities through English literacy, civic education, immigrant integration programs, and have several provisions affecting the education of ELLs. Together these bills provided financial assistance to faith and community-based organizations in support of local educational agencies that promote or conduct high-quality additional language and civics education to middle and secondary ELLs. They also provided tax credits and deductions for teachers who became certified ESL teachers as well as tax credits for employers who made adult education and literacy services available to their employees. The bills also renamed the Office of Citizenship, an office within the Department of Homeland Security, to the Office of Citizenship and Immigrant Integration.

In 1989 House Representative Bill Emerson, of Missouri, introduced H.J. RES. 48: Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States establishing English as the official language of the United States. This proposal had basically two main points: that the Constitution be amended to declare English as the official language of the U.S. and that congress have the power to enforce it via legislation. Revisions of this bill continue to resurface in both the House and Senate as it gains support.

By 1993 this bill, known as H.R. 739 Declaration of Official Language Act of 1993, was sponsored by eleven legislators with the same intent as the 1989 version, but with increased language and scope. This time the bill addressed citizenship requirements that included English language proficiency, repealing Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of

1965. However, this bill was countered by a series of other bills and subsequent legislation that helped strengthen the foothold of bilingual education in this country.

The bill titled: <u>To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 to establish a program to help children and youth learn English, and for other purposes</u>, was introduced to the house by Representative Frank Riggs of California. In this bill he proposed to amend the 1965 ESEA. In addition to changing the named of Title VII from Bilingual Education, Language Enhancement, and Language Acquisition Programs to English Language Fluency and Foreign Language Acquisition Programs, he proposed several educationally significant measures. These changes, if enacted, would eliminate requirements for states to establish or continue native language instruction programs, void any compliance agreements with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare or the Department of Education that requires a state, locality, or district to develop, implement, provide, or maintain any form of bilingual education. It would have amended the Department of Education Organization Act to rename the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs as the Office of English Language Acquisition. On September 10th, 1998 this bill passed the house with some amendments. On September 14th the bill was referred to a senate committee where it was read twice and sent to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

On April 10th, 2008 twenty five legislators sponsored the English as the Official Language Act of 2008. Like its predecessors this bill focused on English being declared the language of the United States. As such it would mean that English carried with it legal recognition, in terms of official documents and conduct of services in any other language. The objective of this bill was to preserve and enhance the role of the national language. This bill was referred to the House Committee on Education and Labor.

After reading some of these bills, and seeing the actions taken on them, I think we are left with a mixture of results regarding implementing English as the official language of government, and by extension, the entire nation. A cursory look at the United States system for enacting laws shows us that it is often a lengthy process with numerous changes and steps. In reading these bills, which are essentially proposals that may become laws, I saw they were discussed then referred to a committee for further review. After that, according to the Library of Congress website, they appear to have no additional actions associated with them. However, the current efforts of groups like U.S. English and English First, as well as some of our current laws, indicate gains by those who favor a more lingual-centric nation.

Through local and national law-making processes, people who support English acquisition, as well as those who overtly oppose bilingualism, have worked to ensure that English remains the dominant, and more importantly, officially recognized language of this country. When looking at the results of the bills that were passed in the House and reviewed by the Senate we are left with the impression that the purpose and intent of legislation geared toward helping immigrants become educated is being slowly eliminated in favor of laws that dictate the acquisition of English literacy without regard to widely accepted research. Despite decades of field experience backed by research that supports bilingual and ESL education, many communities continue arguing over the best way to ensure all of its citizens become English speakers.

Content, Context and Orientation

Freeman and Freeman (1998), write that context influences how teachers deliver instruction. By being cognizant of the community in which they are teaching, teachers "must always adapt their practice to their setting and to their student population" (p.4). The authors cite key variables

that determine the context. These two variables are: the role that English will play in the lives of the pupils, and the age and goals of the students. They point out that adults learning English for the purposes of conducting business or being able to communicate in a predominantly English speaking country might be addressed differently than adults or children who are learning it as part of an academic requirement. According to the authors, context must be considered when establishing a program for teaching English.

Where English is taught will affect the learning as well. The authors argue that, "teaching in an English-speaking country is quite different from teaching in a country where English is not the primary language of most people" (p.4). In their discussion they include the effect of the general population on the student. The student returning to and interacting with their community where he or she will hear English being spoken, for example, at the corner store, and seeing it in print or on televised media, is more likely to become fluent than one who does not. According to these authors, the students whose needs are served by acquiring the ability to communicate in English are more likely to be intrinsically motivated than those whose needs are not. The student's daily activities and the language they use while engaged in them influences their ability to become fluent.

Freeman and Freeman discuss age and its relationship to goals. The authors argue that adults may need to learn English as a matter of economic and academic necessity, i.e. college students attending predominantly English speaking universities and adults working in the international business community. Children in the U.S., Canada, or Britain will most likely attend schools where English will be taught in an ESL or ELL format depending on how the school is configured.

In their discussion they also point out the connection between these influencing factors and the type of program students are likely to encounter. Freeman and Freeman assert that schools with more than one non-English speaking population are likely to use ELL methods whereas schools with divided language groups consisting of English speakers and another major language group, like Spanish, are likely to employ ESL methods. This second group may include bilingual education that stresses native language literacy while simultaneously teaching English. One of the purposes of this study was to examine the approaches of the schools I researched.

Teacher orientation, according to Freeman and Freeman, is based on an individual's assumptions about teaching and learning languages. The authors assert, "An orientation may be the result of the teacher's own learning experiences, the teacher's formal coursework, or the teacher's past experiences in the classroom" (p. 6). The authors continue by stating that orientation may also be affected by the text and materials a teacher uses in his or her classroom. The teacher may knowingly or unknowingly adopt the orientation of the text's author.

As with students, teachers can be influenced by the theory and methods practiced when they were taught a new language. For example, some of these, such as the Grammar-Based and Grammar-Translation methods, are early methods still in use today. Teacher orientation combined with context and content influence how, what, and why students are taught and learn English.

Dominant Programs

According to Johns and Torrez (2001) educational and political forces heavily influence teaching non-English speakers to become fluent in the majority language of this country. As a result, most programs in the United States are focused on this one goal despite their seemingly different approaches. According to Johns and Torrez, this English-Only mindset appears to drive

bilingual and ESL curricular content despite the "preponderance of research" (p.41) that supports the fact that true bilingual education is the most effective way of helping English Language Learners become proficient communicators. The three predominant programs used in this country are English as a Second Language, Bilingual, and English-Only.

August and Shanahan (2008) discovered in their meta-analysis of 16 studies involving bilingual versus English-only programs, that their findings suggested "a statistically significant, moderately sized, average treatment effect favoring bilingual approaches to literacy instruction" (p.139). They reinforce their position by stating that bilingual education appears to have an advantage over English only instruction with a few caveats. Their concerns centered on the factors that moderate the effectiveness of this instruction. Despite pointing out that the studies they examined did not address this factor, their findings did reveal that assessment outcomes for Spanish-speaking students in bilingual versus English-only programs favored ones in which children developed literacy skills in their first language.

According to the authors, true bilingual programs combine the student's native or home language with English for instruction. These programs are usually employed in districts with large groups of students who share a common language. The Center City Public Schools has several campuses where 30-50 percent of the students speak a common language other than English. However, these schools do not employ true bilingual educational practices.

The educational format in the bilingual setting requires the teacher to be proficient in both the student's native tongue as well as the target language. According to Johns and Torrez, the program is "usually defined as any school program that uses two languages, the coordinated, developmental bilingual approach emphasizes being fully proficient in all facets of both languages" (p.41). The authors contend however, that this is not what truly exists. These authors,

like several others, point to numerous factors that affect what type and how well a bilingual program is employed.

English, as a Second Language (ESL) programs, according to Johns and Torrez, are more likely to be found in districts where non-English speakers are a small minority in the population. The major differences between ESL and bilingual programs are the qualifications of the teacher and how the services are delivered. In ESL programs the teacher is not required to be proficient in the native tongue of their students. ESL programs also have students leave their classrooms for specified periods of the day to learn English. The rest of the day they spend in the classroom with the majority language students. While in these rooms they often receive some support via a bilingual teacher's aid.

Language Skill Development

Before examining various pedagogical theories and practices, I needed information about reading and writing skill development of ELLs. I specifically wanted to know what researchers and educators identified as the factors affecting student phonemic awareness, decoding, word recognition, reading comprehension, and oral fluency skills. August and Shanahan (2008) present many findings based on the Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth. This compilation of numerous researchers' work sheds light on the complexity of language skill development with particular emphasis on those learning a second language. The areas that they explore include oral proficiency and literacy development, sociocultural variables, classroom and school factors, and assessment. This meta-analysis helped me better understand the challenges ESL teachers face.

Language educators must help their students learn the alphabet, how each letter sounds, how the letters and their accompanying sounds connect, how the connected sounds form words, and

then how the words in both written and verbal forms connect to make sentences. Along with that, these teachers must make sure the students understand what the words mean so that they eventually can form sentences and express themselves in their new language. The ESL teacher must also help these students reach a level of proficiency on par with their English-only speaking peers in a relatively short amount of time.

In discussing literacy development, August and Shanahan (2008) contend that some of the literacy components cannot "fully develop until other, precursor skills are acquired" (pg. 6). Their meta-analysis reveals students must develop good decoding and orthographic skills as well as be able to quickly and accurately recognize words in order to be efficient readers. Some of the factors affecting how well or quickly learners develop these precursor skills are, age, the student's oral proficiency, cognitive abilities, and previous learning. Supporting their argument regarding age and skill, the authors insist that adolescent ELLs "schooled only in their first language, have well-developed phonological awareness skills" (pg. 7). They continue by pointing out a similar level of development would probably not be likely with a six year old under the same circumstances. The studies also indicate that older ELLs are more likely to notice similarities in their first language that younger students would not.

One of the more interesting finds of this meta-analysis concerns classroom and school factors. The authors write that the research they found does not provide a "complete answer to what constitutes high-quality literacy instruction for language minority students"(p. 8). They continue by saying that instruction focused on phonemic awareness, decoding, oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing clearly benefit students. However, they insist that student skill development is heavily dependent on instruction that focuses on adjusting their instruction to meet the individual needs of the students.

In doing this adjustment, the authors' research reveals second-language learners show greater literacy skill development when the instruction they receive combines teaching reading skills with oral English development. They state, "The need to develop stronger English language proficiency as the basis for becoming literate in English argues for an early, ongoing, and intensive effort to develop this proficiency" (p. 10). With this they make a strong case for educators to remember the connection between reading, writing, and verbal interaction when planning their instruction.

The results of the authors' meta-analysis support the idea that students with emerging first-language literacy skills show higher levels of literacy development in their second language than students who do not. However, this correlation is strongest with students whose first language has a similar alphabet to English. The authors state,

> The studies reviewed…..provide ample research evidence that certain aspects of second-language literacy development are related to performance on similar constructs in the first language; this suggests that common underlying abilities play a significant role in both first- and second-language development…that well-developed literacy skills in the first language can facilitate second-language literacy development (p. 8).

They continue by also saying, "Language-minority students who are literate in their first language are likely to be advantaged in the acquisition of English literacy. The studies in chapter 6 demonstrate that language-minority students instructed in their native language (primarily Spanish in this report) and English perform, on average, better on English reading measures than language-minority students instructed only in English" (p. 11). With this in mind, the authors

make a compelling argument for pedagogy that focuses on teaching students literacy skills in their first language while developing skills in the second.

Language Acquisition Models

Underlying these popular methods is a belief that students need to achieve literacy in their native language either simultaneously with English or before. Gonzalez, Huerta-Macias and Tinajero (1998) argue in support of ELL students achieving literacy in their first or native language. They cite the work of Cummins (1979, 1986, 1989) and the "Interdependence Hypothesis." According to Cummins there is a strong correlation between the development of literacy in the native language and the student's ability to develop literacy skills in other languages.

He writes that the higher the level of proficiency in the native language, the better able a student to become proficient in the second language. Cummins uses the example of the progress experienced by students who first acquired their literacy skills before being put into English based classes versus the performance of those who had to learn to read and write while simultaneously developing skills in both languages. Students who first learned literacy skills in their native language performed far better than their peers who became literate in English while still learning their native tongue. Johns and Torrez (2001), support this idea by writing,

Research tells us that having a rich language experience in one's primary tongue has a beneficial effect on learning a second language. The point is, the more the learner uses language-any language-the quicker he or she learns English. So teachers should encourage the use of the native language in the home. (Pp. 32-33)

Gonzalez, M. et al. (1998), discuss several aspects of successful educational models for Latino children. In their book they cite the work of Baker (1993) in their discussion of bilingual education programs. According to these authors there are ten broad categories of these programs. Baker classifies them into two forms based on their aims. According to Baker(1993) and later in 2001), "the weak forms of bilingual education aim to shift the student from the home, minority language into English. The strong forms attempt to affirm the rights of minority students by fostering the native language and strengthening cultural identity" (p. 204). In discussing some of these programs, the most commonly used at the time the book was written, Baker narrows his focus on four models. These models are transitional, immersion, maintenance bilingual education (MBE) and dual bilingual education (DBE). According to Baker's definition of stronger bilingual programs MBE and DBE are the more commonly used. However, as briefly discussed in the introduction and later in this chapter, bilingual models are less common than other, less costly approaches like ESL.

According to Baker as well as Ramirez et al. (1990) programs that support learning in both the native language as well as the target language, with students enrolled in late-exit bilingual programs, showed significant achievement gains over students who were not. These gains were measured not only by a closing of the achievement gap, indicated via standardized test scores between native English speakers and ELL/ESL students, but by their success in classroom performance and peer interaction within the mainstream. Gonzalez, M., Huerta-Macias, A. and Tinajero, J. (1998) also cite Cummins (1979) to further support their argument.

Cummins' work on developing literacy skills in the first language (L1) to support the development of the second language (L2) learning provides "solid documentation" of the evidence underlying this theory. Cummins, via his study, found that students who had been

previously educated in L1 were able to acquire literacy and language skills in L2 much faster than students of the same age group who had not learned these skills prior to arrival in the United States. His research also revealed that the age of the student was not as relevant as the level of proficiency in L1 prior to arrival in a U.S. school setting. Students, no matter the age, demonstrated that they were better at acquiring L2 if they were proficient in L1 than their counterparts who had to learn the skills of both L1 and L2 simultaneously.

Natural Approach

Johns and Torrez (2001) argue, via their research, that the "Natural Approach is one of the most effective communicative approaches" (P.16). It is designed for beginning language learners and is based on the assumption that a student is primarily a self-taught learner if given "enough comprehensible input" (p.16). The language acquisition theory behind this is based on the work of Krashen and Terrell (1983) who contend that language learners go through four stages of learning. These stages are Pre-production, Early Production, Speech Emergence, and Intermediate Fluency.

According to Freeman and Freeman(1998) part of the philosophy of this approach is that we acquire rather than learn a language. They insist that acquisision is accomplished when "students receive comprehensible input, messages they understand" (p. 19). According to the authors, Krashen contends that reading and writing is important because students began to acquire skills in language communication. They develop their writing, reading, and speaking skills using this method.

In discussing ESL instruction Calderon (2001) asserts, "the problem with the popular ESL methods is that they are either too rigid or one-dimensional in nature, and second-language learning is far too complex a process to be taught using a single method" (275). She also argues

that many of these methods "integrate reading at some point into their continuum but do not deliberately teach reading" (275).

In her brief discussion of the Natural Approach Calderon cites a flaw with one aspect of this method known as the "Silent Period". The Silent period is usually presented to teachers as a period that adults should respect as a time when students are not yet ready to speak English. Calderon argues that sometimes this period turns into "a pause in the development of language, cognition, and reading much longer that necessary" (pp. 275-276). She ends by saying that methods must be developed to help them through that period without the unnecessary delay.

Freeman and Freeman view the Natural Approach as an effective method because it focuses on making language comprehensible in an environment where students are encouraged to develop understanding of words before being forced to communicate with them. The authors contend, "by delaying production, methods such as The Natural Approach lower what Krashen calls the affective filter by allowing students to relax and understand what they are hearing, before being forced to produce the new language" (p. 20).

In further support of this argument, Johns and Torrez present the affective filter hypothesis. Their interpretation of this is that it relates to emotional variables such as, anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence. According to the authors, learners develop a mental barrier when in a "less than optimal" affective state. They develop a filter that either allows the input of new information or does not, based on their level of emotional state. In other words, students who experience humiliation, embarrassment, or other negative emotions are less likely to be receptive to new language acquisition than those who are allowed to learn in a low anxiety environment. In keeping with some of the concepts of the Natural Approach, practitioners of CALLA focus on language skill development in a more curricular content oriented environment.

Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA)

Freeman and Freeman (1998), discuss numerous theoretical approaches and methods used to achieving second language literacy and fluency. However, they too cite the work of Krashen and Terrell's Natural Approach as well as the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) as two highly effective models.

According to Freeman and Freeman there are three components that comprise CALLA: grade appropriate content, academic language development, and learning instruction strategies. With CALLA students study math and sciences first because they depend on language skills less than reading and writing. According to the authors, science provides more hands-on experience thus providing a broader range of input for the students to draw upon. Math uses an internationally recognized set of symbols accompanied by a somewhat limited vocabulary. Later in their language skill development, students take social studies and literature that requires more extensive use of vocabulary and writing. Through their work in the various content areas students develop the academic language they need to function in class. However, a third component of CALLA helps ensure their success beyond the academic environment.

The third component of CALLA called learning strategy instruction helps students develop methods for working with material in each curricular content area. Freeman and Freeman assert that in this component students develop metacognitive skills such as "advance organization, selective attention, and self-evaluation. These strategies help students plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning" (p. 23). This component also involves the student in cognitive strategies that include grouping, note taking, imagery, and making inferences.

CALLA lessons, according to Freeman and Freeman, are divided into five parts. These parts are: preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation, and expansion. These provide the teacher

with a mechanism for assessing the student's skill level and tailoring the curriculum to address the student's needs, providing new information to the student, time and procedures for allowing the student to practice what was learned, continuous assessment, and a means to encourage students to explore language and literacy skill development beyond the confines of the classroom. According to the authors, the goal of CALLA is "to provide students with different ways to practice language and learn content at the same time" (p. 24). Another method that focuses on language skills while teaching academic content is Success for All. What distinguishes this method from others is the types of activities used as part of the instructional techniques.

Success for All/Exito para Todos

Calderon (2001) examines the techniques employed in the Success for All method also known as Exito para Todos. In her brief discussion of this method Calderon highlights some of its key points. She shows that this method focuses on developing children's reading and writing skills through reading, games and other activities related to building phonemic awareness and associating words with objects, as well as reading related activities. The method addresses student needs depending on their age and command of the target language. More advanced students work on metacognitive strategies, reading activities, story presentation, as well as letter sounds and word development work. Research from the late nineties suggests that this program is effective in helping ELLs become more academically and linguistically proficient.

Fachola, Slavin, Calderon, and Duran (2001) conducted research on Success for All programs in 77 schools within 12 districts throughout the United States. The schools were matched based on a common set of criteria. Students were pre-tested to ensure comparability and post-tested to determine the results. According to the authors the results showed "consistent,

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substantial positive effects of the program, averaging an effect size of about .5 at each grade level" (P.10). The authors continue by stating that

for the most at risk students, those in the lowest 25% of their grades, effect sizes have averaged more than a full standard deviation (ES= 1.0 or more). In grade-equivalent terms, differences between Success for All and control students have averaged 3 months in the first grade, increasing to more than a full grade equivalent by fifth grade (Slavin & Madden, in press b; Slavin, Madden, Dolan & Wasik, 1996) (p.10).

The authors finish by stating that the difference between the control group of students and those in the Success for All Program is maintained throughout sixth and seventh grades as well as after they left their respective English as a Second Language programs.

They argue that a more accurate term "bilingual program (p.41)" describes what happens. This term, according to the authors, "provides literacy and content in the primary language while building English fluency, with the goal of all instruction eventually being conducted in English." Johns and Torrez, as well as Baker (2001), refer to this type of program as a "transitional bilingual program" since its ultimate goal is to transition all students into English-only programs. Two programs that provide variations on this theme are, the Early-Exit bilingual program and the Late-Exit program.

The authors write that the Early-Exit program provides some initial instruction in the home language with the idea of establishing a minimum foundation. There is some introductory reading instruction in the home language for the sole purpose of introducing reading. However, these students home language is phased out rapidly so that after a year or two of instruction the student can be mainstreamed.

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They continue by writing that Late-Exit programs differ from the Early-Exit programs only by the amount of time the student receives instruction in their native tongue before being placed in the mainstream English-only setting. Students in this program may continue to receive instruction in their first language through elementary school and up to 40 percent of their time n school even after being reclassified as fluent or proficient.

Johns and Torrez (2001) write that two-way bilingual programs approach this issue from the viewpoint of all students learning a new language. This occurs when students from both the language minority and majority are placed in the same setting. Ideally, the classroom is a fifty-fifty mix of these students. Features of a program like this can include bilingual teachers who will spend time providing instruction in both languages as well as teaching the second language to both groups. According to Johns and Torrez students may serve as peer role models for each other. In this environment, both groups have the opportunity to develop their first language skills while simultaneously learning a second language.

Cultural Considerations

Many of the authors like Calderon and Slavin (2001), Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004), emphasize the importance of culture in their writing. Because we all come with a culture, and the influence it has on how we think, act, and often feel, the authors contend that effective leaders and teachers figure out how to embrace the culture of their students and families. The authors also insist that successful schools do this in a way that appears authentic and demonstrates something more than surface level recognition of non-dominant cultures.

In addition to recognizing culturally specific holidays, events, and ceremonies, schools must create an atmosphere that embraces the contributions of the cultures represented at their school. This includes literature, art, music, and other opportunities like field trips to cultural centers to

provide all students a chance to learn more about their classmates and community members. I think that when cultures are represented in the classroom as part of a lesson, it gives every student a sense of legitimacy about their identity and provides a level of relevance to what is being taught. I will expand this idea in chapter five where I discuss the principals and teacher practices of two schools.

Up to this point the authors have discussed culture in terms of individuals and staff working with students to build in the "cultural piece" as part of their teaching. Expressed almost as an after thought, these authors don't really provide a mechanism for doing this effectively. One method that does provide guidelines and questions the teacher regarding incorporating cultural aspects into the lesson planning is the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol. Examples of this include using pictures to depict ideas or events featuring people places other than the United States, to how students are organized into groups for cooperative learning experiences. Most of this study focuses on how and why the staff at Central City school chose and used this method for their instruction.

Influences on Fluency and Literacy

Unlike the previous authors, Simons and Connelly (2000), contend that there is no one model for effective ESL instruction. They write that "both advocates of English-Language academic content instruction and Native Language content instruction contend that research supports their viewpoints on educating ESL students when, in reality, no such evidence exists." (p. 84) The authors continue by stating that research reveals the success of a given model is affected by a number of factors. Each of the models researched were tailored to the schools and populations in which they were implemented. Simons and Connelly state that most program's "success" is defined by one of the following:

1) scores on a standardized achievement test that demonstrate ESOL (English for

Speakers of Other Languages) students are performing at the average level according to

the norms; (2) exit from programs that support ESOL students until they achieve

English-language proficiency suitable for successful matriculation in regular programs.

(p. 85)

Simmons and Connelly (2000) argue that many of the studies do not examine other important

variables such as graduation from high school, gathering of concrete data on their success in

classrooms once they have exited their language learning program or even the degree of their

social integration once they have entered the mainstream. They expand this argument by

indicating that the scope of research needs to include the placement of ESOL students into

honors programs, placement in advanced classes and even membership in extracurricular

activities. The authors discuss common problems with other published studies of program

effectiveness that give reason for readers to question the validity of one method being advanced

over others.

Simmons and Connelly show that variables like programmatic differences within a school

district can lead to students being exposed to several different methods prior to graduation from

high school. They cite an example of a fourteen-year-old student who went from all-English

instruction in early grade school to language-sensitive content instruction in from grades 4-7.

The student moved to another district and was placed in a dual-immersion program for grades 8-

12 (p. 85). The child's experience, according to the authors, is not atypical and further supports

their argument that the wide variety of methods and approaches used ensures that "we have no

way of knowing if a single program design is most effective across the grade levels" (p. 85).

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August and Shanahan (2008) found that other factors are also not considered when examining key influences on ELL literacy and fluency skills. In the research they reviewed, six sociocultural factors were examined. The areas included immigration status; cultural influences on interactions, parent and family influences, language status or prestige, and district, state and federal policies. In discussing the studies the authors write,

> the studies of sociocultural influence have usually been descriptive only, and have not explored empirical links between these factors and student literacy outcomes. In fact, one general shortcoming in this area is that relatively few studies have considered student learning outcomes. Even when student outcomes are reported, the study designs did not permit strong inferences about the influence of sociocultural factors on literacy achievement (p. 8).

Some authors contend that a key aspect to successfully educating Latino children concerns the cultural aspects of learning. According to Trueba, via Huerta-Macias, "Language and culture are inseparable in the process of mediation between social and mental processes that constitute the instructional process. Language and culture play a key role in the organization of cognitive tasks, the development of critical thinking skills, and the process of creative thinking" (p. 30). In her examination of what works, Gonzalez, M., Huerta-Macias, A. and Tinajero, J. (1998), address other factors such as patterns of interaction that include, participation structures, modeling and hands-on activities, collaboration, and cross-age tutoring. All of which, according to them, have their roots in Latino educational traditions.

Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield and Quiroz (2001) address some of the dynamics encountered within the multilingual educational environment. Although Gonzalez, M., Huerta-

Macias, A. and Tinajero, J. (1998), briefly discussed these aspects, these authors examine the influence of the community and home more extensively. In their book the authors discuss the differences in some cultural approaches to education and how teachers in U.S. schools could adapt their individualist oriented methods to embrace the collectivist ideas inherent in the educational traditions of many non-Western cultures. They also address successful parent involvement models that examine the factors influencing parent participation, parent-teacher communication, and how common ground is found between the home and school.

Trumbull et al, address collectivistic versus individualistic approaches to learning. The Western based individualistic model, according to the authors, is oriented toward an educational framework that assumes each person is responsible for his or her own learning. Within this framework students are expected to often work or study in isolation with the outcomes being based on the amount of information he or she has retained and applied.

According to these authors, evidence of a collaborative model is often seen in Latino immigrant children, as well as Hmong and Korean cultures. These students often work in groups to help each other. What is often misconstrued as "cheating" in the Western, individualist framework, is considered normal among people who learn with peer interaction.

The individualist model, primarily Western-European in origin, is not practiced by many cultures. Specifically, according to the authors, the Latino culture shows tendencies toward a collectivist learning approach. However, the authors caution that, "It is important to recognize that even for immigrant Latino families, values and practices will vary based on the length of time they have been in the U.S., the level of education they attained in their countries of origin, how much time has been spent in an urban setting, and numerous other factors" (p. 4).

With that caution in mind the authors still insist that U.S. teachers need to realize that as their classrooms become increasingly diverse, the learning traditions of some of their students might not be aligned with those normally used in the classroom. According to the authors, within the collectivist classroom children ideally "show more respect for others and for learning by quiet listening; where concern for everyone's success is manifest in a great deal of mutual helping; and where social skills are nurtured as much as academic skills" (p. 13). In order to reach their students more effectively, educators need to know when and how to address the needs of students who are used to practicing collectivist learning.

Garcia, via Slavin and Calderon (2001), bring to light the factors that place Latino children at risk of academic failure. In his work Garcia reveals that there are three key developments that appear to be of great concern to administrators and policymakers at both state and local levels. These risk factors are:

(a) the growing number of students who arrive at school at the beginning and during the year, but are ill-prepared to learn; (b) the growing number of non-native born children and youth who enroll in schools across all grade levels; and (c) the large number of native and foreign-born students who are Limited-English Proficient (LEP)(p. 307).

Garcia also points out that most of these children are not proficient enough to fully participate in the mainstream not only because of limited skills, but also because they tend to come from economically deficient households in neighborhoods with high poverty and high amounts of students who drop out of school. As an extension of these factors many of these families come from homes that do not have access to preschool experiences that prepare the children for school. As a result, they come to school without the same level of readiness as their middle class counterparts who often have had early, age-appropriate literacy experiences. Garcia

asserts that these deficits put the ESL/ESL student at a distinct disadvantage to their English-speaking peers. In addressing this problem Garcia writes,

one of the most important lessons learned to date about effective and sustainable educational improvements is that they must be comprehensive. This means that educators must address all of the facets of schools and schooling, including working with parents and other community leaders to create communities of learners where everybody is involved in the education of all students. This also means that the curriculum must be aligned with state content standards and frameworks and both must be aligned with instruction. Furthermore, all three must be aligned with assessments and adopted accountability structures (p. 326).

He continues by insisting that success will be realized when resources are allocated to match the needs of the incoming students. He concludes by stating that educational leaders must also be informed. This is accomplished via staff development, developing expert knowledge through interactions with their communities and families.

In their administrative guide to quality ESL programs, Simons and Connelly (2000) also address some of the political and economic concerns surrounding ELL/ESL education. According to Simons and Connelly, Goldenberg's (1996) assertion that "our schools' response to the challenge of non-English-speaking students has been uneven, fitful, and laced with political, ideological, and methodological controversies such as those swirling around bilingual education" (p. 353), accurately describes the confusion and discomfort experienced by many educational leaders when faced with the challenge of planning, implementing, administering, and evaluating programs for English as a second language (ESOL) students" (p. 3).

In slight contrast to Garcia, these authors focus on the daunting challenge of teaching non-English speakers a new language while they simultaneously learn a new culture, work at achieving academic competence, as well as adjusting to new societal norms. The authors' contend that the schools in the United States met this challenge with marginal success.

Effective Models for Latino ELLs

When researching effective educational strategies I found authors who addressed widely accepted, age appropriate teaching practices. One of these authors, Baker (2001), asserts that there are many models which range from submersion; where students are expected to learn their second language through absorption via interactions with speakers of the second language, to segregationist language education. The segregationist model basically maintains the first language with little regard for learning the second language. Of course, the models that we commonly find in U.S schools are at neither of these extremes.

Baker (2001) contends that the submersion model with pull-out classes tends to be the most commonly used in the United States. Often titled English as a Second Language classes, students are withdrawn for lessons in their second language then returned to their mainstream classes. Although this model provides some guided support for the students, it also requires them to leave their regular classroom. Students in this model often fall behind their classmates with regard to the curriculum as they focus their efforts on learning English.

Krashen(1997), Baker(2001), Echevarria and Graves (2003) and others write favorably about sheltered instruction models. According to Baker, Sheltered English or Sheltered Content Instruction settings differ from the standard ESL model because ELLs are taught the same curricular content as their English speaking peers with a simplified vocabulary. Teachers using this model also use materials that are matched to the English proficiency of the students. Baker

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(2001), Faltis and Hudelson (1998) and Echevarria and Graves (2003) agree that the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol is an effective tool for ensuring quality instruction that teaches curricular content and language skills.

These authors also agree that sheltered programs have advantages and drawbacks. Because these programs often involve temporary segregation of the ELLs from their mainstream classes, these students may benefit from , Baker writes," (1) greater opportunity for participation among students (they may be less inhibited due to no competition or comparisons with first language speakers of English); (2) greater sensitivity among teachers to the linguistic, cultural and educational needs of a homogeneous group of students; and (3) a collective identity among students in a similar situation (Faltis, 1993)" (P.198).

He also acknowledges that the students may also be deprived because of the removal of English speaking role models, as well as reinforcing stereotypes of segregated students as deficient and in need of remedial attention. He also points out that this view by teachers may lead to "inequality in treatment (e.g. in curriculum materials and training of teachers.)" (p.198). I address some of these models, particularly the Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP) later in this chapter.

According to Echevarria and Graves (2003), the foundation of SIOP is based on the idea that a bilingual approach to educating, combined with a focus on simultaneous English language and curricular content instruction, will produce a richer and more relevant educational experience for ELLs. The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol is the method used by the ESL staff at Central City School. This system, which I also address in the pedagogy chapter of this work, combines research based, nationally recognized effective teaching practices with a strong base of ESL educational methods.

By examining language education models we can begin to develop an understanding of the philosophies associated with, and numerous approaches to, educating second language learners. Although the authors, as a group, do not extol the virtues of a single education model, the evidence suggests that sheltered programs focused on learning curricular content along with language skills, and include materials and instruction that have been adapted to individual student's proficiency, are highly effective. The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol is currently the model that does all of these things for students.

Characteristics of Effective Schools

While thinking about various models of English as a Second Language education, I also wondered what some of the literature said about effective schools in general. To help me define effective practices in the classroom and the entire school I turned to authors like Hulley and Dier (2009), DuFour, DuFour, Eaker and Karhanek (2010). These authors cite the work of many others in their examinations of effective school characteristics.

According to Hulley and Dier, effective schools research has been an ongoing endeavor for the last thirty years. They assert that despite changes in education, in terms of programs, curricula, etcetera, there are "seven correlates of effective schools that were identified so long ago and have withstood the test of time" (p.3). They go on to point out that these correlates, or characteristics "remain relevant as ever" (p3). According to Hulley and Dier effective schools exhibit all of these correlates "within a framework of character", and exhibit their competence in the areas of student achievement, attendance, attitude, behavior, and collaboration.

These authors contend that character addresses environmental and intellectual issues like the school mission, safety, achievement, attitude, and relations with the surrounding community and

parents. Competence addresses teaching, monitoring student progress, attendance, behavior

management, and establishing and maintaining high expectations for success. Instructional

leaders orchestrate how these various parts are addressed and used to help achieve the school's

collective goals and objectives.

Hulley and Dier (2009) and DuFour, et al. (2010) contend that the seven correlates of

effective schools are the following:

1. Clear and focused mission

2. Safe and orderly environment

3. Positive home/school relations

4. Climate of high expectations for success

5. Frequent monitoring of student progress

6. Opportunity to learn and time on task

7. Instructional Leadership

However the latter authors differ from the former only by adding the following:

8. Willingness to face adversity, conflict, and anxiety

9. Perseverance in the face of obstacles

Most of these correlates are self explanatory. Ideas surrounding mission, safety and

orderliness, establishing and maintaining positive home/school relationships are ideas that

address effectively communicating with students, staff, and parents about issues that affect

everybody concerned with the school. Establishing a climate of high expectations, monitoring

student progress, and providing opportunities for students to learn are functions of leadership that require more than communicating.

According to the authors these three areas require the leaders and staff to devote energy and effort to not establishing and maintaining these as part of their norms. Hulley and Dier (2009) specifically address these as areas related to issues of competence. They assert that "ongoing professional learning and skill development are required to ensure that these correlates are strong and readily evident in the work that teachers do with their students" (p. 7). These three areas specifically address student learning and what the staff do to ensure they effectively educate each child who sits in their classroom.

The willingness to face adversity and persevere addresses leadership and a sense of gumption. DuFour, et al. (2010) address these issues in terms of leadership from both teachers and administrators. They discuss how leaders work with others to resolve conflict and build consensus toward reaching common goals. They also discuss how in doing this the leaders must keep the focus of what they are trying to accomplish on what is best practice and ultimately best for educating their students.

When I reflect on why these are important to this dissertation I realized that all of these correlates or characteristics have one thing in common, they require commitment from the staff as well as students to be successful. Commitment means they support the policies and practices agreed upon by the school. They demonstrate their commitment to these policies and practices through the ideas they espouse and their actions in the classroom and other areas. For me one of the most revealing pieces is how they demonstrate what they say and do are connected, and how well these concepts and actions align with widely accepted literature regarding best educational practices.

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District Policy and Practice

The Center city schools have two primary sources that guide teachers, administrators, and district ESL mentors. The first is their Bilingual Student Education Policy that outlines the purpose of ESL/bilingual education in the Center City Schools. An excerpt from the policy follows:

The Board of Education supports district programming and curriculum that promotes the accelerated academic achievement of English Language Learners. The Board recognizes the important role played by multilingualism in academic success and future career opportunities of [Center City] Public School students (P. 1)

Programs that promote accelerated academic achievement for English Language Learners focus on:

- developing cognitive academic language proficiency as well as basic interpersonal communication skills (CALP and BICS);

- building literacy skills in students' native language that will readily transfer to building literacy in English (NLL);

- teaching specific English language development (English as a Second Language/ ESL)

- using instruction in students' first language to teach grade-level content (bilingual instruction)

- training teachers in the development of specific instructional strategies for dual language immersion or sheltered instruction programs;

The goals of such programs are to develop academic proficiency in English, ensure achievement of grade level standards, and develop and maintain students' first language as a resource for learning and social success (p.1).

Some of the key points in this policy clearly follow recent thoughts and approaches to educating students to become English communicators. The board, and by extension the schools, must implement programs that focus on teaching students to speak, read, and write English, they must do so while recognizing the students native language is a resource, not a hindrance, to learning English. This policy also outlines the duties of the school board and the superintendent in terms of what they are required to do to support the ESL programs in terms of teaching standards, resources, staffing, and curriculum.

In addition to the district policy, the board developed the Multicultural, Multilingual Manual(MCML). This fifty-three page document includes the district policy and expands upon it. The MCML manual defines what an ELL student is, specifically outlines departmental duties from the district down to school level. It addresses communicating with parents, academic standards, eligibility and proficiency criteria, as well as the identification and student placement process. It also clearly states the program goals for the entire district. These goals incorporate state and federal guidelines for ELL services. They are the following:

- All English Language Learners will develop proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing in the English language, consistent with the expectations for all students.

- Bilingual / bi-literate students will retain and further develop fluency in their first language in order to provide a critical foundation upon which to build second language learning, an important bridge to their community's culture and a distinct employment advantage in a global economy.

- ELL students are expected to be engaged in and master challenging content and meet the same high expectations established for all students, from kindergarten through grade 12.

- Mainstream and ELL teachers will receive professional development in ELL teaching strategies in order to ensure the academic success of ELL students.

- Program goals and ELL student academic growth is measured through appropriate and valid assessments that are aligned with state and local standards.

- Measurements are sufficiently objective so that they can be evaluated over time.
- A list of staff and a process are recommended for an "ELL Achievement Assessment Team."

- Long-term educational goals for ELL students are comparable to education goals for non-ELL students.

- Long-term academic goals prepare ELL students to meet district goals for overall education program. (p. 4)

The MCML guides principals and teachers toward a student and family focus while providing services to ELLs. In addressing these issues the authors of the manual emphasize the role of the principal and teachers in establishing and maintaining an educationally sound ESL program through appropriate resources, procedures and practices. The manual gives detailed

instruction on how to do things like identify, select, and place ELLs in ESL programs. It addresses the requirements of parental notification, It also addresses special needs students, the particular needs of high school age students, and requirements and procedures for exiting students from ESL services.

The MCML manual is a comprehensive document that addresses most of the issues that teachers and other school officials encounter. It provides a detailed description of everything an ESL program should be and should have except for the curriculum. In this case the manual addresses what the curriculum should cover but does not recommend that teachers follow a specified, prepackaged curriculum. There are no recommendations for specific textbooks or materials either. The authors of this document point out that they desired to allow the schools with ESL programs to have the freedom to use what they wanted so long as it met the requirements outlined in the MCML. What I read in this manual seemed to match what I observed at Central City School.

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) has roots in many of the methods already discussed in this section. As its name implies, it is heavily weighted toward using Sheltered Instructional practices at its core. We can see how it differs from other methods in the way ESL teachers using SIOP deliver content to students. The biggest difference between SIOP and the methods that preceded it is the focus on teaching curricular content in several subject areas while providing English language instruction. Most other methods focus on teaching English literacy and fluency at the expense of student proficiency in other academic areas.

In his dissertation, Read (2009) described the history of SIOP as a two stage process developed and field-tested between 1996 and 2003. Citing the work of Echevarria and Short (2000), he explains that the purpose of this project was to "develop an explicit model of sheltered instruction that could be implemented by teachers of students with limited English proficiency in

order to improve their academic success"(p. 63). In short, according to Read, SIOP was designed to be used by all educators and administrators working with ELLs. He continues by saying that it was designed as an instructional framework that simultaneously promoted academic success and enhanced proficiency in the target language.

Unlike many of the methods that came before it, the SIOP addresses the entire spectrum of teacher preparation, instruction, student assessment, and teacher evaluation. With thirty components grouped into eight major areas, this model provides a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning. Read amplifies these key features when he describes how an observer/evaluator finishes observing a teacher, that person must use a rubric to measure how well the teacher's lesson matched the standards set in the SIOP. The goal, according to Read, is to provide consistency in the type and quality of instruction the students received.

McBride (2007), citing the work of Freeman, Freeman, and Mercuri (2003), points out their findings from case studies they did with elementary, middle school and high school level ELLs. After examining teaching practices in sheltered immersion type programs, they found four key elements to student's academic success. McBride writes:

1. Engage students in challenging, theme-based curriculum to develop academic concepts.
2. Draw on students' background, experiences, cultures, and languages.
3. Organize collaborative activities and scaffold instruction to build students academic English proficiency.
4. Create confident students who value school and value themselves as learners (p. 10)

She concludes this section by reiterating that the SIOP includes all four of the above keys to success. Citing the work of Echevarria and Short (2004) and their work with SIOP McBride continues to tell us about the virtues of SIOP by stating, "they found that implementation of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) program resulted in higher achievement, improved attendance, and fewer dropouts" (p.11). She also explains that the researchers insist the SIOP is "designed for flexible implementation and brings together what they teach by providing an approach for how to teach it" (p. 11). However, despite the research and supporting evidence of this model's success, many other, less effective models are still used by schools throughout our country.

The SIOP became the model of choice for the Center City School district, as well as a widely accepted method, because of its many facets. Comprehensive in its approach to student learning, it provides a variety of strategies for teachers to use. In many ways, SIOP appears to be the evolutionary culmination of Sheltered Instruction and other techniques combined with widely accepted best teaching practices.

Central City school adopted the SIOP after years of using a variety of different methods. This is important because Central City's principal and staff embraced this model before most of the district. They engaged in staff development sessions before, during, and after initial implementation to make this work at their school. Their investment and continued fidelity the SIOP continues to pay dividends as they realize success through their students' progress.

Principal Leadership

The current literature I researched for this study, as well as a plethora of books and articles on this topic, continue to support the importance of principals in schools. When discussing school leadership the researchers and writers address various characteristics, traits, and actions

that effective leaders exhibit. The literature supports leaders who, work collaboratively with their staff, develop positive relationships with their parents, place a high value on educating all students in their school, supports extensive staff development, insist on teachers using effective practices and working to improve their teaching, and provides guidance and direction to keep the staff focused on their organizational objectives.

When thinking of Mr. Alvarez and the principal of Eastside Community school, I see some significant differences in leadership practices, as well as other factors that could influence how and why these two principals whose schools have similar demographics, have significantly different results with their students. By examining these two principals and comparing their schools to the literature, I get a better understanding of why Eastside, as the school where I used to work, does not appear to get the same results with their ELLs and Central City.

Leadership and School Effectiveness

Hoo-Ballade (2004) addresses principal leadership and the effectiveness of schooling for ELLs principal leadership is crucial to effective ELL education in her dissertation. Citing the work of August and Hakuta (1997) she writes, " Consistent with findings of the effective schools research that began two decades ago, school-level leadership appears to be a critical dimension of effective schooling for ELL students" (p. 11). This position is based on the work of various authors as well as a survey of principals.

The results of her dissertation were based on a survey derived from the Bolman and Deal Leadership Orientation (Self) survey in which she gathered data about principals' level of formal of education in second language acquisition, demographic differences between schools and primarily to "identify the extent to which leadership styles and management differed among principals in elementary schools with different percentages of ESL students" (p. i).

According to Hoo-Ballade's data analysis there were no significant statistical differences in leadership styles or educational levels regarding second language acquisition. What this tells us is that the principal's influence on the success of ELLs is more dependent on their decisions and actions than on their style of leadership or education level. This also supports the research of others which promotes the idea that practices are what really matter in determining the success of second language learners.

Taking a similar position, Malloy (2007) asserts in her dissertation addressing leader perceptions of promoting ELL proficiency, the practices of successful leaders aligned with much of the current literature with a few exceptions. She concludes that some ESL leaders make a difference by facilitating the tasks of teaching and learning for ELLs. This research reinforces the idea that leaders who support widely accepted effective teaching practices and appropriate resources will be successful.

One researcher explored this issue from the perspective of principal training. I added his perspective to this review as a means of furthering the discussion of leadership and its connection to effective ESL instructional practices. Ruiz (2005) addresses principal pre-service preparation for four linguistically and culturally diverse teachers. In his work he examines how a cohort of ESL and bilingual teachers progressed through a principal preparation program and their perceptions of leadership effectiveness in their new assignments. Through interviews and discussions with these principal candidates he was able to draw conclusions that could have implications for principal preparation programs, and school leaders alike.

Ruiz states that, "While the pre-service program and their backgrounds prepared them to be knowledgeable leaders of linguistically and culturally diverse schools, they were not prepared to affect teachers' ideology and instruction. Teachers were respectful of the new assistant principals

but were not convinced to change ideology or instruction" (p. ix). He continues by stating that

the results of this study leads him to recommend that principal preparation programs must

provide their candidates with instruction on establishing credibility, provide courses on ethics,

philosophy, empowerment, and social justice if the goal is to help develop effective school

leaders in culturally and linguistically diverse environments.

Ruiz also asserts that the literature he used supports the idea that there is "a direct

correlation between academic performance and effective principals" (p. 2). Authors like Grogan

and Andrews (2000), and Murphy (2002) contend that because of the ever changing role of the

school principal, administrator preparation must include a host of staff development that includes

academic growth, moral leadership, social justice, and community building to name a few.

Another perspective on the importance of the principal regarding educating ELLs focuses on

the creation of a handbook. Smiley (2005) addresses implementing effective school practices for

ELLs via a handbook for elementary principals. In her dissertation she describes developing a

handbook that, "would support elementary principals in gaining the knowledge, strategies, and

tools to lead their schools in effectively serving the needs of English language learners (ELLs)"

(Abstract). The handbook was created, revised, and field-tested based on her review of the

literature, principals' input, and the feedback from renowned reviewers who are considered

experts in the ESL and school administration fields.

Smiley concluded that resources to assist principals in "gaining the knowledge and skills to

foster highly effective learning environments for ELLs" is deficient. She also found that the

literature supported the principal's knowledge as a critical factor in determining a school's

effectiveness. In support of that fact she also found that the skills principals should possess "to

be effective with ELLs can be aligned with the ISLLC standards that link educational leadership to productive schools and enhanced educational outcomes for all students" (abstract).

According to Smiley, citing the work of authors like Garcia (2000), August, Hakuta, and Pompa (1994), training in second language acquisition, establishing and maintaining effective instructional practices, and English language instruction were essential to helping students master content knowledge and skills. This fact, combined with the fact that many school leaders have not received adequate training to address the needs of ELLs, emphasizes the critical role school leadership has regarding ESL education.

Smiley writes, "Strong leadership is the key which remains crucial to the change process (Wagner, 1994). According to Fullan (2001), the main agents (or blockers) of change are principals" (p. 5). She continues by citing the work of many authors that support the fact that school leadership is critical to ensuring instruction responds to the needs of language minority students. Citing the work of Goldenberg & Sullivan (1994), Minicucci and Olsen(1992); and Adger (1996)she writes, "The principal must continually advocate for the inclusion of ELLs and "ensure sustained attention to these students by explicitly keeping language and culture on the reform agenda and insisting that every teacher participate in the school's continuous improvement process (p. 5)."

The literature is clear regarding the influence of principals on ESL programs. Effective ESL programs are supported by principals who foster an atmosphere of inclusiveness, use of best research based teaching practices, focus on academic excellence for all students, and promote strong ties to both the dominant and non-English speaking communities. In doing these things, according to the research, the principal helps keep the staff focused on using the best models and techniques for all students while developing culturally relevant relationships with the families

and surrounding community. In my examination of Mr. Alvarez and the staff of Central City school used this information to compare what they were doing to what the literature says is crucial to the success of a school and its ESL program.

After reading some of the current literature on the topic of principal leadership and effective schools, I am compelled to say that effective leadership has a strong correlation with academic success. The significance of this correlation becomes more apparent, according to many of the authors, when schools implement new methods, strategies, and procedures. In short, research tells us that effective leaders help their staff members visualize what they wish to accomplish, then help create and maintain the framework, direction, motivation, and reason for pursuing the results they desire. In reflecting on Central City and my research there, I see many connections to what the literature says and what Principal Alvarez does.

Alvarez demonstrates many of the qualities associated with effective leaders. His focus on putting systems in place to support academic excellence was prevalent everywhere I observed. In narrowing my focus on the ESL department, I saw the results of professional development that emphasized widely accepted "best" teaching practices incorporated into a proven, comprehensive teaching method. Mr. Alvarez, along with the group of teacher leaders, helped implement and drive a reform effort at their school which they still use today. In order to better understand his influence and leadership style, I turned to the work of Bolman and Deal (2003).

Leadership Frames

Bolman and Deal (2003) discuss various aspects and types of leadership within the context of organizational structures. During their discussion of various structures they focus most of their attention on leadership types and their impact on organizations. Using a mixture of vignettes and

research the authors helped me establish a framework for understanding the type of leadership exhibited by Mr. Alvarez and the staff of Central City school.

The authors divide leadership into four frames of reference: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. Recognizing the results of social science research, and the schools of thought that have evolved, the authors acknowledge that there are many views on leadership. These views examine ideas that focus on performance, emotional intelligence (p. 11), as well as Machiavellian and humanistic perspectives. In their effort to synthesize these various ideas and concepts Bolman and Deal provide a working definition of a leadership frame.

As a mental map, a frame is a set of ideas or assumptions you carry in your head. It helps you understand and negotiate a particular "territory". The territory isn't necessarily defined by geography. It could be a sport, an art form, an academic subject, or anything else you care about.

After providing this quick definition of a frame, Bolman and Deal continue by stating that frames provide a way to understand the leadership theories they discuss. Through framing, the researcher is able to align various aspects of the organization or influences into something that will help them make sense of what they are studying. The authors drew their conclusions about their leadership ideas from managers, organizational leaders. They also drew ideas from the research of sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, and anthropologists as the source of their information and inspiration. In order to help the reader understand these concepts a little better I provide a brief explanation.

The human resource frame, having its base in psychology, defines organizations in terms similar to a family. This perspective views the organization as "an extended family, made up of

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individuals with needs, feelings, prejudices, skills, and limitations" (p. 14). From this perspective leaders would tend to tailor the organization to the needs of the people, keeping in mind the need for workers to be happy at the same time they are doing the work necessary for the organization to be successful. This is in stark contrast to the political frame.

The political frame defines the organization as an arena or place of contest. In this environment competition for power and resources drives interactions between individuals. In this frame leadership is exercised through, "bargaining, negotiation, coercion, and compromise" (p. 15). The authors draw our focus to the fact that in this environment interests and issues cause the leaders to form and change alliances as necessary to attain the goals of the organization.

The structural frame emphasizes the goals, roles, and relationships of the people within the organization. According to the authors, these structures are built more to fit the environment and technology of the organization. According to the authors, leaders in these organizations, "create rules, policies, procedures, and hierarchies to coordinate diverse activities into a unified strategy" (p.14). They continue by emphasizing organizations like this have problems when their structure is not prepared for a change in circumstances. They often must reorganize or redesign to meet the change and be successful.

The symbolic frame emphasizes organizational culture. According to Bolman and Deal, this frame treats organizations like a group of people. They state, "it abandons assumptions of rationality more prominent in other frames. It sees organizations as cultures, propelled more by rituals, ceremonies, stories, heroes, and myths than by rules, policies, and managerial authority" (p. 15). They continue by insisting that the organizational interactions are viewed as theatre with actors playing, "roles in the organizational drama while audiences form impressions from what is seen onstage" (p. 15). In this environment the organization succeeds so long as all of the cast

members effectively play their part. The authors insist that problems also occur when symbols become meaningless or ceremonies and rituals become less important. After reading more about these leadership frames, as well as comparing what I read to my research on Mr. Alvarez, I have developed an impression of his leadership frame.

Another author, Sidle (2005), writes about leadership using a five part, wheel based, framework. He begins by discussing the basis of this framework as being rooted in ancient, time-tested, leadership practices. He continues by insisting that "this simple, intuitive, and compelling paradigm serves not only the development of leadership, but also interpersonal relationships, teams and organizations" (p. 6). I have chosen to discuss the work of this author to provide another perspective to that of Bolman and Deal (2003). With multiple perspectives on this topic I intend to provide a more complete, albeit possibly more complex, picture of the leadership at Central City school.

In his leadership wheel model Sidle cites the image of the circle as being an almost universal symbol found in many cultures around the world. He describes the circle as "an important symbol of unity and wholeness for cultures throughout the world from almost the beginning of time" (p.37). This wheel has four leadership archetypes around the outside connected to one on the inside of the circle. The one in the center of the circle represents a higher level of leadership consciousness than the other four. According to Sidle these archetypes are: The Teacher, The Nurturer, The Visionary, The Warrior, and The Sage; the last being at the center of the circle. I briefly explain the chief characteristics of each and how they may apply in this case study.

The Teacher archetype exhibits an intellectually oriented, fact based leadership style that focuses on using information and tangible evidence on which to base decisions. Leadership in this paradigm, sometimes called "leader as expert (p. 44)" views the person with the most

knowledge and skills as a leader. The Teacher archetype is characterized by logic, objectivity, curiosity, and the desire to insure others within the organization use the same approach to making decisions in support of the organizational goals and objectives. Sidle writes that the Teachers are, "methodical, deliberate, and conscientious in their effort to see the world objectively and to anchor actions in truth and without projection" (p. 45).

Sidle writes that the Nurturer archetype exercises an emotional, people-centered leadership style. A Nurturer derives his or her leadership power through building strong relationships through fostering a collaborative, caring environment. The Nurturer archetype is driven by a high sense of empathy, is values-guided, and exhibits a perpetual sense of optimism. This leader is somebody who is good at listening, communicating, and networking and fostering an environment where people are encouraged to learn and grow. An individual working with a Nurturer knows that the leader cares about and for them as a human being. As such, this leader is usually viewed as one who supports others. Sidle finishes by stating, "This is leader as servant, as in Servant Leader, the notion espoused by Robert Greenleaf (p.48)."

According to Sidle, the Visionary archetype represents, "one level up in abstraction from the powers of the Teacher and Nurturer" (p. 52). He continues by describing the Visionary as one who can simultaneously comprehend the "big picture" while seeing the possibilities and interconnectedness of individual parts. Visionaries are characterized by their clear judgment despite ambiguity, multilevel perspective, and creativity. The Visionary is a strategic and creative thinker who is driven by a higher sense of purpose. They commonly see potential and possibilities where others may not. With their higher sense of purpose they guide their organizations to help them accomplish what was previously imagined. In light of these facts,

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Sidle refers to this leader as, "visionary and architect (p. 53)." I think this is where Mr. Alvarez, the principal of Central City school, may reside in this model's leadership continuum.

Sidle writes that the Warrior archetype embodies action intelligence. According to Sidle Warriors are planners and executers of the plan. Sidle asserts, "they represent the ability to actualize plans, internalize the lessons, and close the gap between knowing and doing" (p. 57). He continues by saying that the Warrior is willing to do what needs to be done despite the risk and obstacles he or she may face. The Warrior is also one who seeks power for the purpose of making the organization more effective.

Warriors are known for having high integrity and tend to act with their whole person. They are authentic and persevere in the face of daunting odds. According to the author, the Warrior sees "the gap between the current reality and the desired future, and [is] disciplined and courageous in closing the gap between the two" (p. 57). Considering what I have learned via the interviews of staff and the principal, I think Mr. Alvarez demonstrates some of these characteristics. However, he is not limited to this part of the leadership continuum.

The Sage archetype represents the pinnacle of this leadership continuum. According to Sidle (2005), the Sage demonstrates the ability to selectively use strengths from each of the previous areas. Put another way, the Sage has the perspective of a Visionary, the clarity of a Teacher, and the tenacity of a Warrior while at the same time able to show the compassion of a Nurturer. The Sage is also adept at appropriately exercising the traits within this continuum depending on the context of the situation.

In reflecting on these two leadership perspectives I realize that there are similarities in their models despite the different names. Both models have people centered and task oriented

perspectives. My purpose in reading them was to help me establish a leadership framework or basis for the Central City School and its principal.

Summary

The literature review reveals some of the differing perspectives on the topic of bilingual educational instruction as well as "best teaching" practices. Despite some of the differences in their approach or theory, the authors advocate practices that build literacy skills in their student's native language before or while teaching English. The authors discussed in this review favored programs based on promoting native language literacy. However, despite their strong advocacy of these programs, the reality we face is one influenced by political and social forces that affect how ELLs learn academic content and English communication skills.

Despite some differences of opinion on how soon students should be moved to English-only environments, the authors discussed agree that students must be provided with opportunities to learn that involve more than seat-time in a classroom. According to the authors, students learn best when their cognitive, metacognitive, social and psychological characteristics are addressed and considered throughout lesson planning, teaching, and their involvement with the greater community.

According to the authors, the skills learned in their native language (L1), greatly enhance a student's ability to acquire the skills necessary to learn English. The authors also support the idea that with literacy skills learned in L1, as well as being allowed to stay in a literacy skills building program longer, students show higher academic performance and ultimately move into the mainstream better prepared to be academically successful. However, despite evidence supporting this position, our schools often operate with less effective settings.

Due to economic, political, and social influences our English Language Learners are often challenged with educational settings that may not be consistent from one setting to the next or even one school to another. With, what appears to be, an ever increasing political shift to have all citizens be English speakers, more and more programs become oriented on providing instruction to get students to learn English without regard to their native language. Fortunately, some of our educators have found a way to still provide instruction via research-based methods that can help our students become literate communicators without sacrificing their native language or culture.

As the number of foreign-born students coming to our schools increases, as indicated by census data, our schools must become more cognizant of the programmatic, curricular, and financial burden they will bear. To provide the education to all students that national and local governments, and school boards dictate, we must develop ways to effectively educate every child. The effort to ensure we are successful must be systemic, comprehensive, and focus on what the children need to become academically and socially successful.

With all of these factors to consider I think this dissertation would be incomplete without an examination of how these things are addressed from the leader's perspective. The above authors provide several frameworks that I used to examine the leadership styles of the principals and the staff of the schools I compare. I examine and discuss how leadership is demonstrated to effectively implement the necessary measures to ensure the success of its students and staff.

III

Method

When considering both quantitative and qualitative research methods, I found both perspectives had advantages and disadvantages. I realized the quantitative approach gives us statistically valid data regarding the preferences of a given population but it will not tell us some of the intangible influences connected with ESL education. At the same time, a qualitative study may miss statistically relevant data as the author focuses on the emotional and psychological aspects of the topic.

Educating children successfully is not dependent on the strict adherence to scientific theory and method. I think it is safe to say that confining the process to statistical validity would limit the scope of research. Therefore, I conducted this study using qualitative research methods based on the works of Bogdan and Biklen (1998), Cresswell (2007), Maxwell (1996), and Merriam (1998). Through interviews, observations and analysis of the data collected via field notes and other means, I examined the quantifiable and intangible qualities of Central City school's ESL program..

After deciding to pursue this problem using qualitative research methods, I realized that I needed something to compare this school to and working definitions. First, I determined and established a working definition of academic success and a successful school. A simple definition was that the school had to have demonstrated higher academic performance as indicated by standardized test scores for their Spanish-speaking ELL population. The building also had to have comparatively low disciplinary issues when compared to other schools of similar configuration within the district. Finally, the school's test information had to indicate growth in terms of achievement levels on those same tests over time.

Finding consistent evidence of growth helped define programs that were successful versus those that were not. Having accomplished that, I picked a school that met or exceeded my selection criteria and proceeded with the research. After comparing Central City school to three other similarly configured schools with similar demographics, the choice became clear. Central City was making progress in ways that the others were not. One of the schools that clearly was not making similar progress was Eastside Community; the school where I worked.

Test Data

During the time I gathered data for this study the Centralia Department of Education used standardized tests for assessing students reading, writing and math skills. The Test for Emerging Academic English (TEAE), was used for assessing the reading and writing skills of English Language Learners. Figure 3.1 shows how Central City and Eastside schools compared at the beginning of this study.

Percentage of ESL Students Proficient on the TEAE for 2003-2004		
	Central City	**Eastside**
Grade 3 Reading	35 N=20	23 N=35
Grade 3 Writing	44	54
Grade 4 Reading	47 N=34	50 N=38
Grade 4 Writing	53	75
Grade 5 Reading	28 N=31	40 N=35
Grade 5 Writing	63	51
Grade 6 Reading	54 N=37	57 N=37
Grade 6 Writing	69	68
Grade 7 Reading	42 N=45	47 N=28
Grade 7 Writing	48	63
Grade 8 Reading	68 N=28	74 N=19
Grade 8 Writing	80	64
Total	N=195	N=192

Fig. 3.1

Figure 3.1shows the performance of both Central City and Eastside school students on the TEAE. In this chart I focused on the reading and writing skills because of their undeniable connection to language development. The TEAE assesses students on their ability to read and write using academic language. In this test students are assessed on a score correlated to a set of ability and grade based criteria. Figure 3.1 shows the overall percentage of the Central City ELL students who demonstrated proficiency during the 2003-2004 school year. At the time these data were compiled the state required all ESL students from third grade and higher to take the standardized tests in reading and writing.

The TEAE test data from 2003-2004 reveal differences and similarities between the Central City and Eastside schools. During this time, before SIOP was implemented at Central City, their test scores are similar. First, the percentage of students demonstrating reading proficiency at Central City school are below those at Eastside. The only exception to this is third grade where Central City has a twelve percentage point lead. However, this exception is diminished when we continue our examination by looking at the writing

A grade by grade comparison of the percentage scores shows a range of differences from one to twenty two points. After converting those numbers to actual students in each category we can see that a similar number of students demonstrate proficiency. The range of difference here shows that Central City had twenty less students demonstrate proficiency in third grade up to having ten more than Eastside in eighth grade. Looking at this in common sense terms, Eastside had more than half of the tested students demonstrating proficiency in both reading and writing while Central city did not. However, the changes in the following years indicate improvements by Central City at the same time Eastside shows minor gains in the percentage of proficient students.

Students Demonstrating Proficiency on the TEAE 2006-2007		
	Central City	**Eastside**
Grade 3 Reading	60 N=25	48 N=29
Grade 3 Writing	56	76
Grade 4 Reading	70 N=20	69 N=29
Grade 4 Writing	90	89
Grade 5 Reading	50 N=15	56 N=25
Grade 5 Writing	53	63
Grade 6 Reading	79 N=24	63 N=24
Grade 6 Writing	72	71
Grade 7 Reading	76 N=33	59 N=22
Grade 7 Writing	84	87
Grade 8 Reading	73 N=30	55 N=27
Grade 8 Writing	79	77
Total	N=147	N=156

Fig.3.2

Figure 3.2 shows the TEAE results for 2006-2007. By the 2006-2007 school year Central City had already implemented and was using the SIOP. When comparing the data from figures 3.1 and 3.2 we see an increase in the percentage of Central City students who demonstrated proficiency in both reading and writing. The percentage of proficient Eastside students increased but not at the same levels as Central City

I used the data from both figures 3.1 and 3.2 to plot a line graph to help me see trends. The data indicated on figures 3.3 and 3.4 clearly show that between 2005 and 2007 Central City makes gains in both reading and writing that Eastside does not. After viewing this evidence I became more convinced that this school was more effective with their English Language Learners (ELLs) than Eastside.
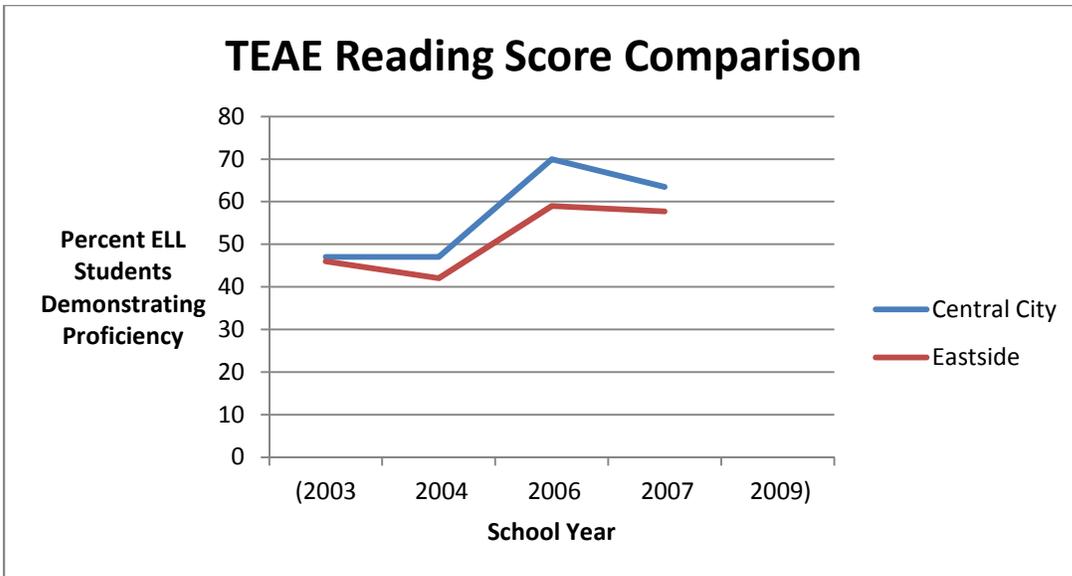
Fig. 3.3
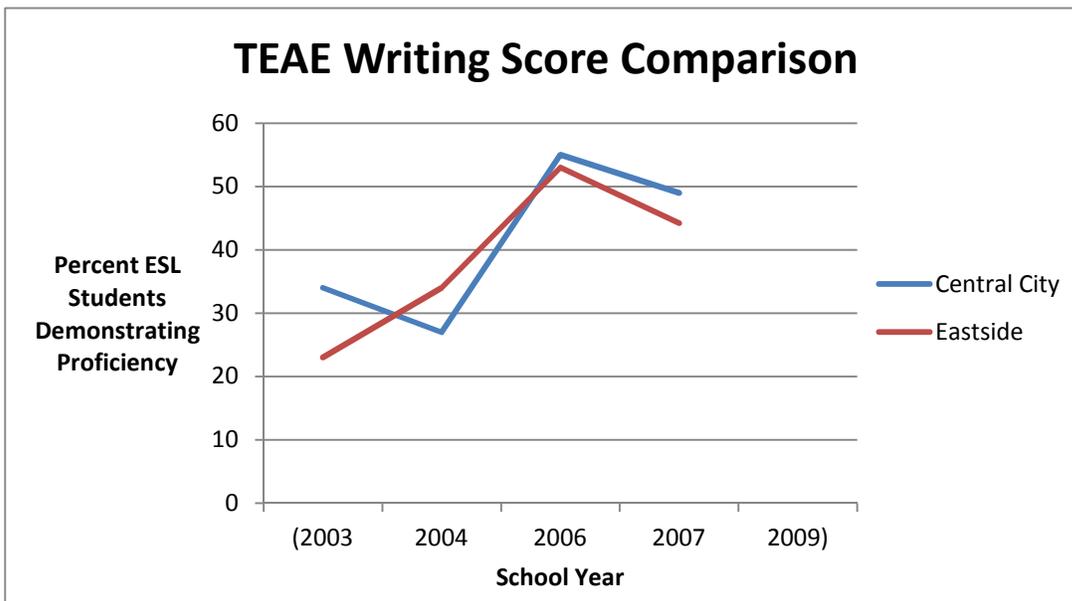
Fig. 3.4

The difference in results between the schools seem to indicate a change. Beginning in 2003 Central City began using the SIOP. By 2006 the percentage of proficient students at this school surpasses Eastside student's. The data appear to support that the SIOP, contributed to the success of Central City school.

In Chapter IV I continue this discussion and show how the differences in their scores increased after Central City adopted the SIOP while Eastside continued to use a more traditional approach to educating ELLs. In chapter IV I also discuss the connection between their success and the teaching methods used, practices and procedures, and several other factors. I will demonstrate that these factors, combined with committed leadership, helped make the difference between the two schools discussed in this study.

Data Collection

Through a series of interviews with teachers, support staff, and school administrators I gathered information on the perceived factors driving the overall success of the ELL students at Central City school. Through observation I compared and contrasted the data presented in the interviews with an analysis of my field notes gathered through observation. I periodically analyzed the obtained data to review what was learned and to possibly uncover other areas to explore. I also considered other factors, see figure 3.5, that could influence how much and what type of data I collected.

During the observations and interviews I used methods that reduced the exposure of the people involved. I think that allowing the interviewed subjects the option of anonymity may have increased the number of candid responses I obtained. However, even if a person indicated that they were not concerned about maintaining their privacy, I used pseudonyms and identified them

by a generic position description within the school. Other people, like community members or parents were identified by their generic title, gender, and ethnicity or race when necessary.

Realizing I needed consent from parents before interviewing, photographing, or involving students in activities associated with the research, I drafted and distributed letters that outlined the scope of the study and requested the permission of the parents and school administration before proceeding. I had the letters printed in both English and Spanish so that parents could read the language of their choice. Those who indicated a desire to be excluded from the research project, or failed to return their permission slips, were not interviewed. However, most of the parents consented to have their children observed and interviewed.

I followed a similar process with the staff of Central City school. With them I used a cover letter that outlined the scope of the study and asked permission to interview and observe them. Then I also assured them of their privacy via a disclosure agreement.

	Cultural Aspects	Academic	Language Skills
Teachers	Knowledge of cultural & integration into lesson/curriculum	Classroom	ESL
Students	How they feel about school	Struggles and triumphs	Barriers to success
Parents	Views of educational success	Ability to help with students & integration with school process	Communication with schools
Administrators	Staff integration & cultural norms	Staff training	Communication with parents

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Fig. 3.5

Figure 3.6 outlines the focus of the study and the sources of information I used.

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Research Theory

In discussing how a person justifies his or her role as a valid qualitative researcher, Bogdan and Biklen (1998) state that they "believe that the qualitative research tradition produces an interpretation or reality that is useful in understanding the human condition. That is the logic in their claim to legitimacy" (p. 25). This succinct statement captures the main reason for doing this study; to understand the condition of a certain group of humans in a specific location at a certain point in time. At the same time I realize that it does not cite a specific theory base for the study.

The observations and interviews I conducted provided a significant percentage of the raw data I needed to help me understand the factors that influenced student success at Central City School. In my attempt to uncover the tangible and intangible qualities of an effective ESL/ELL program in an urban school like mine, I examined school culture, student and parent perspectives on certain aspects of their lives, peer relationships, community contributions, and several other sources of influence from the subjects' perspective. In considering all these factors I found it difficult to frame this study within the parameters of a particular theory. Therefore, this is an atheoretical study.

Descriptive Case Study

To help me decide what type that would be I turned to authors like Merriam (1998), Bogdan and Biklen (1998) and Maxwell (1996) for guidance on qualitative research types, methods, and frameworks. Merriam identifies the descriptive case study, especially when used in education, as "a detailed account of the phenomenon under study-a historical case study that chronicles a sequence of events" (p. 38). She continues, citing the work of Lijphart (1971) that refers to descriptive case studies as "atheoretical," "They are entirely descriptive and move in a theoretical vacuum; they are neither guided by established or hypothesized generalizations nor

motivated by a desire to formulate general hypotheses (p. 691) " (p. 38). The descriptive case study allows the researcher to look at what occurs within a given setting relatively free of theoretical categorizing or interpretation. The researcher, in effect, observes and records what is seen or experienced without initial analysis or judgment.

Creswell (2007) discusses the case study in terms of types and purpose. He asserts that "three variations exist in terms of intent: the single instrumental case study, the collective or multiple case study, and the intrinsic case study" (p. 75). According to Creswell the instrumental case studies require the researcher to focus on one case connected to a single issue or multiple issues. The collective case study has a similar focus in that the researcher usually examines one issue, but "selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue" (p75). The author insists that the researcher might select from several sources to get multiple perspectives on the issue. In his description of case study research Creswell addresses a few guidelines.

One of these general rules is that qualitative researchers usually do not generalize from one case to another because of differing contexts and other factors. He also says that "to best generalize, however, the inquirer needs to select representative cases for inclusion in the qualitative study" (p. 75). The intent of this study is to examine a given situation and provide the reader the evidence in support of the conclusions I reach.

Creswell (2007) addresses many aspects of the case study in terms of procedures, challenges, and analysis. In discussing procedures he addresses the appropriateness of the research problem, finding a subject or case to study, picking the type of case study, collecting data, and analysis. In his discussion of analysis he cites the work of Yin, (2003). According to these authors, "analysis of these data can be a holistic analysis of the entire case or an embedded analysis of a specific

aspect of the case " (p.75). After a brief examination of data analysis he also addresses challenges inherent in the case study format.

The challenges Creswell identifies include the fact the researcher must first identify his or case. Although he offers no clear solution to this problem, the advice he gives is that the researcher establish a rationale for why and how he or she is sampling for choosing the case in the first place and for compiling information about it. They also need to define their boundaries or figure out how the study might be constrained by external factors such as time, limits imposed by the subjects in the case, or unforeseen events. In the end, the author also explains, that the researcher may have to live with the idea that the study may not have a clearly defined beginning and end point. Within this study I address the boundaries and factors that potentially influenced or affected this work.

The reason I chose this method is that it involves a multitude of tangible and intangible factors influencing how the school functioned like, teacher training, measures of student performance, parent participation, school events, and district or state mandates/guidelines. commitment, intrinsic motivation to do what they feel is right, and the influence of leadership at multiple levels. To examine these factors requires a framework that allowed me to express all of these influences without being confined to interpretation based on the parameters of a given theory or statistics.

An initial glimpse into the daily routines and literature of the school suggests a menagerie of ideas and influences; thus making it difficult to link it to one theory or concept. The staff and administrators appeared to be doing the same things that most schools did in terms of discipline, academics, teacher professional development, fostering parent involvement, and maintaining community involvement. However, I felt that something different must have happened at this

school than at similarly configured buildings since the success rate of Central City School students appeared to be higher.

Although these things could be viewed in terms of the frequency of activities and their related actions, such criteria would hardly begin to help us determine why this school was successful. Assuming that schools had a lot in common regarding curriculum, daily procedures, and teaching techniques, I surmised that the differences may reside in how and why actions are taken. One of the things that I examined was how and why certain decisions were made to determine what happened at this school. By examining these factors I began to discover the staff and administrators thoughts, via thick description of both verbal and physical responses, regarding impressions of student capabilities, teacher abilities and skills, administrator abilities and skills, parent support, district support, and impressions of government influence on daily school operations.

Teachers and principals have multiple levels of hierarchy influencing their actions. Despite the multiple influences, it is entirely plausible that their decisions are grounded in doing what they perceive to be right or effective more than doing what supports a particular theoretical or philosophical framework. Therefore, I thought I would confuse the reader if I tried to confine their actions to a specific theoretical framework.

In order to confine this study to a given framework I had to make a few assumptions. First, I had to assume that the administrators and teachers had a shared theoretical basis for doing their jobs. I also had to assume that everything a teacher did with a given group of students, or an individual fit within that framework. During my observations and interviews I did not detect or receive an explanation that indicated the staff operated via a specific theoretical framework.

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Despite having the Multicultural Multilingual manual, I do not think the teachers in this district or even the building had a common theoretical basis for their actions. In this study I present what I saw, heard, and felt from the staff, students, parents, and environment for the reader. Then I provide an analysis of this research without defining what I experienced within a given framework. My initial research into the descriptive case study reveals that these have been used within educational studies for decades.

According to Sharan B. Merriam (1998), "Case studies, especially qualitative case studies, are prevalent throughout the field of education. From Wolcott's (1973) classic case study, *The Man in the Principal's Office*, to case studies of students, programs schools, innovations, teachers and policies, this type of research has illuminated educational practice for nearly thirty years"(p.26). Through this statement Merriam asserts that the case study is a research method that has merit based on its extensive use with a wide variety of topics and has a decades-long track record.

 Yin (2003) defines the case study in terms of the tool to reach the end product. He says, "…a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 27). This definition seems to fit the environment where I decided to conduct the research for this study.

Like many schools in the Center City district, Central City school is a building where one tenth of its population tries to enlighten nine tenths in an environment where internal and external influences affect the academic, social, and emotional well-being of all; and where tangible and intangible factors join to create an educationally sound environment. This seems

like a good place to use a tool that can help make meaning of all that is experienced at Central City School.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Cresswell (2007), Merriam (1998), and Yin (2003), all discuss several types of case studies as well as the numerous disciplines where they have been applied. According to these authors this method of research has been used in law, medicine, social work, education, business, journalism, economics and even government. The authors emphasize that in each of these fields the case study is used for a specific purpose within a limited context.

Creswell (2007) discusses the case study in terms of types and purpose. He asserts that "three variations exist in terms of intent: the single instrumental case study, the collective or multiple case study, and the intrinsic case study" (p. 75). The other authors use broader terms to discuss categories of case studies and their applications. The types of case studies they discuss include: ethnographic, historical, psychological, sociological, descriptive, analytical, and evaluative. After reviewing the descriptions of these study types, I decided that the descriptive case study was the most appropriate for this research.

Using the descriptive case study method I help the reader understand the conditions or circumstances of Central City school and the affect of decisions or policies. I also discuss the phenomena of the school to help understand why it operated the way it did. According to Merriam, the descriptive case study in education, "is one that presents a detailed account of the phenomenon under study" (p. 38).

Further evidence supporting case study oriented research is supported by the work of Miles and Huberman (1994). They insist that the subject or phenomenon must occur, "in a bounded context" (p.25). In addition, they say that the study must be limited in scope. The ideal situation would be one where the number of people, ideas, events, policies, etcetera were limited and

specific. According to Stake (1995) the case is a "specific, complex, functioning thing" (p.2). I think I can safely assume that an urban school building, especially one with children whose ages range five to fourteen years with one ESL and several Special Education programs, could be considered specific and complex. I am confident that the focus of this study on the ESL population and associated staff within one building qualifies as specific and complex.

According to these authors, the case study is limited in its scope and is narrowly focused. A person using this method must have a thick or rich description of the phenomenon to help the reader develop a deeper or more meaningful understanding of the circumstances that can have applications beyond the subject of the study. According to Stake (1981) "Previously unknown relationships and variables can be expected to emerge from case studies leading to a rethinking of the phenomenon being studied. Insights into how things get to be the way they are can be expected to result from case studies" (P.47).

Stake continues by pointing out that because the nature of the case study is to bring so many factors together, in terms of their relationship to the phenomena, the knowledge gained from this experience is more concrete, more contextual, more developed by reader interpretation, and more readily generalizable to the public. Merriam helps clarify why a researcher would do a case study by writing; "..if a researcher needs information about the characteristics of a given population or areas of interest, a descriptive study is in order. Results, however, would be limited to describing the phenomenon rather than predicting future behavior" (p.41). Considering both Case and Merriam's perspectives, I was further convinced that the case study was the most appropriate method for gathering, analyzing, and presenting the phenomena I encountered.

Potential Problems

Merriam explains some of these as being "too lengthy, too detailed, or too involved" (p. 42). for educators or policy makers to read and use. In citing the work of Guba and Lincoln (1981) she also notes that the case study can "oversimplify or exaggerate a situation, leading the reader to erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs" (42). They continue by stating, "They tend to masquerade as a whole when in fact they are but a part-a slice of life" (42). However, Guba and Lincoln address potential ethical issues with the case method as well.

They caution the author of a case study to avoid selecting data that could allow them to write "virtually anything he wished could be illustrated" (378). They continue by pointing out that the writer must avoid biases that affect the final product. These could be political influences, perceived potential controversy over the results of the study, issues of reliability, validity and generalizability of the implications of the study.

Hamel (1993) also points out that "the case study has basically been faulted for its lack of representativeness….and its lack of rigor in the collection, construction, and analysis of the empirical materials" (p. 43). He continues by saying, "This lack of rigor is linked to problems of bias…introduced by the subjectivity of the researcher" and others involved in the case" (p.43). These cautions and warnings provide a compelling argument against doing case study research. However, they also raise questions for me and the research that I addressed.

Proposed Solutions

I decided one way to avoid these pitfalls was to employ methods to mitigate them. For instance, because the setting where the study takes place was so specific, I used multiple sources to cross-reference the data that I gathered. When some things regarding policy or practice were stated as fact, I found other sources or facts to support it. In other words, using the evidence I

collected via observed actions, statements of others, and repetition by more than one person I substantiated a given phenomena. I also realized that bias might influence the outcome of this work.

Having recognized bias, either my own or the people I interviewed, I took steps to mitigate some of it, or embraced some of it as part of the study. I realized that as an employee of the same district, I may have approached this project with ideas that others outside of the district may not perceive. By routinely checking what I wrote against what I observed, and the evidence to support it, I reduced the influence of my personal biases.

On the other hand, the biases of the subjects influenced what happens at the place of study. Their opinions, for better or worse, influenced what I observed and felt, thus becoming part of the study itself. Of course, this is also where controversy finds fertile ground

One of possibilities that I realize is that the results of this study may be read by those who are described in it. Despite using pseudonyms, generic titles, and alternate descriptions of people, it will not be hard for the people described in this document to identify themselves. There is a slight possibility that the principal, parents, school or district staff may find something objectionable in this work. Consequently, their objections might generate negative thoughts about me or others which could negatively impact or influence my career and others.

Despite this risk, I wrote about the data I gathered with the least amount of bias I could, and allowed the reader to interpret this experience for themselves. A completely opposite possibility exists as well. They could find information in this work that will help them better understand and develop their ESL programs.

By using the descriptive case study method I provide a detailed narrative of the inner workings of Central City School. I hope that the readers of this work, whether they are members

of the district or Central City school staff or a person just interested in ESL programs, will find the information contained herein informative and useful for their educational purposes.

Settings

The settings for this study were two urban elementary schools in a mid-sized Midwestern city. The schools I chose for study were selected based on criteria that included test scores, demographics, comparable sized ELL populations, and a few other factors which I explore at length in this study. I chose Central City and Eastside schools because they had almost everything in common except how successful they were with their ESL students.

The basic demographics that I sought were those belonging to impoverished, Spanish speaking Latino students learning to become literate and fluent in English as their second language. These students were recent arrivals to the United States or were born in the U.S. but came from homes where Spanish was the primary language of their parents.

I was particularly interested in this group because they most resembled the fifty-five percent of the students attending both schools. Because their education presents some of the most challenging circumstances given to educators, I was interested in discovering how programs and methods were developed to help these students achieve academic and societal success. I provide a brief description of each school prior to discussing the details of data collection.

The Eastside School

Located in the heart of Center City, this building was one of many newer facilities in the district. Built in the late 1980s this concrete, steel, and glass constructed campus had most of the same physical amenities as other schools. Eastside had a cafeteria, library with adjacent

computer lab, and a space called a multipurpose room. One of the things that set this building

apart from places like Central City was carpet and other, more modern, architectural features.

Eastside had wall to wall carpet. The only places that were not covered in carpet were the

gymnasium , cafeteria, multi-purpose room, and art classroom. The type of activity and high

potential for messy floors, like the cafeteria and art classroom, made it necessary to keep some

floors free of carpet. Otherwise, the carpet was everywhere and gave the building a quiet feel.

A person walking through Eastside on an average day would notice two things about this

building; the two main halls that ran the length of the entire building, and lots of windows facing

the playground. These features insured sound traveled unimpeded from one end of the building

to the other. The visitor would probably notice that he or she could see the back door of the

building from the front of the school. From the front door a visitor could see the main office, the

library, the school cafeteria, and most of the classrooms on the first floor.

Visiting the main office entailed getting a visitor's pass and talking to the office staff to

inform them of the nature of your visit. After being screened by the main office a person was

allowed to proceed to their destination. Upon arriving at a classroom more than likely the visitor

would have to knock on the door and be let in by the teacher. Most of the doors at Eastside

remain locked. The reasons for locked doors and security protocols have to do with the location

and clientele at Eastside school. Although most times parents and students did not present danger

to the school, some of the uninvited neighbors or people passing through the area did.

During the time I collected data for this study the neighborhood around Eastside consisted of

small businesses, and a mixture of working white collar, blue collar and urban poor people.

Although mostly single family homes and duplexes dominated the area, there were apartment

buildings, and other rental properties in the neighborhood as well. Most of our students came

from this neighborhood. Some of our students also came from the homeless shelters located in the downtown area. Unfortunately the poverty was accompanied by many of the same concerns that plague most urban centers. Crime and violence were common place in this part of town.

Walking past classrooms a visitor could see students working and teachers instructing. The place had the feel of purposeful activity. Except for the occasional crying kindergarten student, something everybody in the building could hear if that child was in the hall while upset, the building was relatively quiet when classes were in session. This building also had a "no-nonsense" atmosphere.

Walking through the school I could see that the building was well maintained. It was a structure kept clean by a team of building maintenance engineers. However, the walls in the hall were usually bare. Entering classrooms sometimes presented a different picture.

In many of the lower grade classrooms teachers had posters on the walls that either conveyed reference information or helpful hints. Finding the obligatory number line and alphabet posted above the chalkboard was a common site. Sometimes the teachers had student work displayed within the walls of the classroom. With the exception of the ESL classrooms and a few mainstream classes, there was very little information or helpful hints in Spanish. Overall, during the time I worked there, we had very few things that indicated we had Spanish speakers in the building or even offered support for people learning a second language.

The Central City School

Central City school is located less than two miles away from the metropolitan downtown business district. In addition to being located in a middle class neighborhood, the school is also next to a major thoroughfare. As a result of its location, this building faces some of the same challenges and security concerns buildings in less affluent areas address.

Central City school is a three story brick building with large wood framed windows. The building, playground, and adjacent parking area covers half a city block. Built in the late 1930s, this structure has had few changes over the decades it has been in this neighborhood. There were a few notable exterior features that would indicate changes of the people who occupied it.

One of the most interesting things was the playground. It had the usual swings, various climbing structures, slides, and bridges, and soft surface area on the ground where the children could play. The playground also had hard surface areas where lines were painted to facilitate playing games or running races. There was also a mural painted on the playground. The mural depicted a number of different scenes and had words in English, Spanish, and other languages.

The mural was a collage of people and places around the world. There were no words on this mural, just scenes painted over a blue globe-like backdrop that connected the scenes. I think it would be safe to assume the artist wanted to demonstrate the global connection of all people. I think the mural indicated something about the attitude of the people inside of the building as well.

The following comments help convey the contrast between the exterior and interior of the building.

> *"While walking through this 1930s vintage, three-story building, I get a sense of purposeful calm. It's the middle of the school day and I can hear teachers talking to students, students discussing something they learned in class, and others moving through the hallways on their way to someplace, quickly and quietly. This school feels like it is focused on education."* –Observer comments April, 2004.

One of the first things I noticed about most of the classrooms I observed was the attention to detail in the decorations teachers used. The bulletin boards, and other items on display in the classroom, were functional as well as decorative. In addition to the usual alphabet and number lines displayed around the room, above the chalkboard and other charts, were shelves of books, games, and props. The props were things like masks, toys or models, and pictures of animals, places, or things. However, the attention to details did not end with classroom materials.

I suspect, through a mixture of personal experience and information gleaned through research-based staff development, many teachers had a standardized set of decorations, props, and visual references on display in their rooms. The children's work on display in the hallways also lead me to think the adults in this building celebrated student success and achievement. I could see the evidence in the messages accompanying the work. Titles such as, "Room 203's Greatest Works of Poetry", or "Room 129's Young Inventors Project." Outside every classroom door I saw the work of students displayed on the walls, or left over tape where something had been on the wall recently. By reading the projects on the wall outside of the class, I began to understand what subjects were taught inside the classroom. I noticed that some of these displays were in both English and Spanish.

With a few exceptions, the average classroom had a bare wooden floor. Some rooms had either large area rugs or carpet installed. The carpeted areas seemed to be more common in the lower elementary grade rooms. The upper grade rooms had no carpet.

Containing these spacious rooms were smooth, plaster covered walls that were painted a neutral color like beige, yellow, or off-white. The colors complemented the rich, dark wood used for framing the windows, doors, and baseboards. Each room also had large windows for letting

in lots of sunlight. In addition to the sunlight, the rooms were well lit by the florescent fixtures that hung from the nine feet high ceilings.

Each ESL classroom was a self-contained repository of information. In addition to a well stocked school library, each classroom had its own set of books and other items to support the teacher's discussion of various topics. The topics teachers addressed in the ESL classroom could cover science, math, health, social studies, and geography.

So, on top of the usual English lessons, the teachers addressed concepts in other areas to help the students understand what was being taught. The ESL teachers considered these materials vital to effectively and efficiently addressing curricular subject areas. However, the material or resources not found in the classroom, could probably be found in the school's media center.

When students were not in their classrooms they visited other areas of the school. Central City had a gymnasium, school library, auditorium with stage, vocal music and instrumental music rooms, and a cafeteria. Each of these areas offered much of the same décor as the classrooms. They had materials and information or instructions in both Spanish and English. These areas contributed to the school's overall support of ELLs.

Participation, Consent, and Confidentiality

Keeping in mind the requirements to obtain parental consent before interviewing, photographing, or involving students in activities associated with the research, I used the consent forms provided by the University of St. Thomas. These forms outlined the scope of the study and requested the permission of the parents, school staff and school administration before proceeding. After obtaining permission I began collecting data.

During the observations and interviews I used procedures to reduce the exposure of the people involved. I think that allowing the interviewed subjects the option of anonymity increased

the number of candid responses generated. However, even if a person did not state their preference about maintaining their privacy I used pseudonyms and/or identified them by their position within the school. If the person was a community member or parent they were identified by their generic title, gender and race when necessary.

In order to maintain the security of my information I kept the identity of the participants in a locked file cabinet at my house. This information will be maintained for the purposes of verifying the existence of the institution and the people who worked there until after the study has been approved and published. The raw data from this studied will be destroyed five years after the publication date.

Data Collection and Encoding

The questions I asked participants were based partly on their function within the school, how they were involved with or affected by decisions at the building and district level, and their impressions of how things were going at their school. I also gathered publicly available information from the district website like the school information report (SIP). The SIP addresses disciplinary and test data for parents and community. Although the teachers and other staff were asked similar questions, I asked additional questions to help clarify their initial statements or to better understand something they said during the interview that I found interesting. After collecting data through interviews and observation of teachers and students, I continued the process of classifying and sorting the information.

The data I collected through a series of interviews with teachers, parents, students, and school administrators were divided into several categories. These categories had certain characteristics or themes through which I framed various aspects of this school. I gathered information on the perceived factors driving the overall success of the ESL students while

simultaneously examining the more intangible factors that also influenced things like decision making processes, leadership, and perceptions of the school from a variety of perspectives. Ultimately, encoding not only helped me develop a more comprehensive view of the school and its participants, it also provided a map for writing this dissertation.

The categories I used for encoding the information first focused on tangible factors like hierarchy, structure, staff development, teaching methods and practice, resources, programs, and several other areas. Some of the other major areas I focused on were, how curriculum was developed and delivered to the students, what teachers did to be more effective, how relevant the curriculum was to the lives of the students, and perceived skills of the students who exited the ELL or ESL program at the school where I conducted this study.

After examining the statements of staff, students, and others, I classified their comments about the less quantifiable aspects of schooling. I divided them into several themes that included principal as coach or mentor, teacher willingness to go above and beyond their contractual obligations, parent involvement, demonstrations of commitment to educating children, and many others. These areas provided a more human centered perspective of how the decisions and actions of the principal and staff impacted each other and the children and families they served. This data revealed how people felt about the things going on at their school.

I initially sorted these topics into categories before I collected the initial data. I continued this process throughout the writing of this study. One example that comes to mind is the leadership section. I subdivided this topic into many aspects of the principal's leadership characteristics. Having examined these aspects of his leadership style and practices I gained a more comprehensive view of how the principal influenced what happened at the school.

Overall, the data collection process involved examining the tangible and intangible aspects of schooling. These factors formed the basis of many of the questions I used when talking to staff and students about their school. After sorting their statements and actions into theme based categories I examined and discussed the data in terms of how decisions were made, what people did and how they felt regarding those decisions, and how these decisions and actions lead to the overall success of the school.

IV

Same Kids, Different Results

In this chapter I compare certain aspects of Central City with Eastside Community school. Using the literature as an educational barometer of sorts, I compare the schools to each other and the ideas espoused in the literature. By using the lens provided by years of research, as provided by the authors, I seek to understand why these two similarly configured schools had significantly different results.

Both schools had kindergarten through eighth grade students, Spanish speaking ELLs, and similar levels of poverty and mixture of racial and ethnic groups. However, despite these similarities, they also had differences which may have impacted their academic achievement. The areas that I think significantly affected how well the two schools performed were staff configuration, teacher qualifications and training, student/teacher contact time, classroom practices and policies, leadership, family involvement, and commitment. I examine these key areas then discuss how their differences may have impacted student achievement.

Measuring Up

In this section I discuss the test scores as further evidence of Central City's superior performance when compared to Eastside. Although standardized test scores do not give us an in-depth look at what schools do with their students, they serve as a performance indicators. The tests I examine address their ability to read and understand academic concepts in English. I also examine the ELLs performance based on a standardized test designed specifically for their language learner concerns. In order to properly frame the context in which these tests are given I provide some background information.

Within this state and district, the scores on standardized tests are used as one measure to separate the "under-performing" schools from those who meet or exceed a predetermined standard. In addition to being measured on test performance as a whole, the results of the test are separated into categories identified by race, language proficiency, socioeconomic groups, and recipients of special education services. Other factors such as attendance and suspensions in each of these categories are part of the criteria for determining who makes "the list" and which schools meet the standard. In this case, being on "the list" means your school needs improvement.

In the Center City schools, as well as the state of Centralia, substandard schools have three years to improve their performance or face punitive actions. These actions range from selective removal of staff to a complete overhaul of the staff and administrators. When I began research on Central City school, it was not on the list of under-performing schools despite having the profile, in terms of demographics, of a school that is usually on this list. However, within a year of my beginning research this school was identified as an under-performing school. At the same time, Eastside had already achieved this dubious status.

When reflecting on the interviews of teachers and administrators, I noticed how much they did not talk about standardized test scores. Their conversation focused on the Centralia state teaching standards. According to Mr. Alvarez, their lessons and curriculum are standards based. Therefore, teachers whose lessons meet these standards should produce students who will perform well on the state assessments. This assumes that the students learn the concepts and skills well enough to pass the test.

The teachers and the principal talked frequently about ensuring the lessons addressed the standards. As a matter of fact, when I asked specifically about testing they shifted the

conversation to the standards. I think the assumption they made was that if they addressed the concepts and ideas covered in the teaching standards, their students would prevail on the standardized tests.

The percentage of students making AYP combined with other factors such as attendance, pupils taking the tests, and the progress of specified subsets of students, determine whether a school is considered safe from the state imposed sanctions or if they will be considered for further scrutiny and possible corrective actions. Over the past several years, Central City school has had one or some of the specified subsets, e.g. special education, free and reduced lunch, or a particular grade in math or reading, not achieve AYP. However, overall, they met or exceeded the standards outlined by the state.

Although the staff and administrators acknowledged the importance of students doing well on the tests, as well as achieving the AYP standards, they did not appear to spend a lot of time discussing testing, test preparation, or making excuses for why their students could not meet the standards. In short, they focused on how they taught, and what they taught, not if what they taught was on the upcoming test.

They concentrated on learning the state standards, adopting and using effective teaching methods and techniques, frequently monitoring student progress, and adjusting the academic support a child received in order to ensure progression. They addressed what the staff were doing almost as much as they discussed how and what the students did in their classes. True, their results were not stunning, but they were better than many schools with similar demographics and configuration.

Considering the fact that they made their AYP goals when many others failed is evidence of their success. Although the students at this school did not achieve at the same level as the state

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averages (Figure 4.4), the general population and especially the ELLs made progress as measured by the standardized tests.

In the final analysis the staff and district answered a few key questions that helped define Central City as a successful school. First, according to the test results, the students were proficient in math and reading each year across the grade levels examined. Second, the students identified as limited English proficient, who were mostly ELLs, demonstrated proficiency as measured by the test given to all students as well as the examinations given only to them. Finally, the staff at Central City school also demonstrated that teachers do not have to focus their energy on test items and practice testing to ensure their students passed the standardized examinations. Their actions demonstrated, that high quality, standards based instruction lead to successful exam results.

Statistical Evidence

The time period affecting this study was from 2003, during the implementation and growth of SIOP at Central City school, until I stopped gathering data in 2006. When looking at the reading test scores from 2003 until 2006 we see significant changes for Central City school. The data that I examined represents the students who demonstrated partial to advanced proficiency for their grade as defined by the district.

I focused on reading scores for two reasons: reading represents a key element of language proficiency, reading scores are used by the district and state for ascertaining a school's effectiveness. Using these results, I saw how well Central City school compared to other schools in the district, state, and my old school. What I found revealed trends and provided statistical data as further evidence of Central City's success with students.

In this section I address the reading scores from the Test for Emerging Academic English (TEAE). As outlined in figures 4.3 and 4.4 the TEAE delineates achievement by grade and the student's ability to demonstrate developmentally appropriate language skills in select categories. Although the test data I found does not break each of these areas into separate scores for each category, the data I collected reveals something about Central City's adoption and implementation of SIOP versus Eastside using more traditional ESL methods.

When comparing the two schools' ESL program test results I found information in these data that confirmed the impression I gained during interviews and observations. The data of figures 4.3 and 4.4 reveal the following:

1. Average scores over the seven year period showed growth for both schools. However, over time we also see as much as a ten percent difference levels of improvement between Central City school and Eastside. The difference in reading scores is most pronounced in 2006.

2. In 2003 the schools had almost identical reading scores. Central City had thirty five percent of its students demonstrating proficiency while Eastside only had twenty three percent. At this point, around the time of implementation of SIOP, Central City's writing scores were significantly higher.

3. According to figure 4.3 and 4.4 , Eastside has fewer percentage of students demonstrating proficiency than Central City from 2006 forward. What is interesting to note here is that both schools show a five point decline in the number of proficient students, with Central City remaining above Eastside.

4. Between 2004 and 2006 Eastside had better average scores for writing than Central City. During that same time Central City shows a steady increase that surpasses Eastside's test scores. After that time Central City's scores remain above Eastside's.

5. According to figure 4.2, Central City school showed 10 percentage points above Eastside. By this point Central City students were scoring better than Eastside school at most grade levels.

6. In 2006 both schools peaked in their reading and writing test scores. Both schools showed a decline over the next two years but start to rise again in 2009.

7. Figure 4.2 also show that the difference in scores between the two schools is almost gone at the middle school level.

I think this evidence shows that something worked well at Central City school. The data indicate in reading and writing that both schools showed gains and did not returned to their former low scores. In reflecting on the statistical data I examined other factors that might affect or influence the differences between these two schools. Test data tell us some things about what concepts and ideas students grasp. In the case of the TEAE the data also helped gain insight into the ELL's grasp of academic language. However, I examine other factors for their possible influence on student progress and eventual success within the schools and the ESL program.

Additional Comparisons

Keeping in mind the work of authors like August and Shanahan (2008), Cummins (1989), and Gonzalez, Huerta-Macias, and Tinajero(1998) regarding student language development and school practices, I proceeded with the research focusing on staff qualifications, school structure and influences, activities in the classrooms, program models, teaching strategies, and how much time students received ESL type instruction or support.

The students at both schools received instructional support from licensed teachers and Spanish speaking paraprofessionals. In the Center City School district these paraprofessionals were called Bilingual Program Assistants. When I consider the amount of time ELLs spent learning both academic and casual English I realized how critical the BPA is to their success. I continue this comparative examination by discussing the BPAs at both schools.

Bilingual Program Assistants

The Bilingual Program Assistants (BPA) primary role is to assist students in their classes. A visitor to a school with BPAs would usually find them in an English speaking classroom helping a small group of non-English speaking students comprehend what the teacher was saying about the current curricular topic. When the teacher gives directions for class work or homework assignments, the BPA is there to make sure the students understand.

Both schools had their BPAs scheduled to be in their buildings six hours a day. After subtracting an hour from this time to account for lunch and scheduled breaks this left five hours per school day, multiplied by the number of BPAs in the building, for them to support students. However, their role is more complicated than simple translation and interpretation.

During classroom time they often reiterated the teacher's instructions and "re-taught" the lesson to ensure the students comprehend the content and concepts of what was taught. This often involved not only explaining the content, but explaining ideas that may have been foreign to the students to help them gain a better understanding of the curricular topic.

Interpreting for students involves more than verbatim transposing of English to Spanish. Their discussions require deeper explanations of events, socially and culturally relevant details, and ideas or concepts that exceed simple translation. In effect, they sometimes must teach a lesson in support of the main lesson to help students benefit from their teacher's instruction. An example of this could be a discussion of fishing with a person who was unfamiliar with this activity.

Instead of assuming they knew fishing was a means of obtaining food, the interpreter would ask them what they knew. Obviously, their next step in explaining the activity would depend on what the student demonstrated knowing. The BPA might have to help them understand that fish live in the water and that humans have devised ways to catch and eat them. This also gives us a glimpse of what a BPA may have to do to help a student understand the ideas or concepts being taught in class.

Keeping in mind this need to provide a deeper understanding, it is easy to see why the amount of time students spend with BPAs is vital to their success. Depending on how a school is configured, BPAs may spend a significant amount of their time in classrooms and the school office. I think the differences between how the two schools used their BPA time impacted student achievement.

Central City BPAs

This quote from Lisa Andrews explained the importance of Bilingual Program Assistants (BPAs):

> When our kids come from their countries of origin they have different experiences than our US students. With our American students we talk about going on a fishing trip or camping and they usually understand. With our Latino children they may come from backgrounds where camping and fishing either don't happen or happen in a way that we think of. Sometimes they have to have everything explained in more detail before they finally get it.

At Central City three BPAs worked in elementary level classrooms. One of the secretaries at Central City school spoke Spanish so she was able to handle the parent phone calls and visitors to the office. On most days this meant that BPAs could remain in the classes supporting students. However, they had a secondary role. They often stood as the link between English speaking staff and students with Spanish speaking students and their families.

One of the differences between Central City and Eastside schools was how much time students received academic support. One BPA has roughly eight hundred ninety hours of contact time with students per school year. Using the number of hours each day they actually spent with children multiplied by the number of BPAs in the building, I calculated that the two schools had a significant difference in the amount of time students spent with a BPA. Central City's students had two thousand six hundred seventy contact hours. Eastside's students had fewer contact hours with BPAs.

Eastside BPAs

Eastside used BPAs for office duty as well as supporting students. One BPA was assigned to the office for fielding phone calls, or having meetings with, Spanish speaking parents or community members. When we think of every hour as crucial, Eastside had eight hundred ninety hours less than Central City did for supporting students in the classroom.

The other BPAs worked in elementary classrooms. Most days this arrangement helped keep the two classroom BPAs focused on helping students and staff while the third worked on translating and interpretation for parents and staff. During the time I gathered data for this study, the middle school had no BPA support.

When reflecting on some of the findings contained in current research supporting ELLs learning their core curricular content along with English, I think the decision to keep the BPAs in classrooms was more prudent than having them doing office work. When we consider the fact that Eastside had one BPA devoted to office duty, that meant Eastside students had only two thousand two hundred twenty five hours of contact time. This was significantly less than their peers at Central City.

When comparing the amount of time the Spanish speaking students had adult support from either licensed or paraprofessional staff, the children at Central City School had more than the Eastside ELLs. Having BPAs devoted to supporting classrooms meant that the students at Central City were more likely to receive support in their mainstream classes than their counterparts at Eastside.

If the role of the BPA were not a key part of ELLs learning key concepts in the classes where they need interpretation, this hourly difference might not be important. The importance of these adults becomes more apparent when we consider how much time the students spent

learning concepts and ideas through an interpreter who often provided deeper explanations to help them understand the gist of the instruction.

With that in mind I think their role in the classroom is critical and second only to that of a licensed teacher. The literature addressing best teaching practices supports the idea that students have contact time with adults who help them understand the concepts and ideas presented by their teachers. Of course, the BPA's efforts must be based on the sound judgment and effective practices of the classroom teacher.

Teacher Qualifications and Training

During the literature review I examined some of the pedagogical theory associated with educational practices. Combining what I read with my own limited experiences, I gained a deeper understanding for what I observed teachers doing in their classrooms. These included how things were organized, how they used verbal and mnemonic cues, verbal and nonverbal communication between teachers and students, evidence of a comprehensive plan to address student educational needs, as well as teaching techniques and methods. This is where I also focused the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol and how it was employed in each classroom I observed.

The principal, the teachers, and a former administrator of Central City school talked a lot about the SIOP and how it changed the way they taught and the results they achieved with their students. After hearing such high praise I assumed that I would see the practices and techniques associated with this method used extensively, or exclusively, in the classroom. I addressed these key components in the literature review.

The SIOP included extensive training and substantial, periodic, staff development sessions. Teachers who joined the Central City staff had to take the training and use what they learned in their classes. They had to commit themselves to becoming effective practitioners of the SIOP.

ESL Teacher Qualifications and SIOP Training: Central City

Although the schools had a lot in common in terms of external and internal structure, there were differences that impacted the effectiveness of the ESL program at both places. Central City had four ESL teachers. Ms. Lund and Ms. Pike taught kindergarten through third grade students. Ms. Andrews taught mostly fourth and fifth grade students. Ms. Ferris had the sixth through eighth grade students at their school. With the exception of Ms. Ferris, these teachers were bilingual, Spanish speakers.

Having teachers who spoke Spanish and provided full-time support for the students was part of what distinguished Central City School Elementary ESL program from Eastside's. In addition to being bilingual, these teachers attended periodic staff development sessions to ensure they remained educated in the latest SIOP and ESL teaching practices. The literature also supports frequent teacher education. The authors read insist that educators who remain well versed in current teaching practices using proven, research-based methods are more likely to be highly successful with their students. The ESL teachers at Central City had a distinct advantage over their peers at Eastside.

ESL Teacher Qualifications and SIOP Training: Eastside

There were three ESL teachers at Eastside. Only one of them was full time. The other two were part time teachers who also taught in other buildings in the district. All three of them met the minimum qualifications to be ESL teachers. They were certified to teach non-English speakers to become literate and fluent in English, but they did not speak the first language of

their students. Their minimal qualifications and the time they were in the building had significant implications for staff and students.

The fact that these employees were part-time meant the students saw them for about an hour per day, sometimes less. This also meant that students generally could not see these teachers after school hours because they were gone by the time school was over. Combine this with other events like staff development days, illness, or the reserve teacher not showing up for work, and some of our ELLs were left with receiving sporadic instruction for a given week. The BPAs helped fill in the gaps in what would otherwise be a very fragmented support system for the ELLs at Eastside school.

Of these two significant factors, I think the one that may have been the most significant was the ability of the teacher to speak Spanish. The fact that the Eastside teachers only spoke English meant they were limited in how well they could communicate with their students. Realizing that they met the requirements of their job meant they should be capable of educating non-English speakers. However, the literature shows that more effective programs have teachers who speak the first language of their ELLs. The clear message here is that the bilingual ability adds a level of communication, and by extension, teaching that a teacher cannot duplicate if they are monolingual.

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The ESL Classroom

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Central City

After my conversations with the principal, I arranged a meeting with one of the Central City School ESL staff. Maggie Lund, along with the other ESL staff, agreed to answer my questions and allow me to observe them with their students. I felt that this was where I would get to see

what these "true practitioners" of SIOP did to earn the praise of their administrators and colleagues.

Students received instruction and materials based on their grade level and ability to speak, read, and write in English. The student ability levels were determined by several means. One of these was by teacher observation and conversation with the student. Another, more formal method involved standardized test scores from the previous year for third grade and above students.

Despite the differences in grade level, the teachers here expected every student to begin work as soon as they took their seat. This didn't always happen during my observations but the teachers frequently reiterated this expectation. I think this was more a function of establishing order in the classroom than a SIOP practice.

The work, depending on the grade level, ranged from reviewing recently learned material to answering questions about something they did the evening before school. Upon taking their seats, whether it was on the floor or at a table, the students usually did some kind of independent work or were immediately engaged by the teacher. The younger they were, the more likely they were to be immediately engaged by the teacher.

When I asked about this practice of getting students to begin working immediately, Candy Pike told me that it was part of the Responsive Classroom method. This method focused on employing a variety of activities to guide student behavior through productively focusing their attention and energy. In most of the situations I observed, this strategy worked. Most of the activities the teachers used to get the students focused at the beginning of class were related to reviewing vocabulary or the work from the previous day.

According to the literature, asking students to review previously learned terms provides a useful means of informally assessing their grasp and retention of what was taught. Upon establishing how much students understood the material from the day before, the teacher could either re-teach the previous lessons or begin teaching new concepts to the whole group or select individuals. With the younger students this might have been reviewing letters of the alphabet and decoding words with the teacher. The process of reviewing words with the Kindergarten through third grade students was interesting because it usually included a song or game to help the students remember what was taught.

Lund's classroom, adorned in posters, Spanish and English language books on shelves and several toys, had tables with chairs and a large carpeted area at the front. I saw easels with large-text, story books on them at the front of the room. Next to these were various "props" for the teacher to use, if needed, to help the students understand vocabulary and word decoding skills.

While waiting, I reflected on my observations of ESL classrooms at other schools in the Center City district. I did not recall seeing the posters, toys, and shelves of books. In fact, sometimes I saw a beleaguered teacher pushing a cart loaded with text books and a stack of paper containing homework and class work assignments. These teachers temporarily used the room where they met with their ELLs, taught their lessons, then vacated the space so the next teacher could use it. Fortunately, Eastside and Central City had rooms for all of their teachers. What I saw in Ms. Lund's room seemed to support what the principal had said about her.

Mr. Alvarez, the principal, told me that Ms. Lund was one of the best teachers he had seen in his career. He spoke highly of the dedication she showed to her work and the students in her classroom. He also told me that she became the de facto team leader after a few short years of working at the school. As far as he could tell, she was nominated by her peers because of her

experience, knowledge of SIOP, and her enthusiasm for doing the extra work required of a team leader.

A veteran teacher of five years, Ms. Lund was at Central City school shortly after they began implementing SIOP. Although she has the shortest overall teaching time, she had the longest time in the building among the ESL staff. Ms. Lund, An American woman of German and Swedish heritage, is also fluent in Spanish and holds the same licenses and endorsements as her teammates Ms. Andrews and Ms Pike.

This was a revelation that I was surprised to hear. Usually ESL staff are not bilingual. In most ESL programs the teacher may have students from multiple language groups and be required to teach them all to speak English. In most cases, the teacher also does this without the assistance of a bilingual paraprofessional. At the time of this observation Ms. Lund, as well as the other ESL teachers, usually had a bilingual assistant and Spanish speaking ELLs. Eastside had the more common setting with non-Spanish speaking teachers, no aides, with a class of Spanish speaking students. I was looking forward to seeing how this model, versus others I had observed, was going to work.

Ms. Lund was one of two ESL teachers for the kindergarten through third grade students. Having come from working with a nonprofit organization in various parts of Central and South America where she taught children to speak English, she had only been a teacher in the public schools for five years. Four of those years were spent at Central City. During her time at this school she effectively combined her knowledge of Latino cultures with research-based teaching methods. This combination, according to her principal and some of her peers, was part of why she was an effective educator.

During an interview with Ms. Lund I began to get a glimpse of the things she did in her classroom and how they related to SIOP:

Well, all of our teachers, even those in the English only classrooms, make sure every student in their classroom learns the material. We use scaffolding, modeling, demonstrating, pictures and hands-on activities to teach things.

We pair students of different abilities together so the more advanced students can help the struggling student. We have BPAs help in the classrooms when available and pairing of English speakers with non-English speakers. We all try to use SIOP teaching strategies and Collins writing strategies. The teachers use lots of modeling and repetition during their lessons too.

Ms. Lund's statement focuses on techniques and practices they employed for helping students. Her response also revealed information about the staff and the practices used in their classes. The results of the interviews, observations, and discussions with the principal and district ESL department representative revealed several things that teachers did in their classrooms to ensure student learning. One of the keys to their success was using a variety of strategies and activities to ensure students understood what they were being taught.

The SIOP emphasized the use of songs as an effective way for children to retain information. This is one of the strategies SIOP calls Comprehensible Input. An example of comprehensible input, as defined earlier and observed was the following:

With a song and motions Ms. Lund used the vocabulary words to prompt actions by the students. I perceived this to be an opportunity for the students to interact with the teacher through practice of what they learned. The students mimicked the teacher's actions, and sang.

Within the song and motions the teacher asked questions that checked the student's understanding of the concepts addressed in the vocabulary. This appeared to be one way in which she assessed the children's ability to pronounce the words. The teacher used one of many techniques to help students understand what was being said and how to say it.

The Central City ESL teachers often employed tools and props to enhance teaching children pronunciation and decoding, as well as defining and using the word in an appropriate context. I saw an example of this when the teacher introduced the word, pronouncing its syllables very slowly while pointing at the parts of the word she said. To more effectively demonstrate the connection of letters, their sounds, and how they flowed together, she used a picture of a stream. At the left end of the stream was a consonant, in the middle was a vowel, and at the far end of the stream was another consonant. The stream represented the means by which the letters flowed from left to right to form a word.

During the next step of this process she showed them a book and asked them what they knew about books. Having established, through this quick and informal assessment that they new something about books and understood the associated concepts presented, she asked them to use the word in a sentence. She picked a student who responded by saying, "I like to read book." The teacher picked several others just to see if they understood the concept through demonstrating its use in a sentence. After a few more words the class moved on to another activity, such as a game, using the new words they learned along with words from previous lessons.

I must admit that when I heard a student say, "I like to read book" I was inclined to correct his response by saying, "I like to read books, or I like reading books." However, since I was an observer I watched what the teacher did. She didn't correct him either. When I had a chance, I

asked her why she didn't correct the student's grammar. Her response reminded me of some of the ideas discussed by authors like August and Shanahan (2008) regarding their work with young, ESL students.

Ms. Lund explained that at this stage in their language development the students were learning new vocabulary. Their job at this point was to learn the new words and combine them with words they already knew without modifying the base word into its different forms. Using the different forms of a word, such as the past and present tense, plural and possessive, as well accompanying suffixes and prefixes, would come in later stages of their language skill development.

More advanced students, like the second grade children in Ms. Pike's classroom, would be engaged in more physically interactive activities. One example I observed was the teacher having the students read a story aloud in the classroom. These reading sessions often resembled mini plays or skits. The students often read as if they were a character in the book. They used expression and the voice of the character they were playing. The teacher focused their attention on key words in the text and frequently stopped to make sure the students understood the words and ideas.

Research, the literature, and experience all tell us that language learners must have opportunities to practice their new found skills to become effective communicators in their second language. In a classroom with third and fourth grade students I watched Ms. Andrews, teach a lesson about animals. While at the table she had the students look at different animal types and discuss their internal and external characteristics, feeding and nursing, as well as birth. They discussed words like blood, oxygen, scales, eggs, and live birth.

This review came as part of a board game that she played with the students. One of the major

differences between the SIOP model and what I have seen in my experiences is the incorporation of various topics and disciplines to help students build their academic vocabulary through practice via games and activities.

Through this interaction, which required them to think about the concepts associated with the vocabulary, the students developed a deeper understanding of biological functions. The benefits were two-fold. They simultaneously learned and practiced new words in English while receiving new knowledge of science concepts.

Having reached a point where students could do more deconstructing and pronouncing of words on their own, as well as having a larger vocabulary for their use, the teachers are able to converse with the ELLs and have them work more independently or in small groups. I also observed examples of this at the second and third grades with students who had been in the ESL program since kindergarten.

The techniques I observed were a combination of SIOP and widely accepted effective classroom management practices. These practices included how the students entered the room, a set of scaffolding activities from the beginning until the end of the class period, how often English was used versus Spanish, cues to help children recall or remember words or ideas, and basic literacy skills. This was different than what I remembered seeing at Eastside.

The ESL Classroom: Eastside

What I recall from my Eastside experience is observing classes where behavior expectations, classroom activities, and teaching methods depended on who was teaching the class. Classroom routines varied from regimented calm to controlled chaos depending on the teacher. We regularly watched teachers use five to ten minutes to just begin teaching a lesson. When I multiplied those

minutes over an entire week it did not take long for me to realize we wasted a lot of class time "getting ready" to teach.

In reflecting on the observations I had of the ESL teachers at Eastside I realized that I often saw them teaching students to pronounce words through repetition and mimicking. I usually saw lessons where the teacher talked and the students listened. They did not employ some of the singing or use of props in helping their students realize the elements of pronunciation. Their methods often did not appear to incorporate considerations for multiple learning styles. The teacher sometimes employed textbooks and worksheets for students to do. I do not recall ever seeing anybody use some of the songs, pictures, or other activities demonstrated by the SIOP trained staff at Central City school.

Later, these same students demonstrated that they could read and say the words presented in a story or exercise without the teacher's assistance. What seemed to be missing in these lessons were students demonstrating a thorough understanding of the ideas or concepts surrounding the word. The literature on effective teaching emphasizes using techniques that appeal to multiple learning styles. I think the acting provided a venue for students relating what they learned to something more than intellectual pursuit. They had a physical, intellectual and psychological interaction with what they were learning.

Another difference I noticed was the rooms and environment where the ESL classes were held. The Eastside ESL teachers were provided rooms that were just big enough to fit the ten-fifteen students who attended their classes. Since two of the three teachers were there part-time, these rooms were often shared, and therefore, had few decorations and props of the type I described when observing Central City.

Differentiation

Central City

A veteran teacher of 12 years, Mrs. Pike worked at Central city school and a few other locations throughout the district. Mrs. Pike is fluent in Spanish and holds the same licenses and endorsements as her ESL teammates. Candy, like her teammates, is also a descendent of German and Norwegian heritage.

During one of my observations of another ESL teacher I noticed that the children in her classes often began the class period sitting in small groups of two or three. The students took turns reading to each other from their common assigned storybook. Using Spanish or English, Ms. Pike periodically asked them questions about the characters in the book and their actions.

They used picture books with a sentence or two under the illustrations. The students took turns, each reading the words on a page. Sometimes, especially with the third and fourth grade students, the teacher had them practice so they could "perform" their story for their classmates when the class came together. This meant that not only did the students read their books, but that they had to practice using vocal inflection and emotion. This also appeared to be an effective way of getting students to associate movement and emotion with words. I imagine, to a certain extent, this helped the text "come alive" for the students.

This use of a story and acting seemed unusual but exciting. This seemed to provide an opportunity for students to practice the vocabulary they learned in a way that most of the children seemed to enjoy. Since they did not have to memorize their part in English, this gave them the opportunity to read aloud in English with a little dramatic flair. Other times the students began reading aloud, in unison, until they came to the words that one of the characters said. This time, they read together.

I realized that one of the things these educators, who had students reading aloud while "acting" out their assigned parts, was that they were doing lessons that appealed to more than one learning style. In this case, the kinesthetic, or movement and tactile oriented learning style was addressed along with the visual and auditory. By varying their approaches to delivering curricular content, these teachers made the educational experience informative, associative, and fun.

I think that this is another indicator of the planning and preparation they did for their lessons. The way in which the lessons progressed, and the manner that each classroom activity was closely linked to another, indicates a deliberate process. These teachers clearly used thoughtful planning when preparing for their students. Each lesson I observed, at the elementary level, regularly contained review of previous material, learning of new material, and connection of the old with the new through practice and informal assessment.

Early elementary students often spent their time in ESL learning new words, reviewing old words, or learning new rules of grammar. Their focus on building vocabulary was part of a plan to get them familiar with basic English words, and academic oriented language. This was further evidence of deliberate planning by the staff. According to the literature, building vocabulary is crucial to ensuring students will be able to function in the academic as well as social environments.

Students in the upper grades did more independent seat-work. This was especially true of students with more advanced language skills. The work usually consisted of reviewing previous words, spelling, writing or grammar exercises, and reading a story. In the more advanced groups teachers spent more time in the interactive and application modes than reviewing and assessing.

Differentiation: Eastside

The ESL teachers at Eastside used a more traditional approach to educating their students. Here, they used a limited number of techniques to teach decoding, vocabulary, sentence structure, pronunciation, as well as reading and writing skills. Absent from their materials were the pictures and props found in the SIOP oriented classrooms at Central City. The lessons tended to be sessions where the teacher demonstrated an action or skill and the students did their best to imitate it. The students did not engage in activities which required more than them reading or repeating what the teacher said.

At the higher levels, where we would expect to see more cooperative learning experiences like students working in groups, practicing their verbal and written language skills, ELLs at Eastside had classes that resembled classes at the lower grades. Although they did more writing and reading, they still did a lot of individual work with little interaction with their peers.

Higher Level Practice and Application

A veteran teacher of ten years, Ms. Andrews worked at Central City School for five years in the ESL program. Like her team mates, she holds Elementary and English as a Second Language licenses with a Bicultural/Bilingual endorsement. She also speaks fluent Spanish.

Ms. Andrews pointed to a chart on the wall. She told me that the chart contained words from previous and current readings. It functioned as their word wall. They would later use these words in games that they played in class. The words on the chart were in Spanish and considered part of their vocabulary building.

As the students became more advanced in their skills, they participated in activities that allowed them to demonstrate their abilities in a less formal manner. One of the key components

of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol is the use of games to help reinforce what was taught. According to these teachers, as well as some of the literature regarding Sheltered Instructional practices, games help children recall what they learned in a less threatening environment. The students, in effect, have an opportunity to practice and apply what they have learned in a non-threatening environment. This is especially true if the games require group effort rather than individual accomplishment, to achieve a goal.

In her fourth and fifth grade ESL classroom Ms. Andrews used many of the same techniques or practices employed to help students learn new words, phrases, and use of grammar. Through a plethora of activities, such as performing while reading a book, playing board games to define words and review previously learned vocabulary, as well as working in small cooperative groups, these students appeared to be progressing toward learning English. I also saw them engaged in learning new vocabulary while being introduced to science, social studies, and health related concepts.

A plethora of educational literature supports the idea that children should be engaged on both a physical and mental basis if we are to effectively affect their intellectual growth. When the teachers I observed provided instruction they employed methods that insured they would appeal to a variety of learning styles. Through using movement, they helped students learn decoding and pronunciation of words. By using previously learned vocabulary and establishing the context in which words were used, they helped the students create associations between what they already knew and what they were learning. In effect, they constructed scaffolding on which the students could begin building an understanding of their surroundings in the language they were learning.

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Middle School: Central City

Amy is the only part-time member of this team who works exclusively with middle school students. Unfortunately Ms. Ferris is the least familiar with SIOP, when compared to her team mates. Her job is probably complicated by the fact that in addition to having middle school students, she speaks very little Spanish. She has an ESL license but no bicultural/bilingual endorsement. Ms. Ferris is the offspring of German and Irish parents. She is in her mid forties and has taught and lived in several countries.

What I observed in the middle school was significantly different than the elementary. Unlike the elementary, this teacher primarily taught sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. Unlike her elementary counterparts, she did this without a BPA in her room. This was one thing that resembled the middle school at Eastside school.

According to Mr. Alvarez, the justification for having a part-time person teach in the middle school was based partly on how his funding from the district was determined and basic staffing. The thinking behind this decision was that middle school students needed less support than the elementary students. Therefore, they decided to concentrate their support efforts at the elementary level so that those students would have a strong lingual foundation on which to build their skills.

An outside observer could argue that this idea makes sense if the majority of your students in the middle school came through the elementary level ESL program. Like many other schools in this district, Central City had a highly transient ELL population. Mr. Alvarez acknowledged that it would have been nice to have BPA support for the middle school too, but he had limited resources and wanted to use them the way he and his staff thought they would be most effective.

What I observed at Central City school closely resembled what I experienced at Eastside Community School. In this model much of the basic language skill building was replaced by reading, listening, and writing. With older students the teacher also explored political and social issues that her elementary peers usually did not. I saw evidence of this through the following observation:

The students were told to open their books and turn to the story of the day. The students were reading about racial prejudice via a story about Jackie Robinson. The story was an abbreviated version of Jackie Robinson's debut and career with the Brooklyn Dodgers. The students, as in classes before, listened to an audio recording that they listened to while reading. Most of the students read along with the narrator. A few seemed to be distracted by non-related activities. A few minutes later the recording ended and the teacher moved to a review session of the lesson.

During the review session Ms. Ferris asked many questions about the story they read and heard. Through reading and questioning the teacher established the historical and social context in which this story occurred. She helped the students draw on their background knowledge to establish connections between the main character and themselves. She also introduced key vocabulary from the story like, prejudice, segregation, and discrimination. Through a series of questions she not only helped them understand what the words meant, she helped them related these terms to their own lives.

The students were introduced to ideas and concepts within the context of something that might interest them. In the literature regarding best practices, this would be described as the teacher helping students discover the relevancy of the topic to their own lives while giving them

an historical reference. Their background knowledge was used to help them understand the ideas presented in the curricular material. In this case, a baseball star combined with a story about injustice. Within that story the reader received a mini history lesson, vocabulary building, and introduction to various concepts. In addition to the teaching, the educator informally assessed the students comprehension of the material presented.

The informal assessment came through the discussion of the ideas in the lessons. In this case, reading a short story about Jackie Robinson introduced the students to a few main themes. The discussion provided an opportunity for the students to use their words to describe an event or concept in the story. This also gave the teacher an idea of who understood what was presented and who needed help. There was one other benefit of a story like this for language minority students. The story may have relevancy in their lives as well. During one of my observations I noticed the following:

The next passage, a poem, had a theme of race and how humans were more alike than unalike. The next story also addressed issues of race relations and cultural themes. This story addressed Native American, Mexican, Chinese, African American, and a few key messages about how people really are more alike than unalike.

Having made this connection also provided the students an opportunity to facilitate conversations about Robinson's life and make parallels with their own. Ms. Ferris once again fostered an opportunity to provide pupil to pupil and pupil to teacher interactions. The teacher of this class also took the opportunity to discuss other works addressing the same topic.

Unlike elementary aged students, middle school pupils are included in discussions about topics that relate to their personal lives. They have many more opportunities to interact with their

teacher and peers regarding the subject covered in class. However, like elementary students, the course of the daily lessons involved several different activities. One example was, the students, as in classes before, listened to an audio recording while reading. Most of the students read along with the narrator. A few minutes later the recording ended and the teacher moved to a review session of the lesson.

In this case I think the practitioners of SIOP would call this a form of comprehensible input. The students were presented with information in two formats. One of these was visual and the other auditory. The children read and listened as a means of experiencing the story.

During another session the teacher established clear expectations for the students in terms of what they were doing in the near future. The teacher outlined what the students needed for an upcoming end-of-chapter test that they were going to take. She also had them do the exercises in the books as part of reviewing what they had learned in class. The exercises in their books included vocabulary, practice pronouncing pronouns, and essay questions.

Through reading a passage the students used the context clues, based on their understanding of the familiar words, to figure out the meaning of the unfamiliar words. Because of their varying literacy skill levels, some of them were able to do this with help from the teacher. Most of the students could not do this because of their limited vocabulary.

One thing I think noteworthy here was the emphasis on individual effort versus group. In the middle school setting the students are given more assignments for homework. Ms. Ferris assigned more independent work for class time, and provided opportunities to figure out things for themselves. Reading and writing were a regular part of their lesson plans. Along with these skills, they began to develop the skills for figuring out the meaning of words based on the other words in a sentence or paragraph.

Ms. Ferris was not fluent in Spanish but, through careful demonstrations, pacing of instruction, and assistance from more English proficient students, was able to convey curricular concepts and ideas. Sometimes, speaking a little Spanish, she helped a student understand an idea, direction, or concept. Often the teacher used the concepts addressed in comprehensible input ideas.

Middle School: Eastside

At Eastside the middle school teacher had ten to fifteen students in his class. During his instruction he had students read aloud individually, occasionally stopping to review key vocabulary or terms, then ask them questions to initiate discussion and check for comprehension. Sometimes he used pictures or posters to help students understand an idea presented in the reading.

These classes closely resembled the mainstream social studies or English Language Arts classes. The biggest difference between the mainstream and the ESL class at this level was the amount of time the teacher used for explaining the content of the reading. The only difference I noticed between Ms. Ferris middle school classes and the ones at Eastside was that her students seemed a little more amenable to group work. I attribute that to what most of them did in their elementary years at Central City. When reflecting on what I observed at Eastside school, I noticed the teacher did a lot of the same things with his students as his counterpart at Central City. They read, discussed and wrote about what they read, and often used context to better understand the topic they were addressing.

Summary

During several of my observations of the middle school classes I noticed many of the same techniques being used. The teachers provided several opportunities for the students to interact with each other. This form of practice and application provided opportunities to speak, write, and continue development on their academic skills. Even in mainstream classes I noticed that the teachers often spent extra time on helping the students understand academic vocabulary and checking comprehension of those words before moving on to the next part of the lesson. The students often worked in heterogeneous language based groups, helping each other with assignments or projects. Sometimes, during tests, quizzes, or assignments requiring individual effort, they worked alone. I think the major difference between the middle school teachers at Eastside and Central City was in how the various elements of a lesson were addressed.

When in heterogeneous groups they spoke English with their classmates. This collaborative learning experience provided opportunities for the Spanish and English speaking students to work together. Through collaboration, argument, or discussion, the ELLs had an opportunity to practice their English skills while interacting with their peers. At the same time the English speaking students had an opportunity to exercise their socialization skills with students outside of their non-ELL peers. In the long run, all students benefitted from this interaction.

In reflecting on the standardized test scores for both schools I noticed that the percentage of proficient students shown in figure 4.2 was almost the same for the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students of Central City and Eastside schools. Keeping in mind what Huerta-Macias and Tinajero (1998) say about the importance of program models and teaching strategies, I think this is evidence that further supports Central City's effective methods at the elementary level.

In this chapter I discussed how the teachers used the SIOP and other practices to effectively teach literacy skills to their students. I also discussed how the methods used at the middle school were different than the elementary. The middle school ESL classes resembled a more traditional model, much like the one used for Eastside's sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. Considering the similarities in their instructional methods, part-time employment of the teacehers, and lack of BPA support, it is not surprising that the results of their standardized test scores are similar as well.

One of the other things I also noticed in my observations is how students were expected to find information via resources, and work individually more than their younger counterparts. In the upper grades students often had homework assignments, in both ELL and mainstream settings. Both ELL and mainstream settings had more in common in terms of academic expectations for students.

Practices and Policies

Central City

Central City school used practices that seemed to establish an educationally focused environment for the students the moment they entered the building. One of the things I noticed was that students were rarely unsupervised by adults. At the lower elementary level the students transitioned from one part of the building to another walking in the traditional lines that most of us remember from our elementary school days. Upon entering the classroom they had things to do.

Whether they were simple jobs, like collecting homework or passing out books to their classmates, or doing warm-up assignments on the chalkboard or projector screen, everybody was engaged immediately. Once in the classroom students knew there was little time or tolerance for

just "hanging out and talking." The tone for the class was set through established routine and expectations. Life at Eastside often presented a different picture. However, this was not the only area where there were stark differences.

I mentioned earlier that Central City school had a process for reviewing student progress and placement that involved the principal, ESL team, and several others. In this process a student was discussed by the team and they made decisions regarding what, if anything, should be done to help the student. This process helped keep the teachers and others focused on how students, especially the ELLs, were progressing and what support they needed to be successful.

Eastside

On paper the policies at Eastside and Central City were the same. The expectations for student behavior could be found in many documents and on display in teacher's rooms. However, the fundamental difference between the two schools was a matter of people following the expectations. In short, many of the adults, like the students, did not consistently comply with the school expectations for students or staff. However, one key difference may tell part of the story regarding the disparity between the performances of the respective school's ESL programs.

Students at Eastside school had their files reviewed by a team of teachers. This review panel included classroom and ESL teachers. The principal was not involved with this process. Unlike the group at Central City, the meetings for these students were not part of a routine for the school social worker, any special education staff, or even a BPA.

Consequently, some of the details in a student's life inside and outside of school were not shared with others who were working with him or her. Put another way, the social worker often had to give information to the teachers to let them know of issues with a student that would affect their academic performance. This secondary sharing of information often led to

coordinating between staff that could have occurred at the meeting where they discussed the child's performance and needs. This often produced a time lag in getting a student the resources or support they needed. In reflecting on this process I also wondered, if the principal had attended these meetings would the results have been different.

It was interesting to see how similar the schools were in terms of expectations for students and staff and how they played out in the classrooms. One of the biggest differences I noticed was how student information was shared with staff and how they used it to figure out how to best support a given child. Although both had a process for doing this, Central City appeared to have a more effective means of completing the process.

Two Principals

Within the last five years, many schools in this district gained ELL students, bringing with them several educational challenges. According to the literature, the principal has a vital role in how the school staff faces and addresses the academic and social challenges associated with an increased ELL population. In this section I examine the two principals, their similarities and differences, and discuss how their leadership affected their school's ESL program.

I compare Mrs. Mary Johnson, the principal of Eastside Community School, to Mr. Alvarez and the literature on effective principals as a way to look at the differences between their schools. At the time I gathered data for this study, Ms. Johnson was in her second year as principal of Eastside. Her last assignment, before being appointed principal at Eastside, was in a school that was in the initial stages of implementing SIOP.

Alvarez

On one of my visits to Central City school I had the opportunity to talk to the assistant principal, Mr. Allen Potts. During our discussion I asked Mr. Potts about his supervisor and what he thought were his strengths. Mr. Potts confirmed some of the things I had either observed or suspected. He said:

> I think that one of Ron's strengths is that he does not need to be seen as the one making all the decisions. He gives responsibility to people who he feels can handle it and make the right decisions for the building. If he does not agree with something he will say this is how it will be, but most of the time supports staff ideas and decisions. He does behavior and not just when I am swamped, he does middle school passing time, checks in on subs. He gives me responsibility for SIP and Title One.

Mr. Potts' comments illuminate a few key things about Alvarez. First is that he used shared leadership. According to Potts and others, Alvarez had a mixture of decision making models that worked. As the school leader he maintained the right to make some decisions without committee deliberation or approval, but most of the time involved the staff to influence things at the school. According to Potts he was a leader who got involved with students and staff.

During the course of a school day, Ron Alvarez was one of the hardest people to find in the building. As he made his rounds, talking with teachers and "checking-in" with students, he figuratively touched every corner of Central City School. Mr. Alvarez's strength lay with his connections to people. As such, he demonstrated that he was willing to do what he asked of those whom he supervised. This determination to "get in the trenches" with the staff in his building showed a high degree of commitment to the success of this school.

When I asked teachers and staff about the school, the conversation inevitably turned to comments about Mr. Alvarez. The staff member's comments reflected some of their impressions of him. Maggie Lund summarized the feelings of a lot of staff members when she said:

I think [Ron Alvarez] does a good job. He tries to keep up teacher morale and I appreciate that he believes in us. He's pretty hands-on (not sitting at his desk), he's very good with families. I think he gets respect from everyone because he respects us.

Maggie explained further that a lot of the staff's progress toward becoming an ESL site could be attributed his influence. When asked about his leadership style Candy Pike also commented when she said, "Overall he's a very effective leader. Everyone: staff, students, parents and community, likes him and wants to work hard for him." She also indicated that he seemed to have a passion for making sure the ELL students were getting the best they had to offer. I would say that because it was obviously important to him, it became, by extension, important to them.

Despite a busy schedule, and being surrounded by teachers and a district expert who could probably tell him what he needed to know about the method, Mr. Alvarez chose to get the training with the teachers. In discussing this, Alvarez reiterated the length of time commitment and development of the program took .

SIOP has only been here two years. That's about the time it really started to get hot here. That was two district years ago. This year it's becoming a district thing to do. The staff here this year and the year before took extensive training around that. And then the summer before that, myself and an ELL staff went out to the national training.

While going through this training he became aware of the philosophical foundations of the SIOP, the language it used to describe teaching strategies, how it could help his staff achieve the

academic goals they wanted, and what academic actions and related materials he should see when he visited classes. I submit that attending the training also showed the Central City School staff that he was committed to the new way of doing business. His comments begin to show the depth to which he gained an understanding of this method and its affect on the ELL students learning English.

By being familiar with the teaching method he fostered a sense of authentic investment in what the teachers were doing in their classes. Unlike an administrator with a rudimentary understanding of a particular method or technique, he could discuss the philosophy and application of SIOP with staff, parents, and outside observers. After committing himself to the training and developing an understanding and appreciation for its merits, he became a driving force for implementing and maintaining SIOP at Central City School.

Alvarez also showed his dedication to the overall success of the school and students through other actions. In addition to holding the lunchtime study groups, he regularly monitored student progress, staff teaching practices and the process they used for guiding students to the appropriate educational support. Alvarez and his staff developed a process that brought the classroom teachers, the school social worker, the Special Education teachers, and administrators together to discuss student progress in conjunction with their academic needs-especially for the ELLs. Alvarez explained this process when he said:

Most of the ELL students, we give them a remedial [instruction] where we go work on the areas they are not proficient so they got a lot this year from a teacher in Spanish. That's how we did the second, third, fourth, and fifth grade. I asked a simple question, "How are they doing?" and if they are not doing well, then I really tickle them and ask, "Have you done a letter one, have you done a letter two?" "Are they getting ELL services?" Are they in-line for

special ed. services?" If they are thinking about special education services we have to make sure that we talk about testing and what kind of testing and what kind of language [skills] is happening, and that kind of thing. So, I try to go through every individual student, including the ELL students.

While discussing this process, Alvarez elaborated on the academic areas he and his staff addressed and the other considerations they made when examining a student's progress. He addressed the various aspects of this process in the following statement:

So, I try to go through every individual student [file], including the ELL students. And then I get scores in English and in Spanish if they are in the Native Language Literacy program. So the regular Ed. teacher gets a copy in English but I look at both. I look at both and try to figure out if their CBMs (Curriculum Based Measures-a reading assessment tool) are going up in Spanish but they're not going up in English, you know they're flat-lining in English but they seem to be doing well in ELL, there's something there. You know there's something there. We just have to make sure we're addressing their needs.

Through these monthly meetings Mr. Alvarez gained insight to the academic and special service needs of the students. He asked educationally specific questions about individual students, as well as conducted frequent visits to classrooms to see the students they discussed. The teachers also brought assessment data regarding the selected students, so they could support their decisions with documented evidence. Keeping this evidence in mind, Alvarez monitored

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student performance trends and worked with the teachers and special staff to plan ways to address them.

By monitoring children's performance, Alvarez demonstrated more than cursory interest in their academic progress. His interest in individual student performance kept him in touch with their personal academic progress, as well as possible teaching trends. He stayed connected to the students and staff. He also emphasized academic performance and success from the perspective of a person who knew something about each child. Having this level of knowledge about many of the students in his building put him in a position to hold himself, his staff, and the students accountable for their performance. I think that with a higher level of personal contact with the staff he also maintained more influence on the classroom results.

One of the results of this monitoring process was that it refined the staff's focus areas. Alvarez summarized the foundation of their position on ESL education when he said, "… it comes down to making sure that the child has academic language development, …….we really have to remind people that it's really about them learning the academic language." He continued by stating that all students, English speaking and ELLs, must understand the language of the subject they are studying in order to be successful. An example he used was science or math.

He explained that if a student did not understand the vocabulary of the discipline they were studying, they were less likely to be successful in that area than a person who had a grasp of those words and their accompanying concepts. When students did not have a firm grasp of the vocabulary, even English speakers were left scrambling to figure out the meaning of the words beyond their basic definitions. The ELL student, not having the vocabulary of the English speakers, struggled even more with understanding what the teacher was trying to convey. In short, the teacher was teaching at a level for which the students were not prepared. By having a

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focus that stressed teaching the academic language and concepts along with the topic, the teachers provided a more comprehensible educational experience.

Mr. Alvarez and the staff, discussed and implemented changes to help students increase their performance. Alvarez and his team of teachers committed to monitoring student progress at a level that ensured they scrutinized and addressed every child's needs. By using information on student test scores, quizzes, and general classroom performance, the principal and the teachers had multiple sources of information on which to base their decisions. This process, despite being time consuming and tedious, demonstrated another aspect of the principal's commitment to the staff and students of this school.

Alvarez remained involved in the educational lives of the students within the walls of his building. In addition to regular meetings with staff, to discuss teaching issues and monitor individual student progress, he supported and espoused the teaching method he and his staff chose. As one of SIOPs primary supporters, Alvarez believed that the method and practices they used worked. He expressed his opinion of SIOP when he said, "So you know, its just another tool. Another tool for them to get at whatever they need to get at. SIOP works great."

At the same time, with the support of an expert from the district who could show evidence of where the SIOP helped students succeed, he was better able to help staff and parents understand what they were trying to accomplish at the school. With evidence in hand, Alvarez convinced and reassured most of the staff that what they were doing with SIOP was worth the effort they used to make it work.

Conducting this level of review, by a principal, is unusual. In the schools where I have worked as a teacher or an administrator, I was surprised when the principal knew students names. I did not expect them to have knowledge of their individual academic performance.

When asked about knowing individual student progress issues, most of the principals I worked with, simply said they did not have the time to know that kind of information about students. In most cases they knew about student trends, not individual performances. This level of scrutiny certainly indicates Mr. Alvarez's commitment to all students and staff. He highlighted this by saying,

> I mean we talk about the home, the family, we start there. We want to know how the family's involved. Does the parent know their [child is] flat-lining? Are they willing to help? Who's gonna contact them and let them know that we're concerned. It happens right there and right then.

With a relationship-oriented leadership style, Ron Alvarez showed that he was committed to ensuring the Spanish-speaking students in his building received the best teaching his staff could provide. Alvarez used his personal observation, documented data from staff, and teacher feedback to monitor how both teachers and students were doing. Demonstrating a steadfast focus on student achievement, he not only monitored their progress, he also acted to ensure students received effective instruction.

Johnson

A United States citizen, Ms. Johnson is an African American who was raised and educated in a mid-western urban setting. While growing up in a mid sized city in the 1970s and 80s she encountered few non-English speakers in her mostly black neighborhood or racially integrated schools. Her first real contact with large numbers of ELLs did not come until she graduated from college and started working, as an elementary teacher, at schools in a larger neighboring city.

Even in this environment her exposure to ELLs was limited because she had few ELLs in the classes she taught. Quite often the ELLs she did have went to an ESL teacher for their instruction

or they sat in class quietly waiting for what little help Mrs. Johnson could give them. As her career progressed, and she transitioned to the school administration level, she continued working in schools with few ELLs or even ESL programs.

As an assistant principal she worked in schools that had few or zero ELLs until she was assigned at a school similar to Central City. During her year at that school she learned as much as she could about SIOP and ESL educational practices. However, as a relatively new administrator she did not get the thorough understanding of somebody who had participated in all of the staff development sessions with the staff. After a year she was promoted and reassigned. Despite her limited experience, she was assigned as the principal to a school with a significantly higher percentage of ELLs than she had encountered in her past.

One of the things that may reflect her knowledge of ESL programs was staffing. It appears that Ms Johnson and her staff inherited or hired licensed teachers who met the qualifications for being ESL teachers; while at the same time hiring paraprofessionals who were bilingual. Although this is a perfectly legal practice, like many others, it has its pitfalls. I addressed this earlier when discussing Alvarez and the Central City school.

When examining the school budget and how the principal and other building leaders decided to use their funds, it was easy to see how their priorities were affected by their experience. Mrs. Johnson, like many of her staff, viewed ESL programs through the lens of their personal experiences and what they perceived to be higher priorities when deciding how their budget would be allocated. This meant, more often than not, these programs received less funding, materials, and sometimes even classroom space than their mainstream colleagues.

While at Eastside school I was in a position to work with the principal and the staff from the perspective of an employee, staff member, and leader. As the assistant principal, as well as a

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doctoral candidate conducting research, I was in a position to participate in, and observe interactions between the staff and principal. As such, I think I also had a unique, research informed, perspective on the leadership style and frame of the principal.

Leadership Frames and Alvarez

I think Alvarez operated in what Bolman and Deal (2003) call the Human Resource and Symbolic Frames. I also think Sidle (2005) would classify his style as a Visionary/Warrior. I think these were his areas of strength because he spent a lot of time investing in interactions with people while maintaining the focus on seeing the school where it needed to be. He also demonstrated an affinity for doing things that demanded the attention of the observer and showed them how something should be done. Through his actions he recognized and appreciated the talents and contributions of the people at Central City school. Mr. Alvarez's actions also had more meaning than a single act.

His orientation to the Human Resources frame can be seen in his "checking in" with members of his staff regardless of their status. According to the vice principal and others he worked to make people feel appreciated and respected regardless of their position in the organization. As a Warrior/Visionary he realized the importance of the people to the mission he needed to accomplish. He worked to foster an environment where everybody was valued as a human being and an important contributor to the success of the school. When talking about Mr. Alvarez's influence on the staff and community Ms. Pike replied,

> Leadership style: Mr. Alvarez has a hands-off, non-authoritarian leadership style. He relates extremely well to students, staff, families and community members from a wide range of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Overall he's a very effective leader. Everyone: staff, students, parents and community, likes him and wants to work hard for him.

When I consider his role from the symbolic frame of reference, Alvarez is the lead visionary. He helped the staff see the school as they desired it to be. His actions often emphasize the "we" instead of "me" aspect of leadership. Examples of this collaborative style included, taking training on teaching methods with the teachers, participating on committees, holding informal evening gatherings to communicate with parents, addressing Spanish speaking parents in their language, even doing a lunch detention with students. Mr. Alvarez repeatedly showed that he and the staff were "in this together." More importantly, these gestures also showed students, parents, and community that the staff at Central City school really cared about their students and families. He also reinforced the togetherness theme by maintaining a hierarchy that allowed all employees direct access to him or the members of a committee who were assembled to address certain issues.

Viewing their culture from the perspective of the Bolman and Deal's organizational frames, I felt their ethical soul or spirit was like a family. The authors describe this as "one person's compassion and concern for another-is both the purpose and the ethical glue that holds a family together"(p. 241). Like a family, the actions of the organization were done mostly out of a sense of caring for the academic and social well-being of their students, as well as the professional and personal well being of each other. This family, like most, also had relatives who dropped in from time to time to influence the immediate family setting. At Central City school, this "uncle's" name was Geraldo Lopez.

The principal and the staff appeared to have a positive working relationship based on a number of different factors. These factors included but were not limited to, trust, competence, collaborative interactions, and a focus on doing their best work for the benefit of the students. I

think, based on the interviews with the principal and staff, the foundation of this relationship resided in the principal's leadership style. Mr. Potts, the assistant principal, helped me understand the administrators and teachers roles when he discussed the committee structure and the basis of their decisions:

Our decisions are based first on district initiatives, We get input from staff-especially support staff who work with various grades through our committees. The main decision making group is the Principal's Advisory Committee which is made up of the Principal, Assistant Principal, and representatives from each grade.

Bolman and Deal (2003) describe the symbolic frame of leadership in terms of actions, ideas, and physical items having meaning that people associate with the culture of an organization. According to the authors, culture is "the interwoven pattern of beliefs, values, practices, and artifacts that defines for members who they are and how they are to do things" (p.243). They assert that events can have multiple meanings due to the interpretations of the people involved. The symbolism also carries with it a level of devotion that according to the authors, people may return to for "resolving confusion, increasing predictability, finding direction, and anchoring hope and faith" (p. 242).

Alvarez demonstrated elements of symbolic leadership when he participated in many of the staff development sessions that the teachers in his building were required to take. Although he was not required to take them, he did because it showed the staff that he was committed to learning about SIOP, not just implementing it. He also participated in conducting study sessions for students who had fallen behind in their homework. In doing this he demonstrated his desire to "roll up his sleeves" and work with the staff, not just delegate duties and dictate expectations to them.

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Alvarez also showed his collaborative leadership style via the instructional planning meeting they had in the spring of each year. A key message that he expressed was the need to bring all of the concerned parties together to discuss student needs and how the staff will address them. This act signified one of the key components of the culture at Central City school, e.g. gathering input from multiple perspectives. On another level, since this meeting was about serving the needs of the ELL, this discussion also reinforced the importance of the ESL program at the school.

One important characteristic of his style was that he used gestures and visual symbols or actions to get both overt and underlying messages to his audience. These messages included placing the focus of the school leaders on things that were important, showing that he shared the teachers' struggle and worked when it came to learning new techniques or implementing change. I think he also established a higher level of credibility with the teachers by learning alongside them. In effect, when he formally or informally assessed a teacher they knew he was familiar with the techniques or methods they were using.

Alvarez also demonstrated elements of symbolic leadership through his actions during one of the many family nights they had throughout the year. During the event, families were invited into the school's auditorium to hear a welcoming speech from the principal as well as greetings from the teachers and other staff members. Mr. Alvarez began the event by taking the microphone and welcoming the parents in Spanish and English. He continued by quickly going over the agenda for the evening and inviting parents to volunteer their time via committee membership or working in the school helping teachers. He was one of the few people in the building who was comfortable doing his own interpreting.

The overt message invited parents to be a part of the activities and events at the school during their child's tenure at Central City School. The underlying message to both Spanish and English-

only speakers was that the invitation for participation at the school was for all parents. This also supported the idea that Central City school staff cared about all of their students. Mr. Alvarez and the staff realized that what they did helped shape the relationships they formed with people outside of their building. They communicated through their statements and actions that they were focused on educating students.

Examples of their outreach included conducting ceremonies to celebrate student successes and inviting parents and the public to join them. Making efforts to help students stay at their school, helping immigrant parents know their rights and privileges, and regularly communicating their success to parents and others. One of the effects of regular celebrations and communication with the surrounding community is that the school has a reputation for being a great place for students.

Mr. Alvarez also represented the aims and intent of the school through hiring decisions. In his efforts at hiring staff, he placed qualified Latinos in highly visible positions within the school. These positions include a teacher, a clerk in the main office and one bilingual aide. By doing this he effectively helped the school present more of a diverse public face. This also reinforced the idea that, despite the school being located in a predominantly white, middle class part of the city, brown skin Spanish speakers were part of the staff and had important roles within the building. These employees helped the school support its messages of welcome and inclusion. They also help the school officials communicate with the students' parents via people who spoke Spanish.

In working with his staff Mr. Alvarez collaborated with his teacher-leaders and other key staff like the school social worker, psychologist, parent liaison, and special education teachers. In

this leadership model he established and communicated the vision, but the staff had a vital role in determining how they worked at achieving the mission and realizing the vision.

Johnson 's Leadership Frames

Unlike her peer at Central City, Mrs. Johnson was known for being a "by the book" type principal. At the same time, she worked with people, forming alliances inside and outside of the school building, to accomplish a given task or objective. These tasks included working with the school Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), organizing special events, and getting our business partners to provide money or other resources to help with some of the aforementioned activities. In the style of a political leader, when the time for negotiating and forming coalitions was no longer necessary, she kept them in the back of her mind for later and moved on to the next challenge.

Through her limited experience as a principal and with ESL programs, Mrs. Johnson had a different view of leadership than Mr. Alvarez. Bolman and Deal would describe Johnson's leadership frames as structural and political. Her leadership was characterized by a focus on student achievement and managing the practices of staff.

As a new principal assigned to a struggling school, she was determined to raise the level of achievement and ultimately remove the label the state and district had bestowed upon her building. However, she realized she could not meet these goals without making some hard choices. The choices she saw in her future included teacher evaluations that could lead to disciplinary actions, possible staff changes, and a revamping of school policies and practices. The job she faced as the new principal of a struggling school required a laser like focus on increasing student achievement for all.

One of the first leadership challenges that Johnson faced as the new principal of this building was balancing the needs and desires of various factions. Eastside was a school located at the crossroads of two major educational endeavors; getting English speaking, yet underperforming students to improve, and teaching non-English speakers to be fluent and literate while achieving as well or better than their mainstream peers. These two missions occasionally caused a palpable rift between staff and community members that influenced many of Mrs. Johnson's decisions. It was during these times that her political leadership skills were employed.

Almost as if she had read Bolman and Deal's work on leadership frames, Johnson worked to bring people together to discuss the details of curricular and programmatic decisions that affected the entire teaching staff. One example of this came when we discussing the budget for the following school year.

Prior to this discussion the principal was told that a certain percentage of her dollars had to be devoted to funding positions for reducing class size in the lower elementary grades. Seeing that some of the decisions would affect the rest for the school in terms of space and scheduling issues, Johnson gathered some of the people who would be affected to discuss how to address these changes. This group would help her achieve a balance between mainstream requirements and the needs of others-mainly the ESL program.

With the help of a group of teachers, including an ESL teacher, the principal helped the staff realize that the ESL program, since it was part time, had to consolidate their resources to make room for the incoming teachers the following year. This decision caused a stir among some who pointed out that, "once again, the ESL program gets the short end of the stick." At the same time, those who were on the committee that made the decision were there to help explain why and how it was made and that it was going to be good for all for the students in the long run. By

assembling a coalition of staff, Mrs. Johnson worked with a select group of teachers to reach a consensus on how to integrate these new teachers into the building. This was only one of many instances where Mrs. Johnson formed groups or committees to accomplish a task or goal. Sometimes her efforts involved bartering to get what she thought the school needed.

When faced with trying to get additional goods, services, or funding, Mrs. Johnson was willing to negotiate quid pro quo arrangements. These often included staff providing supervisory duty of a group of students so that they would later get something in return for their efforts. Sometimes this also involved the principal and a select group of teachers talking to community organizations or local businesses to have them "donate" time or resources to help the schools. In return, the organization or business received contact with parents, staff, and students as a way of making themselves known to a wider client base. Put another way, they received advertising and exposure. Fortunately, assembling coalitions and making deals was not Mrs. Johnson's only way of conducting business.

Realizing that all decisions within a school cannot, and in some cases, should not, be made by a committee, Mrs. Johnson also governed. Some of her decisions, like taking disciplinary actions against a staff person, changing some school policies or procedures, she made without consulting teachers or administrators. In this mode she was a structural leader.

Bolman and Deal (2003) describe structural leaders as people focused on goals, roles, and relationships of the people within the organization. According to the authors leaders in these organizations, "create rules, policies, procedures, and hierarchies to coordinate diverse activities into a unified strategy" (p.14). Mary Johnson was an administrator who had a vision with the mission, plans, procedures, and policies to make it work. This aspect of her leadership style meant that she was at the center of every major decision made at the school.

Johnson often focused her efforts on doing, or working toward, what was required to ensure the smooth and efficient operation of the building. She often consulted with staff regarding issues in the building, but would make any final decisions regarding changes in policy, practices, or procedures. These decisions included, but were not limited to, things like budget, staffing, discipline, and programmatic changes.

Leadership Focus and Structure

According to Bolman and Deal the focus of an effective political leader is that of building coalitions and promoting advocacy. Mr. Alvarez spent a significant part of his time working with various committees within the school to accomplish the goals they set together. Through this process, which sometimes involved negotiating, the committee made decisions on which they formed plans or took action. Sometimes their decisions required input from, or coordination with, others who were affected by their decisions.

The organizational hierarchy was relatively flat in that it had a few levels instead of many. In addition to having a relatively short chain of command, the organization was flexible. The staff at Central City school experienced a leadership model that, depending on the situation and the expertise needed to address it, put everybody in a position to be part of important decisions that could affect the entire school.

With the discussion via committees and meetings of various groups, the process involved in making a decision was sometimes lengthy and cumbersome. The staff usually employed a democratic process mixed with consensus building. Building consensus was the preferred way to arrive at a decision but voting was used when it became obvious that getting everybody to agree was going to take longer than the time available. In a few instances the school principal made a decision and the staff supported it.

In most cases, when a decision had to be made, the affected parties met to provide feedback on how they should address it. After discussion and considering their options, they decided what must be done and how they would do it. Many times the principal or an administrator was involved with these discussions so that there was no need for submission of a plan to a higher authority. The committee, in cooperation with the approval authority and the affected parties, were able to efficiently make plans and take action. Other times, especially when the impact of the plan included the entire staff, it was necessary to present the plan to them for discussion. Usually operational level plans were decided by a committee. The entire staff was involved with decisions that had major structural impact like curriculum or schedule changes

When presented to the entire staff further discussion occurred with the intent to refine the plan. After receiving more input the staff members voted to decide if they would accept or reject it. If accepted by the majority via consensus or voting, the plan went forward with the understanding that further discussion or revision may be needed.

The organizational hierarchy was relatively flat at Eastside school as well. In this building the principal, the building leadership council, and a few committees held the decision making power. I provide a brief explanation of the principal and the committees to help the reader understand the dynamics in this building.

The building leadership council, according to the organizational by-laws, consisted of the principal, a few staff, parents, and community members. This council was supposed to act as a collaborative governing body that made many of the major decisions affecting the school. The other committees consisted of staff and parent volunteers as well. The challenges facing Mrs. Johnson and the rest of the Eastside staff were the results of other issues that I will address in more detail later in this chapter.

The building leadership council was charged with addressing and making decisions regarding major changes affecting the school. The issues this committee was supposed to address included programmatic changes, curriculum adoption, fund raising, use of grant monies, and review and approval of other building committee decisions. However, attendance by parents and community members at the leadership team meetings was sporadic. Fortunately, the by-laws allowed for a quorum of team members, regardless of their status as staff or parent, to make decisions.

The by-laws were also written to allow for the principal to make decisions if the quorum could not due to a tied vote or deadlocked discussion. Too often the principal and the leadership team staff members made decisions that affected the entire building without parent input. Later, after the decision to pursue a certain course of action was made at the committee level, the principal was charged with making sure the will of the council was carried forward. The unfortunate affect of this was that the decision making was really left in the hand of a few and there was little collaboration outside of this committee.

Supporting and Involving Families

Central City

When we discussed how the school supported families, Maggie Lund quickly pointed out that family issues are addressed by a number of different staff members. Her comment, along with others, reinforced the idea that the staff actively pursued developing relationships with the parents of their students. By cultivating ongoing, positive relationships with parents, the teachers and staff established a high level of trust between themselves and families.

One of the ways in which parents were introduced to the staff and the Central City School's ideas, methods, procedures, and resources, were through an event called Family Information Night. The Family Information Nights, held about four times a year, provided opportunities for parents and school staff to interact.

Parents and staff came together in a carnival-like atmosphere to meet, share a light meal, and discuss school related activities like, student progress, committee meetings, administrative concerns, and other topics as needed. This was one venue in which the staff interfaced with parents. Other events included open houses, conferences, school newsletters and flyers, as well as scheduled and unscheduled conversations via phone or in person.

Through several venues school the staff made a concerted effort to tell families about school activities and events. Information about activities kept parents informed about things in which their child could participate. Their efforts also focused on getting all parents to be involved in school. The family information night was a good example of this because through it, parents received information, heard about the school's goals and ambitions, as well as received invitations to become active supporters of school events.

Without a commitment to supporting and receiving support from the parents, this school would have a significantly different look and feel. The principal placed a high value on ensuring the school was an inviting and welcoming place. He insisted on inviting parents to participate in leadership opportunities via school committees. Mr. Alvarez also hired interpreters to attend these meetings so that the parents could understand what was being said and provide feedback to their fellow committee members.

The teacher's conversations and actions showed concern for the students' well-being as well as their academic performance. This was especially prevalent among the ESL teachers. They

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often discussed making telephone calls to parents that began with conversations about their children but ended with a conversation about other events affecting the life of the family. A comment by Maggie Lund captured the essence of the challenges they faced and their attitude toward helping families

We have to work hard to help some families work out their problems so that the kids can go to school. Our social worker, and teachers too, often help families with numerous issues by directing them to the appropriate services, as well as providing ":a shoulder to cry on" or somebody to just talk to about various problems.

Eastside

This was an area where we struggled. When I began working at Eastside we used a variety of strategies to get parents involved in school activities. We communicated via the school newsletter and used a phone tree. We tried sending home flyers in student backpacks and having our office BPA call Spanish speaking homes. We seemed to have a real problem getting parents, English or Spanish speaking to participate or support the events we had at school. However, there were notable exceptions to this problem.

The parents came to our school when we had events that featured their students performing or participating in something like a concert or game. When we held events where we provided a meal, gave away food or merchandise, parents came. After seeking and receiving feedback from some of our parents, we learned a few things that would help us realize the potential of getting families involved with school events.

During the time I collected data for this study, Eastside was still struggling with getting parents to participate on the building leadership team, volunteer to help teachers in classrooms, or even help chaperone field trips. We had parents who often promised to help but failed to show

up when it was time to do what they said. This often lead to most of our events being planned with teachers and other staff doing all of the work. When asked why they could not help, these parents often replied that they had child care or work issues that interfered with their volunteering. Until we effectively addressed and mitigated some of these problems our staff did not feel they had support or involvement from families.

Commitment

In this section I examine commitment in terms of time, resources, and dedication to the ideas espoused by the leaders and staff of this school. Realizing that the teachers, support staff, and parents have something to contribute, both principals use an inclusive leadership model to gain buy-in and support for the plans they made together. However, despite this similarity, I found significant differences that affected how the schools operated and achieved their academic goals.

Central City

At Central City the building culture seemed to be that everybody took part in the events. At the school family information night, an event required of all Center City district schools, many staff attended and interacted with parents. However, this may have been as much a function of how the event was held as it was the event itself. Central City made it more of a carnival type atmosphere whereas Eastside it was very much a meet and greet affair. The other interesting thing about this event, and many others, was the way in which aspects of Latino culture were incorporated into the events. The cultural aspects included, music, food, artwork, and the way in which the principal addressed the families in their language. I think the fact that Central City was willing to go the extra step to make it more like a carnival indicated the will to do more to interface with students and families.

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On the first morning of my observations at Central City, I arrived earlier than the designated staff reporting time thinking I'd get to park close to the main door and catch the principal for an interview before the staff arrived. I assumed their staff, like many of the places I had worked before, would arrive around their reporting time. I was wrong.

I was lucky to find a place in the parking lot at Central City when I arrived. When I arrived at Central City most mornings I became accustomed to seeing staff with breakfast and coffee in hand, headed to their classrooms or gathered around the copy machine, preparing lessons for the day.

Central City showed a high level of activity with people willing to do the work in individual and group actions. Examples of this included the ESL teachers providing supplemental reading material for their Spanish speaking and reading students, the numerous meetings teachers and other staff had to address individual student needs, and the concerted effort the school put into overcoming the language barriers to include parents' leadership and other committees.

Eastside

I would not say that the staff of Eastside school was not committed to the education of their students, they were just not at the same level as Central City. The examples that I remembered included things like arrival time at school and special events. Some Eastside teachers and BPAs attended special events after school. Many of the other staff did not attend or would do so reluctantly, and within the parameters of their employment contract.

At Eastside, when I worked there, getting a good place to park was easy if you arrived before the staff start time. Although this may not be a big indicator of commitment, it does address how willing the staff might be to put in extra hours at their work site. Many staff showed that their level of commitment ended at the end of the work day. Some were adamant about leaving the

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weekly staff meeting at the contractual end of the work day. However, this was not the only evidence.

Special events at the schools where I worked, including Eastside, were usually attended by a "hardcore" group of teachers who often did the planning for many things in the building. At Eastside this group often worked hard just to get people to help them. These discussions were also often accompanied by demands for compensation. These events were often not attended by nonteaching staff or supported by parent volunteers.

Other Factors

School success depends on many influences that are quantifiable and tangible as well as intangible. At the beginning of this chapter I discussed test scores that reflected achievement over a three year period. However, test scores cannot tell the whole story regarding the successes Central City school experiences. The Center City school district produces reports based on survey data from parents, students, and staff. This information combined with demographic data, helped me get a better idea of what separated this school from many others in this district.

The Center City School district provides schools and parents with demographic and statistical data through a document called the School Information Report (SIR). Like the section before, the district represents this information in terms of each school compared to the district averages in the categories represented by the data. The information represented in by these averages focus mostly an amalgam of the students, with a few specified areas. I focused my attention to information pertinent to both the entire student body and that which pertained mostly to the ELLs.

Some of the data that were common to the general population, students in the ESL program and ELLs, included factors like Free and Reduced priced lunch participants, teacher

qualifications, suspensions regarding safety and respect in school, and school demographics. Information that pertained specifically to ELLs were things like, percent of the population enrolled in the ESL program, percent of school population that were Latino students, and number of Latino staff in the building. With these various topics in mind I began sifting through this plethora of data to get a clearer sense of what distinguished Central City School from others in the district.

The information presented in these charts shows us differences and similarities in staff and student demographic data. A quick review of the information from the SIR reveals differences in staff composition between Central City and Eastside schools. Despite the fact that Eastside had a more racially diverse staff, both schools had the same number of Latino teachers.

Other comparisons included teacher education level. Compared to Eastside and the district, Central City had more master's level staff. Two of the ESL teachers at Central City were among the higher educated staff.

If our collective efforts to educate ourselves, through staff development and college courses, prove beneficial then this factor should be considered significant. A school staff with a high number of people with graduate level education theoretically should have better results than those with less education. I think this is one fact that cannot be dismissed but, at the same time, not be deemed so significant as to be considered a cure-all or recipe for guaranteed success.

Eastside had a higher number of students in the Free/Reduced price program than Central City. However, both were over 85% and higher than the district average during the three-year period examined. This is further evidence that they were able to succeed despite the apparent poverty endured by many of the families they served.

According to the 2003-2004 School Information Report, both schools were above the district average on student transience. However, by 2005-2006 Central City's flow of inbound students fell slightly below the district's while Eastside's stayed slightly above the district average. While gathering data for this study, I addressed this issue with one of the staff at Central City and was told how they mobilized their nonteaching support staff to help keep students at their school. This was one area at Eastside we just did not seem to address with as much vigor and determination as I saw at Central City.

Another significant factor I considered was the apparent discrepancy of staff to ESL student ratio. When comparing the SIRs I found a significant difference in students receiving ESL services at each school. Both schools were above the district average for the three year period discussed. The difference between the two was that Central City had 40 percent of its school population receiving ESL services while Eastside had 51 percent. They had the same number of ESL staff serving their students. This fact points out that the student to teacher ratio at Eastside was higher than at Central City. This evidence, combined with other student data, suggests the idea that lower class sizes may contribute to student success.

The SIR also addresses student attendance. During an interview I discussed this issue with the family liaison. She talked about attendance issues and what they did to address some of them. The data tells us that more than half of their students attended school more than 95 percent of the time. Eastside and the district averages were lower than Central City's for the 2005-2006 school year. This data is significant because it helps support the fact that students learn more when they attend school regularly. Apparently, the more of them attending most days tends to lead to better academic performance.

From an atmosphere related perspective, issues of safety and respect outline the suspension data contained in the SIR. Apparently both schools have problems in this area. Eastside was on par with the district, while at the same time, Central City was consistently lower in both categories of suspensions. I would not say that the data tell us that one school was necessarily safer than the other. What I think the data tell us is that it is quite possible there were fewer disruptions at one school versus the other.

Summary

While observing the practices used by teachers at Central City school I often reflected on how things were done at Eastside Community School; the place where I worked at the time I did the research for this study. What I found were similarities in terms of staffing and some classroom practices. Some of the differences I discovered I think could negatively impact the students at Eastside School. Although these differences may not tell the whole story, they helped me answer some of the questions regarding why one school, with similar configuration and student demographics, performed better than the other.

One of the first things I noticed was that the ELLs at Eastside had adult support and instruction less than their counterparts at Central City. They were taught by monolingual staff who were licensed to teach them English. They also spent the rest of their day in the main classrooms with occasional bilingual support from Spanish-speaking paraprofessionals.

The biggest difference here was at the elementary level. The students at Central City had daily contact with their bilingual ESL teachers and received support from paraprofessionals in their mainstream classes. The students at Eastside had limited access to their ESL teachers and

with some help in their mainstream classes. The differences were less discernable at the middle school level.

The differences between the schools were also more apparent at the elementary level with the strategies the teachers used. When looking at how the two building staffs were configured I noticed that although both had teachers and BPAs dedicated to educating the ELLs, Central City had more teachers and paraprofessionals focused on classroom support. Eastside school had a similar configuration with the exception of one BPA who was dedicated to providing translation and interpretation for the office staff. This one difference effectively reduced the amount of time ELLs received support from bilingual staff.

Although, according to their policies, the schools had similar expectations and rules for students to follow, how they were enforced was different. Central City students entered an environment where they were expected to work on assignments or tasks assigned by the teacher. At Eastside, the teachers often had "dead time" at the beginning of their classes. Too often, they engaged in tasks while the students waited. When I think of how much instructional time may have been wasted by this practice, I am shocked that some people, teachers, would think that was acceptable.

One of the most glaring differences I noticed was the student work and progress review process. Although the process was similar, the people attending the meeting and the results of that meeting were significantly different. At Eastside the principal and other key people did not regularly attend these meetings so that important information regarding the student often did not get shared with the teachers, or vice versa, until after the review was over. This may have lead to significant delays in getting students the support or help they needed.

After examining the experiences and qualifications of the principals, their ESL and general education teachers, and the focus of the schools, I saw differences in their academic outcomes for their ELLs. Of particular interest was the way in which the ESL and bilingual staff were hired and employed. Central City focused all of their ESL and BPA staff on supporting students while Eastside used some of its bilingual support for office help. The difference in these staff assignments and functions reveal something about the focus and priorities at both schools that affected the classrooms.

One of the more interesting differences, and possibly the most influential, were the backgrounds and qualifications of the principals. Equally educated, in terms of their formal undergraduate and graduate levels, they had significantly different life experiences. Between the two principals, Alvarez readily admits that his childhood experience as a Spanish speaking ELL influences his approach to educating ELLs at his school. Mrs. Johnson, on the other hand, acknowledged that she still had things to learn about educating ELLs.

V

Analysis

I began this study intent on finding out why one of the schools in the district where I worked appeared to be more effective at educating urban, Spanish speaking English Language Learners than similarly configured schools. Since, at the time of the study, I was working at one of those similarly configured schools that appeared to be less effective than Central City, I wanted to know what they were doing that separated them from us. The data I found reveal that leadership, curriculum and teaching methods, and commitment of personnel were qualitatively different at Central City Community School when compared to Eastside.

In this chapter I explain how these three major areas contributed to their success. Using the associated literature as a framework, I examine the above subjects from the perspective of how the practices of Central City align with research based, professional opinions on this topic. I also address how their success might influence the work of other schools.

Leadership

My experience at Central City, backed by statements from staff and evidence from the literature regarding leadership practices, indicate that leadership is vital to the effectiveness of a school-especially during times of programmatic change or reform. The success of this school had a strong correlation with the actions of Principal Alvarez and key members of the staff. Leading with a mixture of leadership styles, Principal Alvarez appeared to guide the staff of Central City on a mission to achieve academic excellence. He operated within, what Bolman and Deal (2003) call, the Human Resource and the Symbolic Frames. I also think Sidle (2005) would classify his style as Visionary/Warrior.

Alvarez demonstrated his leadership strengths by investing time into interactions with people while maintaining their focus on seeing the school where it needed to be. Whether he was in meetings with staff to discuss individual student progress or conducting a homework session with students, he regularly connected with people. He also displayed an affinity for doing things that demanded the attention of the observer and showed them how something should be done. Through his actions he recognized and appreciated the talents and contributions of the people at Central City school. Mr. Alvarez's actions also had more meaning than a single gesture or act.

As the primary leader in the building Alvarez worked on the symbolic and personal levels with staff and students. Some of the examples, as I discussed earlier, included him taking SIOP training with the teachers, holding meetings with teachers and support staff to discuss student progress and support needs, talking with both English and Spanish speaking parents in their language, and conducting lunch detention homework sessions. Although he was not required to do any of these, he used these actions as a means to stay in contact with staff, students, and parents. He also demonstrated to the staff that he was willing to roll up his sleeves to do what needed to be done. He demonstrated continuity between his actions and his words.

By maintaining his focus on SIOP and monitoring the progress of ELLs, and working with other leaders in the building, he functioned as one of the "keepers of the vision". As he stayed committed to ushering in the needed changes, he also realized that it could not happen without extensive teacher education. For that he had expert help educating and coaching the Central City staff.

Gerry Lopez, a relatively quiet man, would be described by Sidle (2005) as exhibiting nurturer characteristics. His leadership style is best described in terms of his role as a relationship builder, mentor, and coach. He was the district ESL liaison whose extensive work

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with the Central City School teachers helped make the school an exemplary ESL model in this district. When this school first implemented SIOP, Lopez worked for the district ESL department while operating from inside Central City school. Although he was primarily concerned with staff development, he worked diligently on building relationships with staff and students.

During his tenure, he achieved a balance between being the advisor and a colleague to the teachers. Through conversations, coaching, and working with the staff he developed a rapport with them. In an interview he described some of what he did to gain their trust when he said, "So what I did, is that I went out and worked with the building. I participated in all of the building activities. I substituted in classes, I took bus duty, I went camping with them." In short, he came as close to being a staff member as he could.

By building this level of trust Lopez provided a deeper level of support to staff than is ordinarily experienced with trainers and teachers. By becoming a colleague, coach, and mentor, he was there to experience the hard work that is often encountered with change. His presence in the building helped maintain a high level of consistent reinforcement of the ideas and expectations associated with the vision of the school. In support of the principal and the Center City School District, Lopez provided a level of expertise and programmatic focus that most schools did not have.

Mr. Alvarez and Mr. Lopez demonstrated complimentary leadership qualities. They realized and exemplified a desire to recognize and connect with the people who worked directly with students. Alvarez exhibited the leadership characteristics that guided the staff to see and eventually realize their collective vision. Lopez helped keep the principal and staff oriented on the SIOP aspects of their objectives through staff development training and follow-up mentoring

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and coaching. Through their leadership these two men effectively helped a staff transition and succeed.

The writings of many authors in education, as well as the data gathered at Central City School, support the idea that for effective reforms to succeed they must be supported by the people who have contact with children. I found, via numerous conversations I had with staff, that Central City's ELLs were supported very well. In reflecting on the literature pertaining to school leadership and effective schools I saw several similarities between what I observed at Central City School and the authors' views.

In chapter two of this study I cited the work of several authors who discussed leaders and effective schools. The authors insist that principal leadership is vital to a school's success. The authors contend that, effective schools need to have a clear sense of purpose and vision, that the leader must be supportive of staff in their quest to improve their practice through staff development and education, and that the principal provide the direction and guidance to keep the staff focused on the organizational goals and objectives.

Alvarez and Lopez exhibited effective school leadership through words and actions that kept their focus on what the learning experience should be for the student, monitoring student progress through meetings with concerned staff, supporting and taking staff development, and developing collegial relationships with teaching staff by employing collaborative decision making. Their leadership was not only supported by the statements of their staff and the ideas espoused by academic researchers, the data provided by the Center City district supported them. The district test performance data provided further evidence of their success.

In chapter four of this work I showed that Central City School had better results than a similarly configured school, Eastside, on their standardized test scores. The test data reveal that

Central City demonstrated significant increases in their English reading and fluency test scores over their peers at Eastside. However, the hard data does not tell the whole story of Central City school.

Leadership of an effective school, when viewed through research based leadership frames, includes intangibles like how people feel about what they are doing and their environment. The atmosphere of Central City School was warm, welcoming and purposeful. They seemed to have achieved the balance between providing a real sense of caring for their students and families, and providing the business-like atmosphere necessary to ensure students learned what they were supposed to via the best methods the teachers could employ to educate them. Mr. Alvarez, Mr. Lopez, and key leadership team members, made their accomplishments possible.

Effective Teaching Practices

The research of authors like Krashen (1997), Baker (2001), and Echevarria and Graves (2003), regarding effective ESL classroom practices appeared to be the norm at Central City School. What I saw in the classrooms was evidence of the following:

- Preparation- clearly defined content objectives that can be written or presented verbally. Through the use of age-appropriate content and concepts, supplementary materials to help clarify points in lessons, and creating lessons that are adaptable to varying levels of language proficiency, the teacher provided meaningful and authentic activities to help integrate lesson concepts with real language practice opportunities.
- Building Background-teacher links concepts to student's experiences, emphasizing new vocabulary

- Comprehensible Input-this includes speaking at the student's proficiency, explaining academic tasks in appropriate voice and amount, using various techniques to make ideas and content clear to students.

- Strategies that appealed to different learning methods and techniques. The teachers consistently used scaffolding and employed a variety of question and answer types.

- The teachers encouraged and participated in dialogue using both target and native language. Students were grouped to support language use and content objectives. The teachers consistently afforded students sufficient wait-time and gave ample opportunities for clarification of concepts in their native language.

- Students were provided lots of hands-on materials, and engaged in activities that required them to practice and apply their new knowledge. Teachers, in turn, used this knowledge in later lessons.

- The lessons I observed clearly supported the content and language objectives the teachers described. They also appeared to be appropriately paced to the student's ability level.

- The teachers provided ample comprehensive review of key vocabulary, supplied comprehensive review of key content concepts, regularly gave feedback to students on their output, and frequently assessed student comprehension and learning.

There are many parallels between the SIOP model, best teaching practices, and effective ESL teaching methods. However, some authors insist that other factors help teachers create a favorable learning environment. For instance, authors like Freeman and Freeman (1998) discuss how the context influences learning.

They address how teachers must adapt to their school population in terms of culture, language, age, and use of their target language in their community. These factors affect how well the students may become proficient at communicating in English. The teachers at Central City School did this well.

The ESL teachers at Central City school took students in and educated them, keeping in mind their cultural heritage. Having developed an understanding of Latin cultures, they tried to incorporate various aspects of culture in their lesson planning and instruction. Keeping in mind the circumstances in some students' lives outside of school, they adjusted their lesson plans and work assignments to accommodate for issues such as their lack of support at home.

The principal, ESL teachers, and the rest of the staff, worked with parents to host events and activities that recognized or included Latino culture. While using the SIOP, teachers incorporated lessons about various holidays, ceremonies, food, and other cultural elements into their daily instruction. During many of their lessons they used a variety of visual aids, props, and myths or legends from Latino cultures to embrace the origins of their students. Some of the authors also suggest that there is a learning style component to recognizing and embracing the student's cultural identity.

Trumball, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield and Quiroz (2001) address Western European based learning styles versus those of other cultures. These authors compare the Western individualist oriented approaches to learning to group or community based learning practices of Asian and

Latino cultures. These authors suggest that teachers who include more group based, collaborative learning methods may be more effective with ELLs. The teachers at Central City did a lot of activities with students where they worked with each other as well as the teacher.

Krashen (1997), Faltis and Hudelson (1998), Baker (2001), Echevarria and Graves (2003), and McBride (2007) all address the merits of the SIOP. One of the key components of this comprehensive teaching method is its use of collaborative learning activities. These activities, according to the authors, provide opportunities for students to practice their second language with their peers. Working with each other they also learn socialization skills through interaction with fellow ELLs.

The teachers I observed at Central City Community School certainly used a variety of group activities as part of their teaching strategies. During the course of the lessons I observed they incorporated activities that appealed to a variety of learning styles and abilities. These strategies also provided numerous avenues to arrive at the same end-the education of their ELLs.

While reflecting on some of the literature regarding different types of language education programs, I realized that the ESL program at Central City appeared to be an amalgam of ESL and bilingual education methods. Johns and Torrez (2001) assert that bilingual or transitional bilingual programs are the most effective because they focus on a students' understanding of concepts and ideas in their native tongue while transitioning them to English. The ultimate goal is to transition all students to English-only education.

Except for the middle school, the teachers used their bilingual skills as part of their instruction. Using the native tongue of their students as part of the daily instructional practice is not a usual part of the traditional ESL model. This is unusual for two main reasons; true bilingual programs require more staff who speak and educate all students in both languages. These

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programs often require more staff than traditional schools and therefore are more expensive to maintain. Through careful and fortuitous hiring, along with adopting a proven successful teaching method, Central City school provided an effective mixture of teaching techniques for their ELLs without the expense of a bilingual program.

Qualifications and Training

As discussed earlier Principal Alvarez demonstrated a focus on the people working at Central City school. Another way he demonstrated this was through hiring decisions and how employee skills were integrated into the Central City paradigm. I focused my efforts on two groups of employees, the Bilingual Program Assistants and the ESL teachers.

Except for Ms. Ferris, the ESL teachers at this school were overqualified for their positions. In stark contrast to their counterparts at Eastside, where none of the ESL staff were bilingual, they had bilingual/bicultural endorsements on their teaching licenses. This enabled them to use both Spanish and English in their instruction. The staff at Central City seemed to have "found" a way to get some of the benefits of a bilingual setting in an ESL environment.

By using their ability to teach in both languages, the ESL teachers at Central City school helped students learn academic and social language skills. They also helped their students develop and deepen their understanding of academic topics in their native tongue. In effect, the students at the elementary level reaped the benefits of bilingual education in an ESL setting. This approach was consistent with some of the ideas espoused in the literature regarding Native Language Literacy and effective methods for teaching Spanish speaking ELLs. The test data and other data, as discussed in chapter four, suggest that their hybrid bilingual-ESL approach appeared to be more effective than the traditional ESL class.

The Central City elementary teachers attended initial training as they transitioned from the traditional ESL model to SIOP. They also had a person whose job included ensuring they received follow-up coaching, mentoring, and additional training. Other than district level seminars, the ESL staff at Eastside had no additional training. They did not have somebody like Gerry Lopez to guide, coach, or mentor them.

When I reflecting on the writings regarding staff development, as well as my own experiences as an educator, administrator, and student, I realized that the most effective staff development training is relevant, timely, and supported by leaders and an expert. Central City had all of these elements in place and working. Along with these elements they had somebody with whom they could readily consult then return to the classroom to use what they learned. Eastside had some training but did not have the support mechanism in place to sustain a coherent program like Central City.

According to the research contained in this work, BPAs play a critical role in the education of ELLs. They provide additional support for students in non-ESL classrooms in numerous ways. In chapter four I showed how important their role in the education of ELLs was when considering the amount of time a given English Language Learner spends with a person who can explain academic concepts and ideas to them in the language they understand. Bilingual Program Assistants extend the time ELLs have contact with an adult who can effectively communicate with them about curricular content.

Contact Time

This was a topic that emerged as I examined the data collected during my research. In comparing Eastside Community School with Central City School, I found that the buildings had significantly different amounts of time their ELLs spent with either a qualified teacher or BPA.

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The students at Central City had considerably more time with bilingual staff than their counterparts at Eastside.

According to the literature, the amount of time that a student spends with an educator who can help them understand what they are being taught is crucial to determining how well they do in school. The BPAs at Eastside had their duties divided between supporting adults and students. The BPAs at Central City were used exclusively in the classrooms. Assuming other factors are equal, and comparing the differences in standardized test scores and growth, the evidence of this research suggests students with more adult contact time fare better than those who have less.

Classroom Expectations and Practices

Two factors that really seemed to separate Central City and Eastside schools were how the students were expected to act and what they accomplished in their classes. Issues like getting classes started, participating in activities, and completion of assigned work were some of the critical things where noticeable differences occurred. The writings of authors like Marzano (1996), Simons and Connelly (2000) and the actions of the teachers at Central City, indicate that successful classrooms are well managed places where adults have high expectations of students. More importantly, the adults not only have the high expectations, they do things to ensure the students are able to meet them.

In addition to these writers, others like Hulley and Dier (2009) and DuFour, DuFour, Eaker and Karhanek (2010), while discussing characteristics of effective schools, contend that high expectations are vital to a school being effective. The staff of Central City School demonstrated, through their frequent staff development training, classroom practices, and procedures for activities like transitioning from classroom to classroom, that they had high expectations for staff

and students. Through their actions and words, the staff exhibited continuity between what they espoused and what they did. This level of continuity could not be maintained without a strong commitment to the vision and mission of the school.

Commitment

The literature I read did not quantify or qualify what the commitment should be or how much a school should have to be effective. The authors who address leadership, effective schools, and ESL education seemed to agree that commitment was a vital part of being successful in any of these areas. Whether the topic was adopting a new teaching method, espousing the ideas contained in a mission statement, or getting parents more involved with school activities, the leaders and staff had to psychologically and physically focus their energy and effort toward accomplishing their goals and realizing their vision. When reflecting on what I observed and heard at Central City School, I would say they were committed.

Central City school experienced a dramatic shift when the clientele changed faster than the school's ability to effectively teach them. According to Mr. Alvarez, Central City experienced a dramatic change in their student population. They went from being predominantly white, to being fifty percent Latino over a period of five years. As the cultural and racial composition of the students changed, so did the socioeconomic demographics of the building. The student population went from being primarily middle-class with very few students receiving government assistance, to almost eighty percent getting Free or Reduced Price Lunch.

Within a relatively short amount of time the leaders of the school realized they needed to make changes if they were to be successful. They realized they needed to develop or adopt a more effective instructional model. Mr. Alvarez and the staff also recognized that they would need a lot of staff development to help them be successful at implementing their new methods.

At the time I collected data for this study, approximately fifty percent of the students who attended Central City school were Latino. The ELLs comprised forty-four percent of the student body at Central City school. Obviously, with a large percentage of the population learning English and academic content at the same time, the staff needed to change how they educated students if they were to remain an effective school.

The leaders and staff of this school committed to the idea that through training and sticking to their path they could achieve better results with their students. They also embraced some of Latino cultural aspects to help families and students feel welcomed at the school. This also showed they that they were valued as well.

The literature on effective schools also addresses the willingness of a school staff to persevere in the face of adversity or conflict, this staff did some of that. Watching their student population change in a relatively short amount of time meant drastic changes in the way they did business. The teachers, students, parents, and other staff had to learn new ways of doing things to be successful. They had to embrace the unknown and move forward.

With the ELLs, the staff and leadership used widely accepted, researched based methods for achieving success. They often worked well before, during, and long after the regular school day to bring well-planned, meaningful, and engaging lessons to their students. These teachers supported their students outside of the usual classroom setting. When the situation demanded it, they all worked to keep their students at the school and in their classroom when the family moved. However, these were not the only places where commitment was demonstrated.

As the Latino families brought their children to Central City School, the staff experienced many changes. Instead of rejecting or marginalizing these students, they committed to adapting to their changing environment. They embraced aspects of Latino culture in their school lessons

and activities that included celebrations. The staff invited parents to participate in school activities despite language barriers. The administrative staff used a variety of communications in both Spanish and English in order to get their messages to parents. All of these things took a commitment on their part to make sure the families of the Spanish speaking students became a part of the Central City School community.

From the principal to the teachers, this staff demonstrated that they were committed to providing a high quality educational experience to their students and families. Their decision to embrace the SIOP model, and take the accompanying training sessions, showed they recognized a need to change their methods. These sessions were also accompanied by a rare, but vital component via Geraldo Lopez and his on-site mentorship and coaching of the teachers. Through his work, the ideas and concepts covered in the SIOP training were kept at the forefront of curricular and teaching conversations. This focus on a research based, field tested method helped them provide the education experience they desired, but it was accompanied by other factors that demonstrated their commitment. Put another way, they remained committed to their reform effort and the students and families of their school.

The reason this is important is that through their commitment they realized growth for the students and staff of Central City School. The growth did not come without sacrifice for the teachers and staff. They gave a lot of their time for training to learn new methods and practices and depart from their old ways of teaching. Their commitment also indicated that they were willing to keep going despite challenges they faced with implementing and sustaining SIOP.

In addition to the usual staff development, all staff participated in SIOP training to support their efforts in the classroom. They also discussed their teaching methods, practices, and curricular issues with each other so that their practices were consistent and current. The effort

devoted to coordinating and participating in the staff development, combined with collaborating on the curriculum, exceeded what many similarly configured schools did.

In chapter four I addressed how the staff at Central City School made personal sacrifices, in terms of time and resources, to help their students. The ESL teachers I interviewed and observed repeatedly demonstrated their willingness to provide a rich educational experience for their students through their purchases and use of items that they brought to supplement what was provided in the school. These teachers willingly helped students even when it meant they had to work during part of their lunch, or after school. These same teachers were frequently part of the crowd whose cars would be in the parking lot early in the morning, well before the students came to school. However, their dedication did not stop with the students and each other, they extended their reach to parents and families as well.

Realizing the connection between effective schools and student homes, the principal, teachers, and support staff committed to maintaining positive connections with their students' and families. Through activities and actions that kept parents informed of school events and expectations, the staff communicated their ideas and showed the families of ELLs that they were welcomed as part of the school community.

VI

Implications

In this chapter I discuss Central City school in terms of its leadership, practices, and commitment to remaining an effective ESL school. I compare these concepts to what is discussed in the literature. Then, I conclude with a discussion of the possible implications the staff of Central City school's experiences may hold for this district, the state, and ESL education in this country.

Despite the number of factors that could have adversely affected their student's learning, the staff at Central City Community School made strides where others did not. The success they enjoyed was not mind-blowing, logic defying, just-short-of-divine-intervention achievement. As a matter of fact, when they began, their standardized test scores looked similar to Eastside Community School, a place cited as a failing school by the Center City District.

Despite having similar demographics and ELLs with similar issues as Eastside, Central City made progress with their students because of some vital differences. The result of these differences in instruction and practice was that Central made gains over time that surpassed Eastside's. I think what this shows is a combination of key factors being brought together at the right time, with the right focus, and a group of dedicated leaders and workers who strived to ensure the students had an effective educational experience.

Leadership

The principal, district representative, and a few teachers, comprised the formal leadership of this school. They were the people who often brought ideas regarding curriculum, teaching strategies, and practices to the rest of the staff. They were also responsible for supervising the

implementation and maintenance of various educational reform efforts in their building. Despite having very different roles within the school, they worked well together.

The principal, Ron Alvarez, was a man who appeared driven to ensure the best educational experience for the students in his building. With memories of his introduction to the American educational system influencing him, he strived to do "whatever it takes", to make sure Spanish-speaking families felt welcomed and supported at Central City school. He did this by focusing his efforts on building positive relationships with the staff and students of his school.

Employing a human resource focused, visionary style of leadership, he developed a family-like connection between himself, the adults, and students in his school. He readily admitted that he was not the expert on things like test scores, specific reading and math test standards, as well as the daily paperwork he was required to do as a principal in this district. However, his source of pride came in knowing who his students were and what was going on with them in terms of their academic progress. His priorities insured that he focused on getting to know people on a personal level while developing the professional relationship.

He told me that he could not recite math standards verbatim but he could tell you the names of the students and staff as well as details about their lives. He knew details about the lives of his staff members as well as their teaching strengths. He also knew the people on his staff whose knowledge he could tap when he needed to know specifics about standards. This energetic leader, who connected with his staff on both a professional and personal level, cultivated an atmosphere where the staff was enthusiastic about their work and the things they accomplished. Their collective enthusiasm for teaching and learning could be described as infectious. However, despite his humble statements, Mr. Alvarez was familiar with many of the ideas espoused in the literature. I think part of his familiarity came from the staff development sessions he attended

with the teachers. The other part of his knowledge came from personal experience as an ELL in this country.

When comparing the leaders of Central City and Eastside, especially in terms of their familiarity with the ideas and concepts discussed in ESL education literature, there were significant differences. The principal, ESL teachers, and many of the mainstream teachers at Central City appeared to have a deeper working knowledge of the practices and ideas concerning educating ELLs. One of Central City's key strengths seemed to reside in their knowledge of the literature and the practices they employed.

Literature on Leadership

What I saw and heard at Central City coincided with the writings of Calderon and Slavin (2001), Krashen (1997), and Cummins(1979). Their word and practices reflected knowledge of child development, effective language instruction techniques for younger ELLs, and teaching students academic content while they simultaneously learn English. Their discussion of lesson plans were connected to research based ideas regarding child language acquisition, cultural considerations, learning styles, and the characteristics of individual children's academic progress.

One of the things I learned from this experience was that leaders who were well versed in the literature, approach educating ELLs from a different perspective than leaders who were not. Having realized, through research based writings and staff development, that ELLs have unique needs these educators employ a variety of effective strategies to help their students learn. The principal, ESL teachers, and monolingual teachers at Central City school realized and appreciated the challenges presented by their ELLs. With this well-versed leadership they maintained their collective focus on employing effective teaching strategies and methods.

Mr. Alvarez employed key symbolic aspects in his leadership style. As the administrative and instructional leader of his school he exuded a sense of higher purpose when talking about educating students. For him the mission for the ESL staff was more than teaching students to read, write and do arithmetic using the English language. He conveyed this to the staff through the things he said and did. He showed his staff that he invested the time and energy into doing some of the things that he expected them to do. This simple act showed the staff that he was there with them, learning and experiencing the same discomfort that comes with growth.

One of the things that I noticed about many of the staff members was that they had a passion for their work with students. Although Alvarez had not been in the school as long as many of the teachers, he admitted that the people he tried to get, when hiring staff or receiving teachers through the bidding process, were people willing to work the extra hours and participate in school-community activities in support of students and their families. When looking for employees, he sought people who were passionate about teaching and learning. In short, he and the teacher-leaders on his staff sought people who routinely worked beyond the normal duty day because they believed so much in what they were doing with students that monetary compensation was a secondary consideration.

Geraldo Lopez, a district ESL representative, saw things from a different perspective than Alvarez. His job required him to know the "ins" and "outs" of teaching methods and curricular reform. He was the "go to" guy when it came to discussing test standards, curricular needs, and teaching practices, for students in the ESL program. He, in many ways, was the main person Alvarez could depend on to help keep the staff on track regarding teaching methods and practices. He brought expertise concerning the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol to Central City School at a time when the rest of the district was adjusting to the influx of Spanish

speaking immigrants and having difficulty providing an effective and meaningful educational experience for them.

However, instead of approaching implementing this new teaching method by dictating to the staff, he used relationship building as the foundation of working with teachers. He found that by working together with teachers he developed a better sense of their strengths and areas where they needed help or support. By getting to know the staff as individuals, he fostered a sense of collegiality among the teachers. In turn, they supported each other and became more effective with the students.

Despite their common backgrounds and relationship-oriented leadership, Alvarez and Lopez had significant differences that complimented each other. Ron Alvarez freely focused on developing connections to his staff and students. He admitted that he depended on Lopez, as well as several teachers on the staff, to focus on the more technical areas. Lopez devoted his efforts to making sure teachers understood the various aspects of delivering curricular content via the SIOP model. The teachers, along with Lopez's help, ensured their instruction met or exceeded state-defined standards.

Through this multifaceted approach, where leaders were able to focus on their strengths, the leadership team at Central City School covered both the technical and personal aspects of supervision. By playing to their leadership strengths, Lopez addressed the legal and technical areas while Alvarez devoted his energy to keeping the passion and fervor alive in the staff members. Armed with a higher sense of purpose, the leaders and staff effectively worked to achieve educational gains with their ELL students in ways that other ESL programs did not.

Academic Focus

Despite the district and state's focus on standardized testing as a measure of a school's performance, the teachers here did not speak of testing as the primary reason for doing their work. They focused on ensuring the ELL students learned academic content while teaching them the English language. By ensuring the students were able to decode words, read with comprehension, converse fluently in English, and still learn academic content, they helped their them be successful at school and in the greater community.

With a renewed focus on standardized testing results, the Center City district leaders emphasized improving test scores in math and reading. Math and reading were the two academic areas emphasized in the standardized tests. This renewed focus was particularly evident in schools where the students did not score well on these tests. In such places it was common to hear teachers talk about academic skills relative to how often they appeared on the test. An outside observer would also hear teachers admonish students who are not doing well, or one who was misbehaving, to get back on task because they, "needed to know this for the test." Central City staff balanced preparing their students for the testing with teaching them what they needed to know in order to function in the greater society.

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Education and Training into Practice

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The teachers I observed and interviewed at Central City were effective professional educators. In addition to using a variety of approaches with their students every day, they devoted a lot of their time and energy to learning more about teaching techniques so that they had more to offer their students in the classroom. When they were not educating students, they were involved in staff development activities with the district, or Mr. Lopez.

The ESL teachers at Central City school appeared to consistently use the methods and practices they learned through staff development. They chose SIOP as their method and worked diligently to employ the strategies contained therein. Within these strategies they also carefully monitored each student's progress in a given subject area. If a student appeared to have difficulty with a certain topic or skill, the teacher adjusted how she delivered the instruction, or used a number of other resources, which often included other people, to help that child.

Bilingual Program Assistants provided instructional and non-instructional support for students and their families when needed. Their role as the "bridge" between the ELLs and their English only speaking peers and teachers, provided a deeper level of understanding the ideas and concepts addressed in their academic instruction. The BPAs role in helping the ELLs transition to the mainstream appears to be a very important factor regarding the success of these students. The importance of their role is second only to the teacher's.

During interviews I discovered that most of the teachers at Central City school were involved in decision making roles. Every teacher was required to be a member of a decision-making committee. These committees provided numerous leadership opportunities for those who wished to lead or contribute. With these opportunities came the people who planned and organized, special events, teacher training, and peer coaching. Again, this was another demonstration of their commitment to the children, families, and staff of Central City school. The teachers in this school showed their connection to what they did inside their rooms with events and factors outside of their rooms.

They also exhibited leadership through the things they did inside their classrooms. As teachers they were obviously "the leaders" in their rooms. Where they lead, among their peers, was that they regularly implemented new methods or practices in their rooms that were discussed

in staff development sessions, committee meetings, or recently attended seminars. They also

shared this information with their peers and paraprofessional staff through informal discussion,

or formal coaching and mentoring. If given the opportunity to select somebody who

demonstrated these characteristics, I would choose teachers like them for the school I lead or as a

teacher for my own children.

Parents as Partners

Through their work and accompanying statements, the Central City school staff appeared to

place a high value on certain actions and ideas. One idea they valued was establishing and

maintaining positive relationships with their students' parents. They attracted parents to the

school through a number of formal and informal venues that embraced their language and

culture..

A person visiting Central City could see parents participating at many different levels within

the school. In short, the parents were encouraged and included as part of the school "family".

Their presence was felt, directly or indirectly, throughout the school. I was especially impressed

with the fact that the parents who participated, Spanish and English speaking, helped where they

could.

Despite barriers to their involvement like language, culture, racial, economic, and level of

education, Latino parents participated as partners. The Central City school parent liaison,

principal and staff strived to make the parents feel welcomed. They did what they could to

ensure parents knew they could participate in events and activities or be members of various

committees. The concerted effort to include Spanish speaking parents in various roles within the

school meant they were represented and had a voice as an equal partner in school affairs. Despite

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these barriers, they sat at the figurative table as decision makers instead of just being on the receiving end of decisions which affected their children.

Focus on students

The student progress review meetings that the principal and staff held demonstrated how much they valued ensuring that they provided an appropriate education to all of their students. By holding these meetings with the principal they added a higher level of accountability than I have seen in other schools. At Eastside these meetings were often held without the principal being present or aware of who was discussed. With the leadership of the principal, the Central City staff appeared to place a high value on accomplishing the things they said they would do. One of these priorities was keeping abreast of current teaching practices.

The teachers I interviewed valued staff development. They participated in many staff development sessions as part of their personal growth. The ESL teachers really demonstrated this sentiment. Their licenses with bilingual endorsements enabled them to provide ESL services and Native Language Literacy services to their students. They had the advantage of working with students, at least the ones who stayed long enough, from their primary grades through middle school. For this reason, I submit that this staff really valued the attitude of "going above and beyond" the normal expectations for the student's.

More than a Job

When I asked some of the teachers about their jobs at Central City, their responses revealed more than their methods, practices, and procedures. Like the parent liaison, the teachers I interviewed and observed demonstrated the desire to give whatever they had for the children's benefit. In addition to being well versed in the research based teaching methods and mandated education standards, the teachers regularly talked about developing relationships with their

students' families as part of their job. These teachers readily and regularly discussed how they used multiple teaching strategies to help students understand the concepts of a given topic better. They apparently took pride in the personal success they enjoyed with the students.

I saw numerous examples of their commitment in how they approached problem solving with the students. They employed multiple teaching strategies to help students understand an idea or solve a problem. Several times I noticed teachers meeting with students after class or after school to help them understand an idea or concept discussed in class. The classroom was just one place where these teachers worked to help improve the lives of their students.

Reflection

In reflecting on what I learned from this experience, I thought about their choice of teaching methods, curriculum, concepts of leadership, and parental involvement. I mostly thought about how these ideas and concepts were brought together and put into action. I wondered about the forces that kept this staff focused on doing what they believed was right for their students. Then I realized that what I was thinking about were choices and the will to do them. Robert Pirsig (1974) summarizes these thoughts when he wrote, "My personal feeling is that this is how any further improvement of the world will be done: by individuals making Quality decisions and that's all."

In his book, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance (1974), Pirsig uses this term to express his impression of one of our country's sociological deficiencies. Pirsig's opinion is that we lack quality in our leadership and among too many individuals. Pirsig asserts that quality is something we seek as a means of improving our condition or situation. It is how we rise above mediocrity and find something that pleases us; gives us a reason for continuing the action or task;

and of which we can be proud. He continues by pointing out the affect of quality on those around us.

> And not only the job and him, but others too because the Quality tends to fan out like waves. The Quality job he didn't think anyone was going to see is seen, and the person who sees it feels a little better because of it, and is likely to pass that feeling on to others, and in that way the Quality tends to keep on going (p.323).

Pirsig (1974) also argues that we, as a country, have long had this ability to make Quality decisions, as a natural resource, but that we squandered it. In his discussion he points out that as a nation we must get back to individuals who make Quality decisions and have the gumption to carry them out. He also states that we need a "return to the rebuilding of this American resource...individual worth. We do need a return to individual integrity, self-reliance and old-fashioned gumption"(p. 323) . In summary, I think Pirsig argues that intelligent, grounded people must make good, sound decisions and have the will or "gumption" to carry them out.

Gumption

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines gumption as boldness of enterprise, initiative or aggressiveness, guts, spunk, and common sense"(p. 323). If there is one thing that I can say I learned in this experience is the staff of Central City had gumption. Their actions and statements showed a strong sense of good judgment combined with aggressive determination to successfully implement the systemic changes necessary to help their students.

At the heart of what happened at Central City School were the choices people made. I think one of the essential elements here is that they created an environment where quality decisions were made on a regular basis. This sense of quality permeates the actions of Central City School staff.

Examples of this staff's gumption and quality decisions were seen in how the principal, district liaison, and teacher leaders kept the staff focused on students. They did more than mention or reiterate ideas such as providing educational support to children, reviewing student academic needs, contacting and involving parents in school activities, they did these things as part of their jobs. It was not surprising to see them doing many of these activities outside of their normal working hours. Put simply, they said what they were going to do, discussed it, reflected on it, then did it. When I think about it, these are the elements I would want to see in a school where I was the principal or where my children attended.

Quality

One of the essential points of this paper was to find those phenomena that distinguished this school from other similarly configured buildings in this district. Even more to the point, I wanted to know why the children at this school seemed to perform better on standardized tests than many of their ELL peers at the school where I worked. As I sought answers regarding pedagogy, assessment, teaching practices, administrative procedures and a host of other things, I found I had more questions to ask.

I would like to say something like, "All they did were these twenty things and that lead to super-high academic performance." I will not do that because what I discovered cannot be put into a simple recipe-like solution for others to follow. However, I think that a group of people wishing to duplicate the successes of Central City school can implement the tangible pieces realizing that without the intangible, their results may be significantly different.

When reflecting on this experience I was impressed by how much the staff seemed to care about the students and their families. This was evident from the staff who greeted students, parents, and visitors and appeared to be friendly and helpful. They seemed to exhibit a genuine concern for the needs of the children and their parents-no matter the issue. During interviews I heard teachers often speak of the deeds they did for families that were outside the normal purview of a school, as if they were just part of their jobs. I walked away from this building thinking, "If I were a Central City school parent, I'd send my children here because these people seem to care about my child and my needs."

One example of their caring that I recall was how much energy they put into keeping a child from relocating to another school within the district. This single act stands out because it said to the child and the parents, "We want you to stay here." I imagine that nothing touches the heart of parents more, especially displaced immigrants, than when somebody makes an effort to keep them, rather than send them away. We also have to realize there are other reasons for the school staff to keep the students at their school. However, in the end, the staff and administration did what they thought was best for the benefit of the children.

Another example of their commitment was demonstrated by the parent liaison at Central City school. Despite the fact that she did not speak Spanish, she spent a lot of time working with Spanish-speaking parents to plan events for the school, she also helped families find resources in their community for transportation, housing, financial assistance, and health related issues. She worked with Latino parents to help cross the language barrier by having them talk with other parents about upcoming events at the school. Through this network of English and Spanish speaking volunteers she conveyed vital information to all of the parents. This network was especially effective when she needed parents to help with events like, school information night,

the school carnival, parent and teacher conferences, as well as distributing information about summer school.

At the heart of all they did was a focus on how their actions benefitted the students. During his interview, the principal frequently used phrases that focused attention on how a certain idea or practice would benefit the students. This language seemed to permeate the speech of the ESL teachers I interviewed as well. Whether that was a function of the principal's leadership or the teacher's disposition could be argued either way. I think their actions supported their words.

If conversation with school officials and observation of teachers were not sufficient evidence to convince a visitor that the Central City school staff cared about students, the climate surely was. The way that staff and students greeted each other and visitors with smiles and friendly gestures as they moved through the hallways, gave the building a welcoming yet purposeful feel. Through displays of student work and achievement in the halls and display cases, signs in both English and Spanish, and murals depicting children of different races and cultures working together, I could see that it was, as the principal often put it, "about the kids."

From the Outside Looking in

As an observer I saw this school's leadership as a community of administrators, staff, and parents who were the primary representatives of the school. The principal, lead teachers, and others who demonstrated leadership in the school, were the vanguard of the school's mission and represented, in essence, its culture. As an outside observer I was impressed by the pervasive nature of their school culture.

As a parent I also prefer teachers who include me in the process of educating my child. I appreciate a teacher who keeps me informed of my child's progress, and works with me to develop solutions to problems should they arise. I also think about this from an administrative perspective as well.

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Many times, in my role as a school administrator, I received phone calls from angry parents who said they did not know their child was actually failing a class until the midterm or progress report arrived in the mail. Without getting into the merit of the parent's argument, I often felt that many teachers did not communicate with parents outside of the scheduled conferences, open houses, or special events. I mention this important characteristic because the staff at Central City school communicated well and often.

The principal and teachers at Central City said they maintained regular and frequent contact with the parents via paper and electronic methods. After seeing their website, flyers, newsletters, posters, and hearing the office staff and teachers making phone calls to parents, I am confident that they communicated as often as they said. The written communiqués were usually done in English and Spanish and covered general topics, announcements, and children's progress reports. Of course, frequent communication affects the impression parents have of your school as well as what they convey to others.

Parents can help affect the climate of a school by the impressions of the school that they convey to their children. In other words, if parents are not pleased with the school, they convey that to the children and anybody else who cares to listen. The children, realizing their parents have little respect for the institution or staff, may return to school with less-than-ideal learning habits and attitudes. They may discourage other parents from sending their children to the school as well. Mr. Alvarez highlighted the impact of their frequent, positive communication with parents and community when he said,

> The program's been here long enough so the parents who send their kids, Latino families, know they are getting a pretty decent shot. I think it just been years of having family nights, conferences, have the ELL programs as a spotlight, word out in the street, that kind of thing,

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I just think that after a while things just kind of snowballed.

His statement further supports the idea that when parents convey to their children, and other adults, that the school is a good place for them to go, and that they support the staff in their efforts to educate children, the students are more likely to attend school with a more positive experience. One of benefits of this informal communication is that other parents are likely to send their children to the school too. Central City had an unofficial "waiting list" of students trying to get in. Parent impressions affect other areas as well.

Another thing that Central City school did well was maintain a balance of its various language, cultural, and socioeconomic groups. Speaking bluntly, the middle class groups of White and Black people did not leave en masse when the Spanish speakers arrived. They continued sending their children to the school even though they could have "voted with their feet." As a parent and educator I see two implications here

The staff of Central City school managed their public relations well. They had a positive message to send and they did it through their words and actions. The messages were internalized by parents and students who, in turn, told others the good things about their school. This message, which was often conveyed in general terms at local shops, community gatherings, and school-related activities, helped maintain the impression that Central City was a "good school."

Implications

After examining this school within the framework of the literature and my data, and realizing how special it was when compared to similarly configured schools in the same district, I began to think of issues of transference and reproducibility. When addressing the basic question of transference, I thought of it in terms of what could be implemented immediately and what

elements would require several pre-existing conditions in order to flourish at a given site. In thinking of these factors I think that Central City School was a special site whose characteristics can be replicated.

Difficult but Possible

After considering the attributes that might be relatively easy to replicate, I thought it would only be fair to examine those areas that were considerably more difficult. These characteristics are not impossible to replicate, they just constitute the intangible aspects of an organization. As such, their influence is felt or experienced but not readily captured on a checklist as something you can dictate. An example of this would be the concept of care. A leader cannot simply tell a staff to demonstrate a higher level of care then measure it via a survey or chart its progress on a graph.

Caring is something we all feel to one degree or another. The staff at Central City school demonstrated that they cared via the things they said and did for their students and families. This level of caring for others would rely heavily on the individuals hired to a particular staff. To a certain degree this factor would be influenced by hiring decisions. However, even the most thorough hiring process can not determine the level of care employees show each other and their clients or customers. In short, assembling a staff that showed this much care to their students takes careful screening for people who have demonstrated this attribute, time, and luck.

Another area, closely related to the idea of care, is personal experiences. One of the things that drove Mr. Alvarez to seek the excellence for ELLs was his own experiences as a Spanish speaking immigrant to this country. He kept this memory fresh in his mind as he thought about how the decisions the adults made affected the students. He did this from the perspective of a person who was one of those students.

In my experiences as a school administrator, I have been in buildings with a wide variety of cultures. The culture of Central City school is one where giving for the sake of children and families is the norm. This includes a staff where the attitude of giving one's time and energy, beyond contractual limitations, is considered part of the job.

Defying the Odds

A person researching data on this school would find that the staff did their job amid a mixture of races, cultures, languages, and socioeconomic factors. The staff considered all of these factors when planning instruction, curriculum, and activities. Although these elements should not be construed as negative, they were part of what made working at this building a challenge.

This school experienced a significant change in its student population. Over fifteen years ago the majority of the students in this building were white, middle-class, English speaking students with college educated parents. Today, more than half of the students are non-white, their parents have less than a college education, and often do not exhibit or share middle-class values. Of this group, most are Latino with varying degrees of English speaking proficiency. When we stop to think about what statistics regarding impoverished, non-English speaking students reveal, this school should be struggling to get their children educated. We could even say that they would be doing well to teach the students basic English. However, achieving the minimum standard is not what they do.

The staff stands apart from many of their peers in this district because they achieved what others did not. Despite all of the factors stacked against their success, the Central City staff teaches their students the language skills they need. The students prove this through their academic performance, social interactions, and standardized test scores. I must admit that their

test scores were not phenomenal by themselves, but they reflected the results of caring, hard work, perseverance, and academic progress. Their results reflected the effort of teachers and other service providers to work with children who, in some cases, had not been in a in their native country or the United States for several months. Along with the students who had been in school they worked to improve their academic and social language skills. However, their performance on classroom assessments and tests are only one indicator of their success.

As their language skills improved, their ability to interact with others became evident. At this school, many of the Latino students participated in the school band, sports, and other extracurricular activities. Since the band director and most of the other teachers did not speak Spanish, the students interacted with others using English well enough to be comfortable participating in these activities. I fond this refreshing because I have seen schools where the only sport the Latino boys would play is soccer, and very few of the girls participated in any athletic activities. I think, as the language barrier dropped, the enthusiasm to try new things increased.

In order to appreciate what the Central City teachers achieved with these students, I submit that we need to adopt a more comprehensive view of success. For the ELL students we should look at their progress in terms of each child's personal growth, as measured by changes in their abilities to communicate in English. The body of research-based literature supports approaches that realize various stages of language development and cognitive abilities. Taking these factors into consideration I think the more comprehensive view is warranted.

If I Could Build it

If I ever have the opportunity to implement or shape an ESL program within an urban setting, I would emulate much of what I learned at Central City. I would get to know the staff, students,

and families through gathering information and talking with people. Establishing positive links with the surrounding community and parents would be one of my top priorities.

In getting to know the people of the building I would examine the gathered information for evidence of their educational experiences, parental impressions of the school, staff impressions of the students and their families, and the surrounding community's connection with the school. Gathering this information would give me insight to the areas I would have to address when the school year began. This insight, I hope, would provide the basis of developing positive relationships between parents, the surrounding community, and school staff. The relationship building would, of course, be ongoing with the intent to create long-lasting bonds that would even transcend the length of time a student attended our school. Of course, this feel-good, touchy feely characteristic must be supported by ideas of high academic performance, a clearly defined path to achieve our goals, and the will to do what is necessary to accomplish them.

My academic focus would be oriented on using research-based methods and practices that were considered to be the most effective for the ELL population we served. Employing these practices would be tempered by an approach that would emphasize evaluating, refining, and using what works. I would also want to ensure that we gave sufficient time for the reform to work, like Central City school, before switching to something else. Like Central City School we would closely, and frequently, examine student progress data to determine what working for them. Then, based on that data, the appropriate staff would work to get them what they needed to enhance their academic success.

In reflecting on personal and professional experience I realize that the areas on which a group of people focus, tends to draw the most resources in terms of time, energy, and financial considerations. With this said, I find out where the staff's current focus is placed and either

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enhance it or change it. The focus areas I would propose, and work diligently to solidify are, academic achievement in all content areas for all students, monitoring and servicing student needs as quickly as possible, maintaining frequent contact with parents via multiple information sources, recognition of student and staff achievement, and facilitate ongoing staff development.

This does not mean other important areas like behavior management, school policies and procedures, parent participation, and a host of other things that make schools what they are, would be over looked. These other areas would not be the primary focal points for our resources. They would be addressed within the context of effective educational practices and expectations.

By being aware of the close connection between what we do and how well the students perform, we would maintain our efforts on doing what helped students learn what we were teaching. Of course, this would take a conscious and concerted effort from the staff and administrative leaders. I would have a staff willing to regularly reflect on their practices, make changes or keep what was working, then have the determination and fortitude to take the actions necessary to ensure their collective success.

Probably the most difficult thing to do in this grand scheme is to find or develop people able to make quality decisions and have the gumption to carry them out. Ultimately, the people chosen or melded by the influence of positive role modeling and mentoring by other teachers and staff members, will affect how successful a school will be. The staff member's dedication to the academic success of the students, as measured by things like evaluation and assessments, parent input and participation, impressions of the school within the surrounding community, will be determined by the things they say and do. If I, an administrator who is familiar with effective methods and practices, can hire or be sent like-minded people who are willing to make

thoughtful decisions and follow them with deliberate and bold action, I am confident that we will achieve the success with our students that others only dream about.

An Aside

I also think the evidence show that something changed at Eastside. Having seen this data I was compelled to call the current principal of Eastside and ask what they were doing to get the gains with their ELLs. She told me that in 2006, after several lengthy meetings with some of the district leaders, she and her staff began to implement the SIOP. She confessed that it was not easy but they now see success with it and are planning to continue using it.

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