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**LOOKING THROUGH A STRANGER'S WINDOW:
COTEACHING IN THE ESL CLASSROOM**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education
Moravian College
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

2016

ABSTRACT

Over the course of twelve weeks, I investigated the observed behaviors and reported experiences of dual language English learning students when implementing ESL strategies in a co-teaching classroom. As a researcher, I investigated how using the native language of children can bridge their current understanding into learning another language, in this case English. I investigated how the dual language model set within the school affects the student participants within the classroom, I as the researcher experienced teaching both Spanish and English, and how it affected the output of the student participants. The usage of the student participants' native language was used in conjunction with their second language learning of English to allow them the opportunity to make connections between both languages. Participants who needed to explain something and could not do so in English were able to use their native language, and/or draw pictures, use picture dictionaries, or have another participant help them to express their idea or concern. The researcher also evaluated the effects of collaborative co-teaching and its effects on the students and teachers. With the implementation of ESL strategies our students showed growth in reading and were much more comfortable learning and speaking the English language. In a co-taught

class, our students learned how to be patient with us and each other. They learned valuable problem solving skills and imitated our collaboration. Students became confident and felt more willing to learn.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank God for his constant blessings and for the opportunity to share my story with you. A special thank you to my family. Mom, you always encouraged me to keep going and strive to be the best I could be. You taught me to never give up on my goal. My dad, the man who taught me how to rotate tires, change oil, and ax down trees: you taught me to take hold of life and do things for myself. You and mom helped foster independence in me and for that I am grateful. To my sister Kathy, husband Cosmo, and their precious triplets, Arianna, Luca, and Giuliana: you all taught me that there is never a dull moment to be had. To my brother Oscar, for being a listening ear, and an amazing co-pilot on my journeys and adventures. To my sister Raiza for going against the currents and doing what makes you happy. To her lovely daughters, the children I am so blessed to call my nieces, Laila and Leilany. You fill my heart with so much joy each and every day.

Appreciation always to my friends who without a doubt are the family I chose to have in this life. To Donnell, a man who I highly respect, for believing in me even when I didn't believe in myself: you taught me that the greatest lessons in life we learn through experiences and not solely through textbooks. You taught me that it's okay to relax, breathe, and just let go which oftentimes seemed impossible. Sometimes it's okay to be imperfect as it enhances and improves our

character. When life was moving fast, you reminded me that it was okay to slow down and put myself first. You reminded me to sleep plenty, eat well, and take care of me, because an unhealthy version of me wouldn't be any good to anyone else either. Thank you always for being a listening ear, reminding me to smile always and for being a symbol of courage. To Manny, my technology guru for a friend: thanks for always taking my devices back to factory settings and saving my papers when my laptop decided to configure updates in the last ten minutes before they were due. Thank you for just putting up with me. To Sacha, Amanda, and the ladies at work, who have shown me to appreciate differences and remind me daily why I do action research. We do action research to be better at what we do for the benefit of our kids. You ladies were the ones who encouraged me daily to keep going and for that I am very grateful. You all taught me that we get back what we put into the world. If we put out positivity it ripples back to us. You helped me keep my smile bright at all costs. To Kelly and Andy, who kept me laughing and smiling throughout the writing process: I was grateful to have worked with you both, and for your uplifting texts and comic relief. It is my fundamental belief that if you haven't laughed at least once in a day, it has been a day wasted.

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RESEARCHER STANCE

Learning a language is something exciting and gratifying. I received great joy in learning new languages and learning about the cultures of different people and customs. I have had many experiences both personally and as an educator that have molded me to be the woman that I am today. I am a young teacher in an urban school in a suburban city. I taught at a school that focused on the instruction of two languages. I am Latina and speak three languages. I grew up in the city that I now teach in. It is with this in mind that I begin this story.

“Avanza Chuly, que tu papá tiene que mandarle esa carta a tu hermana. Escribela bien.”

This is a line I often times remember being said to me. “Hurry Chuly (my childhood nickname of which I am so proud, and which stems from the word “*chula*” referring to being cute or pretty), your dad has to send that letter out to your sister. Make sure you write it well.” I would frantically try to hurry and make sure all my sounds were right and that my writing made sense. I would stop, rewrite and erase. My dad would sit next to me at the kitchen table and proofread what I had written and gently correct my mistakes. It was with this guidance that I learned the art of writing. I had to make my writing perfect for my half-sister to read in Puerto Rico. She didn’t know how to speak English so I needed to write in Spanish for her. This process that I found at times tedious yet exciting was

something I never envisioned being so important to the woman I am today. I spoke English with my siblings— who already were in school—and Spanish with my parents. My dad spoke only Spanish and my mom spoke both.

At the time I lived in a home that was rented through public housing, in an urban neighborhood. I remember waking up to *merengue* and *salsa* music playing on loud speakers at the *bodega* behind my house. My great uncle owned it and he believed you should enjoy life every day, and his music was his reflection of that. We didn't have a lot of money but never really knew that except when Christmas came around. My mother would ask us all what we wanted and told us to make a list of three things we really wanted. There were four of us and I was the youngest. The eldest was off at college and therefore I don't have many memories with her in my childhood. I did have my brother and my sister with me, and they would tell me that I needed to make sure I didn't ask for things that were too expensive. I live appreciative of my parents for raising me so well, and without the need to feel the burden of their economic hardships. I thought we had money because at our house we always had nice clothes (usually hand-me-downs) and food.

We went to church which was in Spanish. Many of my fondest memories happened there. On the way to church I would grab my mother's perfume bottles and try to read every French word on them to show I knew how to read. My love

of reading was consistent. During bible school I was always asked to read because I read in Spanish and anything less was unacceptable. I had homework assignments that I would take home to work on and bring back proudly to present. I could participate with little to no effort. At school I spoke English and in first grade we had a new student come from Nicaragua. She only spoke Spanish and it was my job to translate for her and to be the interpreter. During recess I would teach her general English vocabulary to help her transition to the United States. In the grades to follow, I remember being reprimanded for speaking Spanish. I was told I wasn't allowed to speak Spanish in school. In school you only spoke English. My teachers were not tolerant of that, and therefore, I spoke only English. That was the rule.

It was time to enter middle school and I took up world language classes. I took French, German, and Spanish in an introductory course, before we had to choose one. My mother insisted I take French because I already knew Spanish and German for her was too harsh. My mother had taken a French course or two in school. I went through the public school system taking French courses until high school. I was the only person enrolled in French Honors which I did as an independent study. I did this with joy as my French professor was a native French speaker. She motivated me to take French classes in college.

In high school I went through a phase in which I decided not to go to college. It was then that my mother reiterated the fact that I needed to go and that it wasn't an option. My mother had started college but never finished, as starting her family got in the way. I needed to go, and therefore I decided to apply early decision at a school near home which happened to be the alma mater of my other two siblings. If I didn't make it in there I would never go to college. Somehow, I made it in and was surprised but didn't know what I was getting myself into. I went through several courses and discovered that French was still interesting to me. I eventually decided to major in it.

With this decision, I was forced to study abroad. I went home and had to face my father and tell him what was going to happen. As in any average Hispanic family, having your child leave your side is reason enough to panic. He panicked, and although I had my suitcase packed for a month he thought I was kidding. It wasn't until the day I moved the suitcase from my bedroom to the front door that he realized I was leaving. I said my goodbyes and off to Paris I went. I had been to Austria on a week-long trip in high school, but to leave for France for four months—it was scary. I had never been away for longer than a week. My transition was average. It took four days of touristic travel in Ireland before making it to Paris for it to finally sink in. Four months. I cried in a way I've never cried again because I was certain and had convinced myself that I would never see them again. Upon my arrival to my host family's home, I learned they spoke no

English. I then felt obligated to switch my brain completely. I changed my phone preferences to French. The first couple weeks resulted in headaches and frustration because I wanted to pick up everything in conversation but it was hard. I questioned myself then. What was I doing there? Was this even for me? It took those four months for me to grow up. I learned to be independent and embrace ideas I'd adopt and make my own. At a boutique before I came home, I had a salesman ask me what part of France I originated from. It was a highlight because, for the first time in my life, someone thought my French was up to par with that of a native speaker.

I graduated college with a bachelor's of arts in French with elementary education. I loved the elementary and primary level. I loved teaching them but I also loved languages. How perfect would it be to teach elementary students a world language? I made it my goal upon graduation to teach world languages to elementary students. It was then, while applying to jobs, which I stumbled across a school that focused on a 50/50 dual language model. I was hesitant to apply as it was a charter school. It was July and I was employed one week later. My assignment was to teach Spanish in first grade. At that moment I felt grateful that my parents taught me the importance of bilingualism.

I taught first grade for four years and then I was given the assignment of being the ESL teacher. Watching the freedom that the children have each day to

speak in whichever language they choose is exciting as it proves to be a step forward in society. This proves that society has shifted its mentality to believe that bilingualism doesn't serve as a threat but as a gift, helping to make each of us unique and culturally sensitive citizens. It is now okay for students to speak their native language and even encouraged. I encouraged parents to read with their children in whatever their native language was. The English is what we will focus on in school. What difference could I make in the lives of these kids? Could the fact that I am identified as Hispanic/Latino origin mean anything? Can the fact that I am certified in various language pedagogies affect the instruction my students receive? Will the experience I gained as a Spanish primary grade teacher affect how my students receive the information I present?

Along with my assignment as the ESL teacher, I was also told I would be co-teaching. Co-teaching is something that requires so much close planning and requires open communication with one's teammate. I have worked by myself and have occasionally conferenced with other teachers about how best to reach our students. My concern began to grow about whether or not I could maintain open communication with another adult and work around someone else's schedule on top of my already filled agenda. The National Education Association offers six steps to successful co-teaching. The first is to establish a rapport. (Marston, 2015) I began to take the time to get to know my colleague because for me I had to make a connection on a personal level in order to work well, with, and around

somebody. Then I learned that she and I are very similar in our views of education and our views of the kids. Coincidentally we both grew up in the same neighborhood and had a lot in common. The other five suggestions consist of getting to know each other's teaching style, know each other's strengths and weaknesses, review IEPs and goals, establish a plan of action as a team, and take risks in order to grow. It was through this that I learned how honest and how open about myself as an educator I need to be in order to best collaborate for the sake of our kids. My colleague was great at organization, and I was okay, but could always use improvement. Collaboration and an awareness of each other's strengths and weaknesses proved to be difficult, but when you can be honest and share that information it can really provide for enriching growing experiences.

Considering my ethnic background, how I learned languages, my teaching experiences, and that I was now co-teaching for the first time, these factors led me to my research question. What are the observed behaviors and reported experiences of dual language English learning students and dual language teachers when implementing ESL strategies in a co-teaching classroom? Perhaps through explicit vocabulary instruction students could make connections with their native language. Perhaps students may be able to identify better with me if they know where I am from. Perhaps if they knew that their teachers are both bilingual and worked together to teach them in an environment where it is safe to make mistakes and grow, they would at least try. Could the use of some words or

phrases in the student's native language allow them to grow and understand enough to acquire their new second language? Could the fact that those kids are the mirror image of my colleague and myself as children be a factor that changes how we as bilingual teachers instruct our students?

I personally believe that languages are best learned at a younger age. I also believe that being able to know multiple languages really opens the doors for you in an ever-changing world. It provides a window into the lives and cultures of others. It allows you to see where others are and their views on the world. Knowing a few languages allowed me to be a part of several worlds that were completely separate from each other, but allowed me to be the woman I am today. I believe that with guidance and explicit instruction students can learn a language. Practice and a reason to learn the language are strong factors that determine the drive of the learners. I needed to learn in order to communicate with family members. Some learn because they want to travel. Each student has their own reason but it serves as motivation to learn. Participating in conversation and collaborative groups allows students to practice what they are learning in new and interesting ways.

Co-teaching left a lasting impression on my students. I believe that our collaboration served as an example of teamwork for our students. It was my hope that students would identify with us and understand that we as teachers truly

wanted what is best for them. I believed that students would find their own reason to learn the English language. I believed that with the experiences I had, the instruction and planning done would have some impact. I believed that in some way, the students will be affected by us. I believed that the use of their native language, even sparingly, would help bridge their acquisition of English. I was open and eager to see what would happen and was prepared for challenges that could arise. I understood that I would probably re-evaluate my views and opinions accordingly, but above all, I understood that it would be perfectly acceptable and I would even welcome it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction:

“There is wide scientific consensus that bilingual infants develop two separate but connected linguistic systems during the first year of life. We now know that infants have the innate capacity to learn two languages from birth and that if the early dual language exposure is sufficient in quantity and quality, young children can successfully become fully proficient in both languages.” (Espinosa, 2013, p. 5)

Everything that a child hears, whether from the mother, her surroundings, or strategic practices used to introduce a fetus to language, is an early experience for language learning. Once a child is born she has been exposed to and has experienced something with language prior and it continues as a mother sings or reads to her child. (McElroy, 2013).

Bilingual and dual language education is an alternative form of education in which one can introduce children not only to their native English language, but also to other languages as well. Programs like these provide students with the opportunity to develop both languages simultaneously. Bilingualism is defined as the ability to speak two languages. As is noted by the United States Department of Education (2015) and The American Speech Language Hearing Association

(2016), the percentage of bilingual children in the U.S. has increased from previous years and may continue to increase in years to come.

“The percentage of ELL students in public schools increased between 2002-03 and 2012-13 in all but 11 states, with the largest percentage-point increase occurring in Kansas (4.9 percentage points) and the largest percentage-point decrease occurring in Arizona (9.6 percentage points)” (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2015). Their statistics alone show how the rise in ELL students has occurred in almost all states within ten years. Therefore, there is a larger population of students who are coming from diverse backgrounds and speaking languages other than English.

Dual Language Learning

“A bright spot in the area of bilingual education is the continued increase in the number of dual-language bilingual programs. These programs have had positive results for native English speakers and those learning English, as both groups become bilingual and bi-literate” (Freeman & Freeman, 2011, p. 57).

Students who are dual language learners are immersed in two languages fully. Through best practices based on research, students can learn both languages simultaneously. At dual language schools, the mission statements are geared towards preparing students to become active members of society and to embrace biculturalism and bilingualism. Dual language and bilingual programs are intended to support the student in the instruction in both languages to make

students proficient in all domains of language acquisition, to making them literate in both languages (Freeman & Freeman, 2011).

Dual language programs educate all children in two languages, especially English and another language. Over the past ten years, dual language programs have grown across the country and there are approximately 2,000 programs currently operating in the United States. In these classrooms, all the students experience what it is like to learn another language. Students are exposed to the benefits and challenges of learning another language at an early stage in their development. Students are exposed to socio-cultural integration amongst fellow peers. The goal is to promote bilingualism and biculturalism for all the students enrolled which they can carry on with them throughout their education (Espinosa, 2013).

Benefits of Bilingual and Multicultural Education

Multicultural education aims to educate students and make them conscientious and culturally sensitive individuals in an ever-changing world.

“We define multicultural education in a sociopolitical context as follows: multicultural education is a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that

students, their communities, and teachers reflect” (Nieto, 2010, p. 68) .

Nieto makes the argument that by having schools that provide a multicultural education, one will have students who cannot only reject different forms of discrimination but will also challenge it. Nieto and Espinosa both agree that dual language learning yields many benefits for the students for short term and for the long haul.

One could argue that dual language schools rob students of a thorough education because half of their day is being used to instruct them in another language. It could be argued that these students will fall behind in their core academic classes such as math and reading. One could make the claim that these students are struggling when examining norm- referenced test data (Nieto, 2010).

“In fact, the data from recent evaluations shows that a balanced dual language approach is an effective model for both DLL students and native English speakers. It is one of the few instructional approaches that can fully close the achievement gap for DLL students while not showing any adverse effects for non-DLL students. All students seem to benefit cognitively, academically, and culturally when they develop proficiency in more than one language as measured by standardized achievement testing in addition to positive reports from parents, teachers, and administrators.” (Espinosa, 2013, p. 15).

Impacts of Native Language on Second Language Acquisition

In a headstart in Los Angeles, California, Marc Goodrich, Christopher Lonigan, and JoAnn Farver conducted a study: *Do Early Literacy Skills in Children's First Language Promote Development of Skills in Their Second Language? An Experimental Evaluation of Transfer*. The researchers sought to examine whether or not students' first language (L1) has an impact on their second language (L2). The participants were Spanish-speaking children who were between the ages of four and five years old. The findings weren't what they had hoped for however; the findings did show that the better their foundation of print in L1 the better they were able to acquire their L2 (Goodrich, Lonigan, & Farver, 2013).

Through bilingual education students can acquire another language with the usage of their foundations in their first language. The study that Goodrich, Lonigan and Farver conducted suggested that the foundation of the concepts of print in students' native language facilitated and enhanced their second language acquisition of English. Many would argue that when students are learning English, everything should be fostered in English only. However "maintaining the home language appears to strengthen student's sense of self and to increase educational motivation among adolescents" (Gandara, 2015). When students learn a new language, the home language should continue to be developed to ensure the

child has a strong basis in at least one language. Over time, the language skills will transfer from L1 to L2. Through bilingual education students are not only learning foundational skills but are taught how these skills. Therefore, once students have a solid foundation in their first language, their second language is solidified through the skills they transfer from their first.

Language Pedagogy Strategies

The *National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)* promotes and educates individuals on the importance and the benefits of bilingual education. Stephen Krashen is a fundamental theorist and professor of education on language acquisition. In Krashen's *Monitor Theory: First-and Second- Language Acquisition Are Similar*, Krashen discusses five hypotheses:

1. *The acquisition-learning distinction*

Adults learn languages in different ways than children do when developing their first language; adults learn languages in a subconscious and conscious way. The subconscious is similar to how children learn but the conscious way is very different. Adults learn the rules of grammar in a very conscious manner that allows them to apply and produce what they've learned.

2. *The natural order hypothesis*

The learner acquires the grammatical constructs that follow predictable patterns and order that are learned and acquired in a natural way, as opposed to formal

education.

3. *The monitor hypothesis*

When the learner has consciously acquired the knowledge of rules, the learner uses this information to control and monitor the output of their second language. This *monitor* operates when enough time is given to focus on the form and the learner knows and understands the rule that is being applied. Acquisition is responsible for fluency of all utterances produced in the second language.

4. *The input hypothesis*

This hypothesis states that language can be acquired most when exposed to “*comprehensible input*” (Hadley, 2001, p. 61) of structures that are a little bit beyond the current level of competence. What makes the language comprehensible is the context and the background knowledge of the world and other cues.

5. *The affective filter hypothesis*

Language acquisition can occur under the most optimal conditions. If the learner is motivated and self-confident, and if his anxiety is low, greater language acquisition can be reached. Once a student is anxious, the affective filter is high, and the student is less likely to acquire the language.

Through these hypotheses, Krashen demonstrates that one can learn a language and one can acquire a language and yet those two ideas are not the same.

One can learn a language by consciously monitoring what is learned and making changes when necessary, whereas language acquisition would be a “subconscious” process. *The affective filter hypothesis* is an important element in language acquisition. Students should be free from anxiety to learn another language. When students are defensive or fearful of making mistakes, their self-esteem is lowered thereby inhibiting second language acquisition (Hadley, 2001).

ESL Teaching Strategies

ESL teaching strategies can be used within a classroom to benefit all students. (Reiss, 2012) Having a bilingual classroom is also beneficial to the students who would be learning a language other than that of their classroom. The quality of interactions between all who participate in this setting are improved. Everyone involved grows in some ways by becoming culturally sensitive to what is going on around them. A teacher who is aware of the importance of bilingual education and who has the fundamental pedagogy for teaching languages can provide high quality instruction for all students. (Espinosa, 2013) The same skills and strategies used to teach someone a new language can be used in any general education classroom and reap benefits. “Classroom teachers can help by using instructional strategies that increase the comprehensibility of the content they teach and by choosing assignment and assessment strategies that separate content language from English language knowledge” (Reiss, 2012, p. 3).

Jodi Reiss in *120 Content Strategies for English Language Learners: Teaching for Academic Success in Secondary School*, categorized different strategies based on their function in the classroom. The purpose of these strategies is to help students during classroom instruction and to get them to articulate and use the strategies in their own general education classrooms. There are various skills that can be used to effectively teach students. The consolidation of these strategies was necessary to coherently and effectively explain their significance within four categories.

The first category is related to the delivery of the lesson. Strategy #9: Use Think-Alouds and Modeling (p.50), #24: Slow Down! (p.70), #25: Enhance the Intonation of Your Words (p.71), #28: Simplify Your Sentence Structure (p.73). These strategies allow for students to listen to someone thinking aloud, and then follow this example to help themselves in a situation where they may feel confused. With this, students can hear someone clearly articulate in a manner that is simple and at a moderate pace (Espinosa, 2013).

In order to build a solid foundation for any lesson it is important to activate prior knowledge first. The second category is related to strategy #18: Spark Interest (p.61) because it can be used to grasp students' attention and tap into their prior knowledge. Once one has activated prior knowledge, there are very specific strategies to assist in presenting new material and teaching the lesson (Hadley,

2001).

The third category of strategies focuses on the visual supports used in the lesson and for the students' use to better their understanding of the content material. Strategy #33: Use Visuals and Graphics (p.76), #90: Use Diagrams, Maps, and Charts as Assignments (p.145), #92: Use Graphic Organizers as Assignments (p.147), and # 94: Use Graphic Organizers Before Written Work (p.154) are all examples of supports to ensure and reinforce student learning through classroom activities and assignments. When giving English Language Learners an assessment there are strategies and modifications one can use that allow students to show understanding. Strategy # 105: Grade Written Work with a Rubric (p. 171) allows students to see the guidelines in which they will be graded. Using specific content strategies for ELLs will allow these students to succeed in any classroom (Reiss, 2012) & (Gottlieb, 2006).

The fourth category of strategies have to do with providing students with adequate time. Strategy #50: Allow Extra Wait time (p.93) and # 84: Allot Extra Time (p. 139) are interrelated because during classroom instruction one needs to provide extra time for the student to formulate and answer. When providing work, teachers must give learners the opportunity to process the information so that they are able to complete the assignment successfully (Reiss, 2012)(Gottlieb, 2006).

Lack of Understanding and Flaws in Bilingual Education

Bilingual classrooms often times suffer because other teachers don't fully understand what it means to teach bilingually. Myths about dual language learning need to be evaluated (Espinosa, 2013). "Attacks on bilingual education and negative public opinion have undermined the efforts of schools and teachers trying to implement good bilingual programs" (Freeman & Freeman, 2011, p. 57). Teachers are often frustrated by the lack of understanding and knowledge about what it really means to have a bilingual classroom.

Co-teaching: What is it?

In addition to evaluating bilingual classrooms and dual language schools, one should also consider a classrooms that have co-teaching. The National Education Association (2015) has identified *6 Steps to Successful Co-Teaching*. The six steps are as follows:

1. Establish Rapport

It is important to know your colleague on both a working level and on a personal level.

1. Identify your teaching styles and use them to create a cohesive classroom.

When both people are informed of how each of them teaches, both

teachers can use what they know to combine styles into one classroom.

2. Discuss strengths and weaknesses.

By discussing strengths and weaknesses, it allows each teacher the opportunity to become aware of the other's attributes in order to collaboratively work together to improve and grow.

3. Discuss Individualized Education Plans and regular education goals.

By discussing goals upfront, both teachers have a basic understanding of what they would like to accomplish with their students.

4. Formulate a plan of action and act as a unified team.

When teachers come together as co-teachers they commit to scheduling common planning time and establishing grading, classroom behavior plans, classroom procedures and consequences collaboratively. This means that together they must consolidate ideas they both can agree on so that they remain consistent.

5. Take risks and grow!

Co-teaching requires both teachers to depend on each other and work collaboratively. Both teachers accept to take risks and grow together. This opportunity allows teachers to learn from each other in a way that is natural. The feedback they provide to one another is authentic and intended to foster mutual professional growth (Marston, 2015).

What is co-teaching? A classroom that is co-taught is a classroom where two individuals are responsible for providing instruction to a group of students. A typical co-taught classroom is one in which the general education classroom teacher and a special education teacher join to teach collaboratively in a mainstream classroom. These teachers work to help their students succeed. It is through their efforts that the classroom is run more efficiently (Marston, 2015). One could argue that there is no need to have two adults within the same classroom teaching the students when one teacher could do just that. The teachers involved in a co-taught classroom typically volunteer to work collaboratively. However, let us consider how important it is to differentiate instruction. Co-teaching allows for honest and earnest conversations to happen between both teachers about what they are doing in the classroom and how to improve their practice. It allows for smaller group instruction that is tailored to fit the needs of the students. One must constantly seek better ways to reach a child's *zone of proximal development*. It also gives the students an additional resource for help and guidance in the room (Marston, 2015). The argument about having two people do what one could do discounts the notion of how difficult it really is to co-teach.

Vygotsky would describe the role of the teacher to be that of a “mediator”. The teacher must work in children’s zone of proximal development to reach them where they are (Freeman & Freeman, 2011). Having two teachers in the room

helps to ensure that the needs of each child are being met. One could argue that the presence of two people facilitates this but is that always the case? Two teachers working together, who have different backgrounds and different views on education and children, can present challenges for both. Differences in teaching styles, habits and preferences can be difficult to manage. In order to have a successful teaching experience in which the students benefit, no small amount of preplanning is required. Teachers have to first sit down and get to know each other on a personal level. Questions to address include: What are common interests and common dislikes? What are each person's foundational views of teaching, and how can they best mesh their ideas? Teachers then must reserve a common planning time to ensure that they are on the same page in order to provide coherent instruction (Sacks, 2014).

Co-Teaching from the Student's Perspective

In *Co-Teaching in a Teacher Education Classroom: Collaboration, Compromise, and Creativity* (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012) the authors took a look at the effects of co-teaching. Graziano's co-teacher and he worked collaboratively to best teach their students. Over the course of this study teachers received feedback from their students. At the end of the course, students needed to complete an evaluation that was designed specifically for a co-teaching designed course. The students were satisfied and suggested the course be repeated

because when ideas in class were stated and another teacher paraphrased them, they were made more comprehensible to the students. The teachers found that over time their meetings became shorter and they were more in-sync with the teaching. Their beliefs started to mesh and their differences began to subside because of their joint research efforts. Open communication between co-teachers benefits their students by way of better reaching the needs of each one (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012).

Because not all students are the same, the first time they hear something. It doesn't necessarily click for them. It is more likely that students understand after the other teacher explains it another way. Co-teaching requires time to collaborate for the sake of the students involved. It can be challenging for the teachers involved but is beneficial to the students. Students are more likely to receive the help needed and will have the opportunity to see an example of collaboration and teamwork (Alanis, 2013).

Conclusion

Exposing students to another language early on benefits their development. Students who have a solid foundation in their native language will be more likely to speak another language and become literate in that language by transferring important skills. When teachers are educated on the topic of bilingual

education and core language pedagogies and strategies, their instruction is a reflection of their fundamental beliefs (Billak, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

The study was intended to provide insight about what really affects a student who is trying to learn a second language. The research question was: What are the observed behaviors and reported experiences of dual language English learning students and dual language teachers when implementing ESL strategies in a co-teaching classroom? Through this question I uncovered strategies that were effective in helping a student bridge the two languages, and discovered some constraints that affected the student participants in acquiring the language sooner.

Setting

This study took place in a sixth and seventh grade ESL classroom in an inner-city school located in eastern Pennsylvania. The school's population is 97% Latino/Hispanic heritage. The student population qualifying for free or reduced lunch is currently at 98%, and as a school we qualify for a program that provides free breakfast and lunch to all students. The school runs from Kindergarten through grade seven with total enrollment of about 364 students. On average, there are 27 students per classroom. There are two sections for each grade except for fifth grade, which has three. The school is run on a 50/50 model. Students receive 50% of their instruction in English and 50% of their instruction in Spanish. They receive math, reading, and writing in English. They also receive

science, social studies, and language arts in Spanish. My classroom contains 12 desks set up in pods of four and two desks set up as a pair. Students frequently work at their tables and constantly work together on sharing and various think-pair share activities. There is a whiteboard that is used for grammar instruction, daily warm-up assignments, and to write homework assignments. There is a projector that can be used to show videos along with speakers.

Participants

Of the 14 students in this English as a Second Language (ESL) class, there were five students who had been in the country for less than two years. The other nine students had been in this country for at least two years. One of the students was identified as needing an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Procedures

- All students were engaged in the same activities in class however only those who had provided parental consent and a student assent form participated, and had their information collected for the purpose of this study.
- Adult participants were engaged in discussing the student participants in their classrooms, however the information collected was only used for the purpose of this study upon the retrieval of the adult consent form.

Week one:

- Student participants took a pre-test.
- Student participants completed an interest survey.
- Teacher explained consent form and study.

Week two:

- Teacher reviewed classroom routines with student participants such as classroom rules, how to care for their materials, and how to interact appropriately with each other.
- Teacher collected writing samples from student participants.
- Teacher collected data for the Aimsweb assessment.
- Teacher met with and interviewed general education teachers.

Week three:

- Teacher continued to review classroom routines with student participants such as classroom rules and how to care for their materials and how to appropriately behave with each other.
- Student participants reviewed letters of the alphabet.
- Student participants focused on the vowels.
- Student participants practiced listening and speaking skills.

Week four:

- Teacher reviewed classroom routines with student participants such as classroom rules and how to care for their materials and how to appropriately behave with each other.
- Student participants reviewed letters of the alphabet.
- Student participants focused on the vowels.
- Student participants practice listening and speaking skills.

Week five:

- Teacher reviewed classroom routines with student participants such as classroom rules and how to care for their materials and how to appropriately behave with each other.
- Student participants reviewed letters of the alphabet.
- Student participants focused on the vowels.
- Student participants practiced listening and speaking skills.

Week six:

- Teacher introduced vocabulary with picture cards and anchor charts.
- Student participants searched for characters and settings in a given text.

Week seven:

- Teacher introduced vocabulary with picture cards and anchor charts.

- Student participants practiced sequencing events.
- Students practiced reading and writing basic sentences using syllables.

Week eight:

- Teacher introduced vocabulary with picture cards and anchor charts.
- Student participants practiced sequencing events.

Week nine:

- Teacher introduced vocabulary with picture cards and anchor charts.
- Student participants identified the beginning, middle, and end of a text.
- Students practiced reading and writing basic sentences using syllables.

Week ten:

- Teacher introduced vocabulary with picture cards and anchor charts.
- Student participants identified the author's purpose.
- Students practiced reading and writing basic sentences using syllables.

Week eleven:

- Teacher reviewed key skills for the unit.
- Teacher collected writing samples from student participants.

Week twelve:

- Student participants took a post-test.
- Student participants completed an interest survey.

Data Sources

For this research study, the subjects were ELL students, including students with IEPs or 504 Plans. The subjects were a part of my ESL classroom for the 2015-2016 school year. Data were gathered using the following:

1. Surveys

An interest survey was given to give me a clear indication as to where students believe their skills were and how interested they were in being a part of the language learning process. The same survey was given at the end of the study to see if students have changed in any way as a result of the study. Interviews and check-ins were done throughout the course of study to clarify and understand how the subject felt about certain strategies, activities, and/or group assignments.

2. Observations

With the use of a double entry journal, I recorded for a set period of time each day what was going on in my classroom. After each class session I was working on finding commonalities and trends in data. I reflected on what I was seeing in my students. On the left I would state factual evidence, quotes, and details about various things that happened and on the right hand side were

be my reflection and thoughts about what had happened, which later helped in the development of the codes and bins.

3. Student Assessments

I used the Aimsweb as a pretest and also a post-test. I gave the pretest at the beginning of the study and the post-test immediately after the study was complete. I looked at the student's fall and winter Aimsweb scores. I took a look at their Spelling Inventory data to measure progress. All data collected was represented in tables.

Trustworthiness Statement

As an educator I feel that we as teachers are constantly conducting research in our classrooms on a daily basis. The research that we conduct is oftentimes used to determine where to go next with our instruction. Validity and reliability were key components in ensuring that all data collected have been analyzed appropriately. First, this project went through Moravian's Human Subjects Internal Review Board to ensure that all consent forms could be sent out. Upon approval of the HSIRB, my building principal received a consent form to indicate that I could conduct this project within my classroom. The student participants and their parents/guardians received consent forms about their participation in the study, as the subjects are students under the age of eighteen. The students and their parents were informed via this consent form that all data

collected were kept in password-protected computers and/or a locked filing cabinet in my private home. Subjects were made aware of the fact that if at any time or for any reason they would like to remove themselves from the study, they could do so.

As the researcher, I practiced reflexivity to ensure that my findings were data-based and were free from any potential biases on the subject. With the use of a double entry journal I separated factual evidence from my own thoughts. The facts were stated as such and my personal opinion was research-based. To ensure that the evidence found within my research was valid, triangulation of sources, data, and methods was implemented. Low inference descriptors were used and recorded through observations, and were used to gauge what my students were doing and saying as a result of the strategies and instruction that were utilized in the classroom. Every piece of evidence and data was scrutinized, coded and placed in bins. From these, theme statements were formed based on patterns found in the data. All assessments and student artifacts were tracked on a spreadsheet to show the students' growth over time. Data triangulations were used to evaluate all pieces of data to understand and identify themes or patterns. With the use of an answer key, all assessments were graded. Participant feedback was collected, and student participants completed surveys at the beginning of the study and after the study was completed to see if their interests and feelings about learning a second language had changed.

RESEARCH NARRATIVE

The Whirlwind of Changes

Sitting eagerly, excited, and mildly nervous in the cafeteria waiting, each teacher sat with fingers crossed. The day had come to determine our placements as classroom teachers. I received my letter. I had hoped my gut feeling would be wrong because I loved first grade. “Deb Cruz, ESL Teacher,” the building principal announced. As I heard this, I frantically fought back my tears. Could it be? Was I really moved? I had been handed my placement letter and the staff cheered. I quietly placed the letter on my lap and got lost in my thoughts. I was upset, which was natural as it was something I always knew could be a possibility but was never fully convinced would happen. How could I leave my team which had been developing so nicely? How would I get used to not being a homeroom teacher, which was all I knew? Being a specialist sounded great, but how was I going to transition? For a week straight, all I heard were people asking me how I felt about the move. I simply answered, “I’m still processing and digesting the information.” I figured I would stay neutral. However, to better describe how it felt, it was as if someone were digging her nails into a scab and making it bleed over and over again so that the wound could never heal. There was a note attached the letter that read, “Please see me!” I met with the building principal about my

new position, and it was there that I learned that I would be co-teaching. This I found interesting. I thought, two teachers in a room, teaching together... I wonder what that will look like. When I was told this, my whole perspective shifted.

Co-teaching is something that has never really been done in our building. My curiosity was piqued. Each time it was attempted, other teachers were unsuccessful. The reasons for this were unknown to me. I vowed at that moment to own this. When you can't control the situation at hand, you have to take what you have and make the best of it. This change took place at home, too. I took my less-than-attractive yellow kitchen, one that needed a few updates that I could not afford at the moment, and used the color to go with a lemons theme. Life had given me lemons but I was making my lemonade with the lemons. When I got frustrated I would pace and clean my kitchen to seek clarity and the lemons reminded me to make sweet treats from every sour situation. The summer proved to be more stressful than I expected, but I learned great lessons to carry over for the rest of my life. I curiously sought resources for clues to the meaning of co-teaching and examples of what a successful co-taught classroom would look like. The National Education Association (2015) has identified *6 Steps to Successful Co-Teaching*. Marston (2015) and Sacks (2014) also describe similar steps. The six steps are as follows:

1. *Establish Rapport*
2. *Identify your teaching styles and use them to create a cohesive classroom.*

3. *Discuss strengths and weaknesses.*
4. *Discuss Individualized Education Plans and regular education goals.*
5. *Formulate a plan of action and act as a unified team.*
6. *Take risks and grow!*

I spent the summer in contact with my co-teacher learning about her and about her philosophy of education. I learned about her pet peeves and about her strengths. I learned that she and I were similar in some ways and not in others. We liked many of the same things and held similar beliefs. I secretly believed our principal knew that as a team we'd flourish. In fact, she said we'd be a "dynamic duo." My colleague and I spent exchanged text messages throughout the summer, discussing how we wanted our classroom to look and be. With what I had studied about co-teaching's six steps I learned about the first step of successful co-teaching, establishing a rapport between us first (Marston, 2015) (Sacks, 2014). How could we be good teachers to our kids if we knew nothing about each other? I spent time getting to know Sara as a person. To me it was important to find things out, like what she liked or didn't like. What were the things that annoyed her? Not only would we be sharing our students but we would be sharing our space, which was very small space. The tiny classroom needed to serve as our instructional environment and our office. What were we like as teachers? What would we accept and not accept? Before school began, this was something that we

needed to thoroughly address. Our classes didn't start right away and therefore I wasn't too scared about this.

It was the first day of school and I had my schedule in hand, including my list of duties around the building. I greeted students as they walked in for breakfast. Smiles were wide and hair was neatly groomed. Overall, this was a loving community of children. It was then that I was faced with reality. I wouldn't have a class to call my own, nor would I have a class to teach Spanish to any longer. Breakfast was over and I realized that my co-teacher and I would be bombarded with paperwork. I felt that I wasn't doing enough, having come from a full day classroom setting of first graders. My colleague reassured me that this was only a procedural time, and being with the kids would be much different. I held on to those words daily. I wasn't sure how to handle transfer-ins, or transfer-outs. Minor details like understanding the arrangement of the filing cabinets was proving challenging. I had always considered myself organized but this was above and beyond. Within the first few weeks of school, we attended data meetings organized by our administrators and our reading specialist. These meetings helped determine what group each student would be placed in. There, I received the data from our Spelling Inventory in both English and Spanish in the fall (Table 1).

Table 1

Student:	Fall English Spelling Inventory	Fall Spanish Spelling Inventory
Marc	Complex Consonants	Inflected Endings
Hugo	Complex Consonants	Inflected Endings
Jazmin	Complex Consonants	Inflected Endings
Miguel	Complex Consonants	Inflected Endings
Ivan	vowels	silent letters
Eleni	vowels	Accents
Kelvin	vowels	Inflected Endings
Darian	vowels	silent letters
Leo	Complex Consonants	silent letters
Aida	vowels	Accents
Joely	vowels	Diphthongs
Roger	vowels	silent letters

Most of our students fell into the category of needing to work on vowels and therefore we decided to focus on vowels during our ESL class. Table 2 shows our students' reading levels before the study began. This information was most

useful in showing that our students were behind in reading and needed to develop their reading skills further. As teachers, we needed to encourage them to keep reading.

Table 2

	Fall Lexile Levels
Marc	460L
Jazmin	395L
Hugo	185L
Eleni	N/A
Ivan	N/A
Roger	715L
Aida	690L
Joely	625L
Darian	N/A
Leo	N/A
Kelvin	N/A

Miguel	N/A
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Week One: Bilingual: It's your super power!

It was the first day with our sixth and seventh grade and I was nervous. I'm sure my colleague was, too. This would be our first day teaching middle school together. Knowing that I wasn't alone helped me. We worked together. We had students stand up and tell us their names. I was starting to think that maybe this year wouldn't be so bad after all. We started our first class on Wednesday and by Friday I was certain that even though things would be challenging they would be worth it. Thursday night I was watching my Spanish *novelas* and saw a commercial on Univision. It was a Cheerios commercial. In this commercial there is a young boy who is with his father at the breakfast table. This is the extent of the conversation:

"Papá, mis amigos dicen que hablo raro." (Dad, my say that I talk weird.)

"No hablas raro. Hablas bilingüe." (You don't talk weird. You speak bilingual.)

"¿Bilingüe?" (Bilingual?)

"Es un súper poder, bueno para ti." (It's a superpower, it's good for you.)

"¿Cómo tu cereal?" (Like your cereal?)

"uh hum" (uh hum)

This little boy was clearly an English language learner who was nervous about going to school because kids commented that he spoke funny. His father cheered him up by stating that he had a superpower. He was bilingual. At that precise moment I realized that this was something more than just a commercial; it was something I wanted to share with my kids.

Friday morning came and my colleague and I discussed this commercial and went over what we wanted to address with our students. Lunchtime was now nearly over and the kids started to trickle into the classroom. They were ecstatic because once they saw the projector on, they assumed we were watching a movie. They didn't realize that this 30 second commercial would be the starting point of our year. The video was played once.

After watching the video, we told students to take note of who was in the video and what the problem was really about. An interesting discussion arose. What did it mean to be bilingual? What did it mean to speak two languages? Darian was one of our students and was the most outspoken of all. "Miss, this video shows a kid like us who is learning English." "Yes, he is. What else can you tell me?" "He's sad because people make fun of him." "How does that make him feel?" "It makes him feel very bad. He is trying to learn to speak English and others are making fun of him. When I first came to this school, the kids laugh at me but I don't care. I speak English because you have to practice to learn." At that

precise moment, my colleague and I did something that seemed seamless and fluid. With one look, my colleague wrote on the board: “How do you feel about speaking English?” We emphasized how powerful it was to speak two languages. Speaking two languages and being bilingual was our “super power”.

Not everyone has the means of learning another language, and knows how it opens a world of opportunities for you when you get a chance. It was obvious from the faces we had before us that there was something there, something that we needed to uncover. I noticed a few students like Jazmin, Joely, and Aida who kept looking down at the floor. They wouldn't make too much eye contact like Darian and Leo, who would steal the show. They were bright and loud but after Darian spoke the faces changed. All the students were quiet and secretly praying that we wouldn't call on them. This showed me that when students are carrying baggage, it's sometimes best to stop the talking. We instructed students to answer this question on an index card: How do you feel when speaking English? They were new to us and middle school was uncharted territory for them. We collected all of the index cards and this is what they looked like. (These are direct quotes extracted from the index cards.)

Miguel: “I like talking Spanish alot Because all My friends are spanish and I like talking spanish More then english.

Ivan: “I like to talk because old of my friends talk in english.”

Aida: “I feel kind of incoftable when I talk in English because sometimes when I talk in English Infront of the class I get nervous and start getting what I was going to say so that’s how I feel about talking in English.”

Jazmin: “I bont like because whent I wan to Talk inglish every bady laft of me and I feel bad because everybady said I Don’t no how to kalk then I talk in my head why they can soport me.”

Joely: “I feel a little weird speaking english because sometimes I don’t now how to say some words and sometimes they understand me.”

Darian: “ I feel very pruum of my self Because in or sometimes I wact movies an ingle and I oways said how do they spick that leguage and loock now I speked very happy.”

Hugo: “I fell weird wen I tak spanesh and eglesh.”

Roger: “My first day of school I feel like scared but now like darian say, I don’t care when people laught at me I don’t care am just continue.”

Marc: “I feel like not sometime not taking English because I feel weird I get sad.”

Leo: “I Like speaking inglish but I do A lot of mixtake and I feel asham because I thinck my freinsds are going to light at me but they don’t light at me.”

Kelvin: “Well I don’t like taking en english because some times I mix up with english and spnish. And when we have to talk a font of the class I mix up with my talking. And the more I talk in english the more I forget spanish.”

Upon reading these, my heart broke. Students who wanted to learn and wanted to participate were scared of speaking and expressing themselves in a classroom. It was obvious that their writing skills were clearly at a deficit, but they tried so hard. How can these students still participate in a mainstream classroom? Were the accommodations necessary and supports being put into place? I hoped that they had been getting word banks for tests, visual supports, and extended time on their assignments (Reiss, 2012). How would these students act or feel in their content area writing? My co-teacher and I sat to discuss what was before us. “Unfortunately, this wouldn’t be the first time I’ve heard this.” Sara would tell me. “What do you mean? Don’t the teachers provide the necessary scaffolding in the classroom to ensure that the students are receiving the right amount of help to help them succeed?” “You’ll see...” was an answer Sara resonates to this day. I was a person with so many questions who constantly sought answers or clarity. I would hit a brick wall and constantly hear, “You’ll see...”

Dialogues like this were very common between us. I learned new things daily. She had been teaching ESL longer than I. I began to reflect back and was

feeling bad as a classroom teacher, because I was sure that in my years of teaching, somehow, I had failed some of my students. I never realized the needs that some of them had were this great. I honestly didn't even know where to start. There was such a difference between from being a support specialist and being a homeroom teacher. All the overwhelming feelings I felt on that first day subsided when I had these kids in our classroom. They were "our" kids, an adjustment I too needed to make each time I spoke. It wasn't "my" classroom but "ours." This was step two of co-teaching: *Identify your teaching styles and use them to create a cohesive classroom.* (Marston, 2015) (Sacks, 2014). When working in a team, one has to let go of "I," "me," and "mine," and make things plural: "we," "us," and "ours." I consider myself flexible and think using the plural pronouns will only help students understand that they may call upon two of us, not just one.

Week Two: Getting Into the Swing of Things

We decided to try small games that were simple and would be a good indicator of where our students' listening skills were. The first game we attempted this week was called "Mr. and Mrs. Wright." The objective of the game was to get students to pass an object around the circle to their left or right depending on the directions they heard during the game. Within the game, students were to listen to a story where they heard the names Mr. and Mrs. Wright along with directional words of left and right. In order to play the game students needed to focus and

listen intently to the story being read. Each time they heard “right,” they needed to pass the ball to the right. Each time they heard “left:” the ball needed to be passed left. I had played this game with a group of native English speakers but never in a group of non-English speakers. Through this game, I could see how our newcomers were having a hard time processing left and right. While reading, I remembered another ESL strategy: speak slower (Reiss, 2012) (Espinosa, 2013) and don’t forget to enunciate. Instead of rushing through the story as is done for native English speakers, I read it slowly and yet it gave the same results, but at their level. The students were focused, listening, and actively participating.

My colleague wanted to play another game to get to know our students by learning their birth months. We asked them to determine the best way they could arrange themselves in a line starting from January to December. Watching them was interesting. They stood around in little pods. We got their attention and showed them again. Another ESL Strategy is: provide scaffolds with visual supports (Reiss, 2012) (Hadley, 2001). We used several students as examples to demonstrate what we wanted. We sent them off again. This time, only a couple moved while an array of girls huddled up to speak in Spanish. Hugo, who was usually a quiet kid, stood up and miraculously took on a leadership role. He went to each student and asked them when their birth month was and physically started moving kids backward and forward in the line. He did this and would step back to contemplate his work. When he was satisfied with how accurate the moving had

been, he found his own spot. I was pretty proud of Hugo for standing up in front of everyone. It can be a little intimidating as a younger student to be a sixth grader taking the lead in a mixed-grade class.

I took some time out during the week to meet with students and explain the overall process of my study. We went over rules and procedures and discussed our expectations. During all of this, Sara and I practiced yet another strategy of co-teaching: sharing talk-time (Sacks, 2014). It became difficult for us at times to find an even balance in talking without overpowering one another. This was a challenging scenario. We never mapped out exactly what we would say and never planned out a script, we were getting into the swing of things.

“So how do you like the way things are going?” I’d ask Sara after class.

“That went okay I guess, but it was hard to stay focused.”

“I agree. It was hard for me to follow you at times.”

“Yeah, there were times that I knew exactly where you were going, and other moments, I wasn’t even sure so I let you take over.”

“Hmm, I wonder how we can make this run a little more smoothly.”

Sara and I had conversations like this every day since we had begun, because for us this was new and a little scary. We not only needed to trust in ourselves as teachers, but in each other. When you teach for so long by yourself, it

gets a little scary to trust someone else to do things with you. You often feel like you're not going to do things "right." This was still new to us and we were grateful that our students participated so nicely. They got comfortable quickly and even needed reminders when it was appropriate to joke around and when we needed to be serious. The classroom was filled with characters. In sixth grade we had Miguel, Marc, Hugo, Jazmin, Ivan, Kelvin, and Eleni. In seventh grade we had Darian, Leo, Aida, Joely, and Roger.

This was what I learned and observed about each of these kids at this point in the study: Miguel was rather tall in comparison to his peers and loved to laugh but had a really kind heart. Marc was a singer and a dancer. He loved *bachata*, *salsa*, and a little bit of *merengue*. He came in with enough energy for two and danced his way to his seat. Hugo was quiet with a loud yet endearing laugh that was infectiously contagious. It didn't matter what you were feeling, his laugh would make you happy. Jazmin was quiet, and didn't ever speak. She might whisper and giggle while talking into someone else's ear, or would prefer someone else to talk for her. Ivan had a very thick accent. He just arrived in this country at the beginning of school. He preferred to speak Spanish even though he did go to a bilingual school in Puerto Rico. Kelvin always had a smile but often forgot what he wanted to say to you by the time he walked up to you. He would then return to his seat and remember. This could happen several times in a row. Eleni arrived that week and was quiet, almost too quiet. She didn't interact with

anyone and usually didn't show emotions in class. She seldom smiled or laughed and wore what appeared to be a blank stare. Sara noticed that when we spoke, Eleni always stared at our lips while we talked. I requested to have her hearing checked by the nurse. Unfortunately, it took a few weeks before that could happen. However, we were glad we did. At around halfway through this study, we learned that Eleni had significant hearing loss in her left ear, and her right ear had suffered some loss, too. I later believed this was the reason for her being quiet because she needed to really focus on reading lips to interact. She also heard herself talk and thought she "didn't talk right."

In seventh grade, Darian was a charmer. He was polite and eloquent with his words. He had been in this country for a year and had learned to speak very well and very quickly. He could usually pick up on things faster than most and loved to make people laugh whether with jokes or his antics. Leo was Darian's best friend. He couldn't ever sit still and he arrived around the same time as Darian. He often seemed a bit confused and needed things said in multiple ways to understand. Aida was another girl who came in quietly and tried to go unnoticed. She preferred not to talk and only talked in short phrases. Joely was also quiet but had made it known that she didn't want to learn to speak English. She refused to talk and when asked to, she got very uncomfortable and usually would go without speaking. Lastly, Roger, another newcomer, was quiet and reserved. He would talk exclusively to Darian and Leo, and only in Spanish. He

refused to speak any English because he was scared to make mistakes. His big bright eyes were what he used to show confusion, understanding, disappointment, and other forms of nonverbal cues.

These students came into our classroom fearful of speaking English and appeared to be insecure. Those who were most outspoken seemed confident in their identity as Latin American students learning English. By the end of the study, students were more comfortable speaking English, and when encouraged, they would stand in front of the class to share writing assignments. When responding to answers in a whole group, our students automatically stood up, as we taught them to be respectful to others while talking and to be proud of what they were saying.

The students had learned the basics about us. Sara and I grew up in public housing (ironically, the same neighborhood.) We both learned Spanish and English simultaneously. Sara was an ESL student growing up and I was not. I am the youngest of four and she is the oldest of four. I spoke English at home with my siblings while speaking Spanish to my parents. Students knew that I learned another language in college, and therefore I knew how hard and frustrating it can be at times. We could relate to our students as we shared the same culture and similar upbringings. They could relate to us, and had us as role models to follow. We were their examples.

While monitoring our students, we initially gave our students a basic letter names and letter sounds assessment (Appendix E). While assessing them, Kelvin got very frustrated with me and protested by saying, “Miss, this is too easy. This test is for kindergarteners!” After that bellyaching, I looked at all of the scores and saw all of the students struggled with the same exact sound, /j/, because in Spanish it sounds like an /h/. The /g/ sound could make a /j/ sound in English. The /h/ was a problem because in Spanish it makes no sound but in English it does. The /i/ and the /e/ sounds commonly are misunderstood because the “I” is called “ee” in Spanish and the “E” is called “eh.” The /c/ is confusing because it can have both the sounds of a /c/ or a /s/. Kelvin was a little overconfident. He didn’t realize that he might have been right in Spanish, but if it wasn’t said in English, it was wrong. This information was used to tailor their warm-ups. We spent time reviewing long vowel sounds. We discussed how they should sound, what they looked like, and the difference between vowels in English versus vowels in Spanish. We looked at the differences between the consonants in both English and Spanish. Students were given a composition book that we referred to as a journal. These journals were used to take notes, complete warm-ups, and respond to writing prompts.

Week Three: To Translate or not to Translate?

Our unit on family began. We learned new vocabulary terms and reviewed old ones. Our students were aware of “mom” and “dad”, but didn’t know that “mom” could also be said as “mother”, or that “dad”, could also be said as “father”. Students copied a vocabulary list from the board related to the topic of family. Several glitches in our schedule happened that week. There was a day where we didn’t have school and another day where the homeroom teachers canceled our RTII (Response To Instruction Intervention) block. That week, Sara and I created a joint Prezi to show our students who was in our families. The students proved to be interested in knowing more about this. They started to ask questions about us and that was exciting. Listening to them try to speak English was a rewarding experience. We then had students participate in an activity related to who had the most and who had the fewest people in their families. Newcomers asked for directions to be repeated. I then remembered another ESL Strategy: slow down and give clear directions (Reiss, 2012) (Espinosa, 2013). It is important to repeat directions and have students repeat the directions back to you to ensure all of the students understand what is happening. This activity was done solely in English but there were visual supports present. We built a bar graph to incorporate math into the lesson and also to have a visual aid for our students. At the end of class, Sara and I sat down to debrief. Students were to tell how many people were in their families. Some students were unclear about how many people

were in their families and Sara and I realized that perhaps going over our vocabulary first would have been more effective.

The next class we started with vocabulary. Should I translate it or not? How do I get them to understand the concept, in a short class period, in a way that makes sense to them? After consulting research on bilingual education (Gandara, 2015), I decided to use their native language as a strategy. For the sake of vocabulary instruction, I wrote a list of family members on the board. I had students read the words individually. I then read each word and had them repeat it. Next, I asked the class to explain what the word meant or to use it in a sentence. There were many blank stares when we got to the word “uncle”, “aunt”, “niece”, and “nephew”. I could do circumlocution and circle around the word the best way that I could or I could strategically use their native language to help them with that word. Once I said the words in Spanish, *tío, tía, sobrina, sobrino*, I had them repeat the vocabulary list again and jointly say the Spanish terms along with the English terms. Students relaxed immediately, and Sara took that moment to explain how important it was to pronounce *aunt vs. ant*. This pronunciation activity took a couple of minutes as students initially said the words incorrectly. Students were then asked to write about their families and to tell a little bit about them. We made it a habit to have students stand while speaking and to go to the front of the room. Eleni, a student who had missed the first two weeks of our classes, was very quiet. This was her first week with us and I was trying to learn

more about who she was. Eleni and another newcomer got nervous when sharing so they were practically inaudible. When Eleni spoke, the class had to be silent or else no one would hear her. Even then she was still practically inaudible. She would look at her paper and look at the board to search for the right words. When presenting, many of the other students referred back to the board as well for help in saying the correct word. The translation helped them to stay focused and helped them to work through their presentations.

After class, Sara and I began to discuss what areas we as co-teachers could improve upon. We discussed the importance of staying consistent. Step five in successful co-teaching is to *formulate a plan of action and act as a unified team* (Marston, 2015). We had to remain as consistent as possible in order to keep our kids focused. This week, they really tried hard to speak Spanish during class. We allowed them to but we probably shouldn't have. At the beginning of the school year, a few weeks before we met our students, Sara and I had discussed the rules we valued and what classroom management system we wanted to use. We opted to use Class Dojo which is a website and app that allowed us to create an account for each class we had. Once we created a class, we inputted the names of our students. Each student was randomly given a monster avatar associated with his or her name. Students could earn points for various prizes. The point system was based on what we valued as co-teachers together. This is what it looked like.

(Figure 1 is a sample class, and Figures 2 and 3 were actual awarded points we gave in class for a sample student):

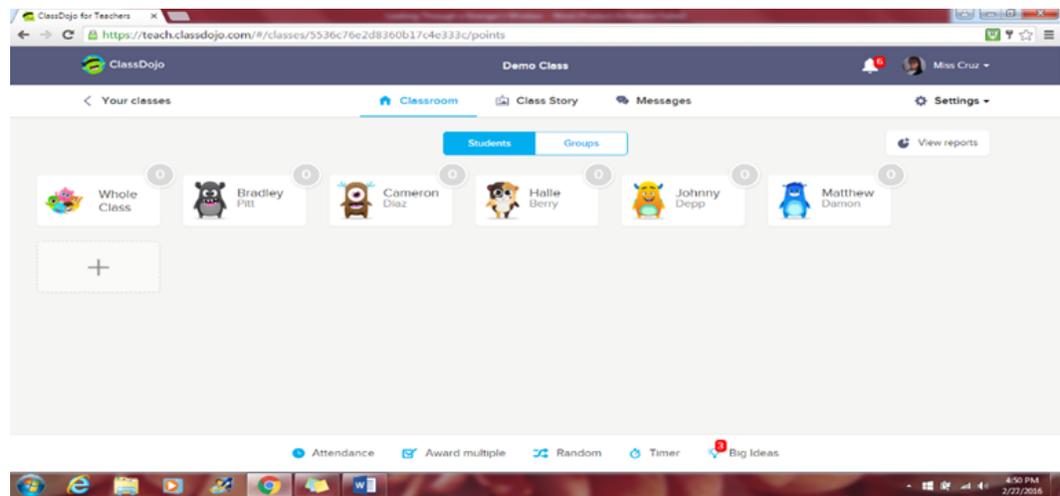


Figure 1

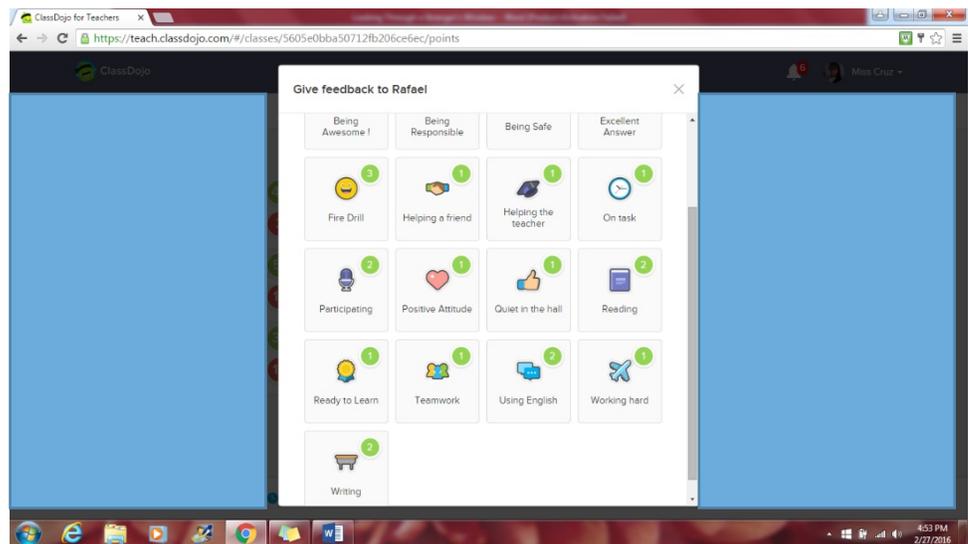


Figure 2

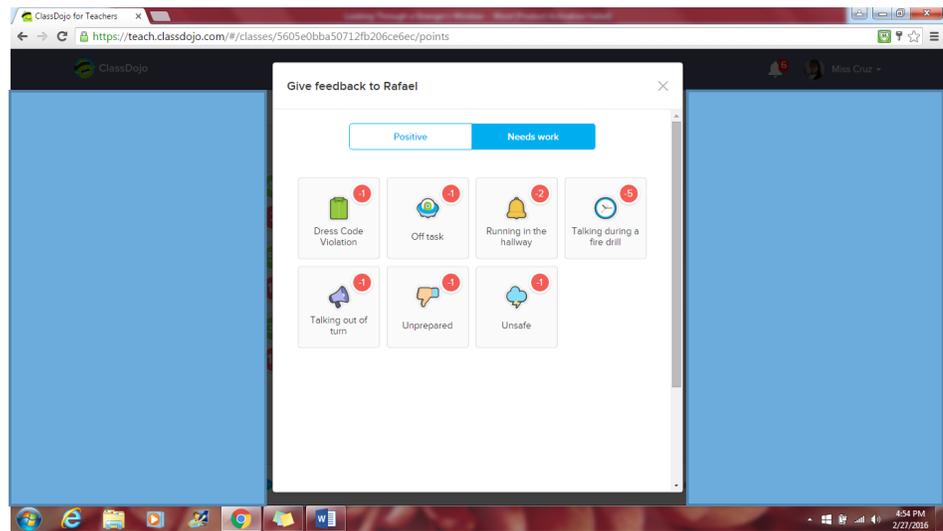


Figure 3

We began to feel badly because the students were losing points in our classroom management system and it felt punitive. We needed to come up with a better way to address our students' need to speak Spanish to communicate in an English classroom. How much Spanish should be allowed to help students succeed in an English only classroom?

I struggled through trying to figure out "talk time." We struggled with the consistency of classroom management because we found we were harsh, and then thought the other person would address a situation, and then it never got

addressed. It is easier when you're by yourself to rely only on your own judgment to issue rewards or consequences. I felt like everything was okay at the moment but I kept asking myself if what I was doing mattered and was valid. I grew curious about whether or not the consequences we gave each time the students spoke in Spanish was fair. This week one of their warm-ups was to complete the English Language Learning Interest Survey (Appendix F).

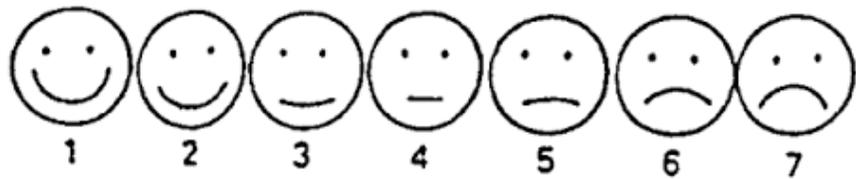


Table 3

Question Number on the English Language Learning Interest Survey	1.	2		2	1	1		3
	2.	6	2					1
	3.	3	2	1	1	1		1
	4.	2	1	1	2		1	2
	5.	3			3	1		2
	6.	2			1	2	2	2
	7.	4	1	1	2			1
	8.	2		1	3	1	1	1
	9.	5	3			1		
	10.	1			2	2		4
Feeling and Number of Students Who responded To Each Question								
* 6/9 students liked learning English								
*5/9 students preferred to work in partners or groups								

*4/9 students were still being read to in English *4/9 students disliked working alone

The information presented on Table 3 was used to determine how students initially felt about learning English. Sara and I referred back to these surveys while we planned our lessons. It was our goal to have students feel comfortable learning English.

Week Four: Two Worlds Collide

Sara and I had a profound talk about how our teaching styles were clashing in our classroom instruction. She expressed how she felt that I relied too heavily on the lesson plan to function, and stated that she didn't. She had a point. When I plan a lesson, I am very intentional about what I write and why I write it. If I took the time to write it down, it serves as a guide for what I really want to do. Sara on the other hand writes down the objective and conducts her classes solely according to that. We started discussing it at 3:30 p.m. and by 5:30 p.m. we were at home texting each other. Slight annoyance set in because we were about to be observed (together) by our building principal and we feared getting a "needs improvement" score on our observation. Her worries then became my worries. We would have to see our boss to discuss how to best continue working together despite a difference that was currently making co-teaching challenging.

Sara started to shut down and stay quiet because she was set in her ways. She was and is still well aware of this tendency of hers. However, she had never worked with middle school before and it made her uncomfortable. When we worked together and planned, I was always eager to see the scope and sequence of everything months in advance. As the year went on, I realized why Sara didn't plan the way I did. Our students were at various levels of language proficiency. An assignment that I would have guessed would take a week to do actually would take two or three weeks to complete with all of the supports and strategies that needed to be implemented. I wanted to plan the year out and it was not happening like that because of the constant changes to groups and scheduling. How could we get over this hurdle? Our schedule was designed so that we could teach four classes a day, provide push-in support twice a day, and have a prep time we used for co-planning. It was a small issue but it could have blown up to be so much bigger if we didn't address it immediately. I was glad that we could be so open with each other because that caused us to really be critical with each other and openly share what was happening. With intermittent text messages, we had come to the conclusion that there were other forms of co-teaching that we could venture into. I proceeded to send her six models of co-teaching that could be utilized (Friend, 2011). I was willing to compromise and make changes along the way for the benefit of our students.

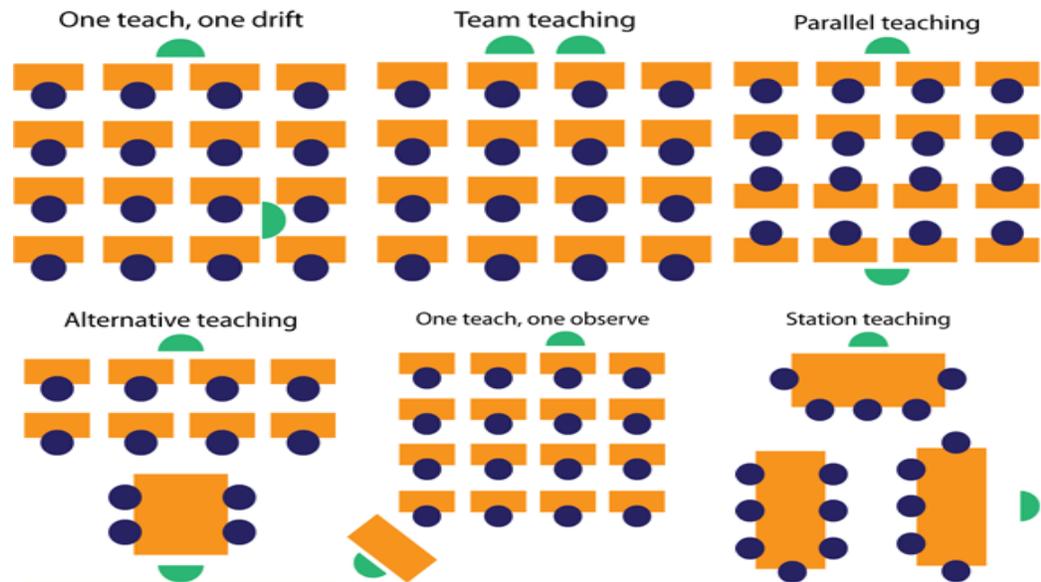


Figure 4

There are six different ways in which one can co-teach. The first model is called One Teach, One Drift; one teacher is teaching while the other is circulating the room to help students. The second model is called Team Teaching; both teachers are at the front of the classroom teaching together. The third model is called Parallel Teaching; the class is divided in two where both teachers are teaching on opposite ends of the classroom. The fourth model is called Alternative Teaching; one teacher is teaching while one is working with a small group separately. The fifth model is called One Teach, One Observe; one teacher is teaching the class while the other teacher is making observations of the lesson and its delivery. Lastly, the sixth model is called Station Teaching; students are divided into groups that rotate to allow all students the opportunity to work with both teachers

on several different skills at stations. (Friend, 2011) We had been following the team teaching model and one teach and one drift model. I sent her a message because I felt like both of us seemed hurt and I know we really shouldn't have been. I apologized because I thought I wasn't being a good teammate. Maybe I should have been more supportive or should have reasoned with her better. I'm not usually very set in my ways except when it comes to planning. I was made aware of this and understood that when you work with someone else there must be a compromise. You should always plan ahead (or so I once thought, as I liked to plan months in advance), but you may need to deviate and rewrite plans as needed, especially when co-teaching.

The next day we spoke to our building principal. She said what I most feared. We could continue to do co-teaching if we liked or we could quit and work on our own. I feared this option because it would signal me failing at something. She reassured us that it was too soon to tell. She was right. It was only the beginning of October. We decided to continue working together because we valued honest feedback about what our teaching looked like. Our principal would evaluate us honestly but said that we had only been working with each other for a couple weeks and feeling uncomfortable was okay.

Sara and I started to ask each other how it went after each lesson. We addressed situations and disagreements much more quickly and we became more

transparent to each other and ourselves. We grew to understand each other and developed a mutual respect as people and as educators. We learned to agree to disagree and still remain friends. We were so similar yet so different and yet that only made our instruction better. When one of us taught the other watched and we discussed what we should have done or what we did that we liked.

I wanted to see what a co-taught classroom looked like. I wanted so much to see what it meant to work collaboratively. I wanted to know how other people taught English. Was I doing this right? Unfortunately after many attempts we had not been able to get into a classroom to see co-teaching firsthand. I had sent letters to veteran ESL teachers I knew, emails to fellow classmates at other districts, and sought out our building principal for support. Despite our efforts, we were unable to visit a classroom and would continue searching for professional development opportunities.

On Monday of week four, students completed a short vowel warm up. We practiced the short “a” sound and introduced adjectives. The students could not read the directions and were unaware of vowel sounds. Students were making vowel sounds and naming the letters in Spanish. They needed an explanation of what each letter name and sound was for the vowels, and even then struggled. When the Spanish vowels were introduced first, they were more open to saying them in English. A lot of repetition was needed to help them solidify the sounds.

We specifically focused on short “a.” I introduced adjectives by writing in both English and Spanish. I should have asked the kids what the vowels were in Spanish first. Sara and I needed to sync up our teaching styles. We still had inconsistencies. Students didn’t seem to notice a difference and seemed to benefit from seeing things done a couple of ways.

On Tuesday, students revisited the adjective review from the day before. They then had to describe a friend. Some of the students wrote things like “My friend Ivan can run fast.” “My friend Ana likes to sing.” We walked around as they were writing and we noticed that they didn’t seem to understand, so we stopped them and reviewed. Sara went about writing a sentence on the board and circled the noun and explained that adjectives describe the noun. Students began to understand. Once students were provided with the visual aid, they were able to produce sentences like “Andrea has rosy cheeks.” Students wrote honestly and remained focused. This was a wonderful visual aid that I think the kids really appreciated. We had different colored dry erase markers on the ledge of the board for moments like this one. Once the activity was over, I handed students survey one (Appendix G).

Sara and I wanted to discover what we could do better and what co-teaching looked like for our kids. After class, Sara and I spread out all of the surveys on the carpet and sat down to read them answer by answer. We were able

to see that students liked how we thought aloud as a strategy with them listening because it showed how we could compromise and solve problems together. I think aloud a lot because it shows kids how we get to our answers. I always did it because it helped me to verbalize what I was thinking and when working with Sara on a team it seemed to keep us focused. Darian liked how we always said things differently because it helped him understand the lesson better. What Sara and I thought would be confusing, Darian saw as an advantage. As two separate people we said things in two different ways and yet if one student didn't understand it the first time, the second way often helped. Eleni mentioned how we sometimes didn't work together and that that's an area in which we needed to improve. In some cases, Sara and I needed to ask our kids for more clarity. Our class told us "nothing confused them" and that we offered "a lot of help." We do make accommodations and adapt our instruction, however I don't know if that's what they meant. Could they mean that the content wasn't challenging enough? We needed more clarity, so Sara and I decided to meet with them and ask. First we needed to do a free writing activity.

Wednesday, we did a free-write activity as a warm up. Hugo was the kid who panicked the most during this activity. "Miss, I don't want to do this." "Why not Hugo?" "Because I can't spell, and I'm going to get it wrong." "Then draw me pictures instead." Hugo was immediately relieved and got to work. Something was not right with Hugo. I was uncertain about what was wrong but I knew that

when he wrote, it looked familiar. Based on my experience as a first grade teacher, Hugo seemed to be writing at a first grade level. At this point, was this a language related issue or was there something more? Students had puzzled expressions. I realized that perhaps they were seldom told to just write about whatever was on their mind. Most often they are told what they have to write. Sara and I opened up the assignment to allow a drawing of what they were thinking. During this warm up, I walked around and saw that Hugo was thinking about race cars, Leo was thinking about his home in Puerto Rico, and Kelvin was thinking about whether or not to ask a girl out at lunch.

When time was up, we had the kids join us on the carpet to discuss the survey. Darian stood up and commented that “I like that both of you are our teachers. When I raise my hand one of you can help me and one of you can help somebody else. It’s more better.” There was some truth to what he was saying. We were worried because co-teaching at times could be confusing to us, but the students really benefitted from it. Sara thought co-teaching was getting “hard” because we taught “so different.” She thought that we were struggling to fight for air time. Trying new things was hard because what worked for you previously tended to keep you stuck in your ways. Our saving grace was the fact that we got along. In fact, Sara stated that if we didn’t get along well, we’d be working independently.

All Sara kept stating was: WE NEED TO START SMALL GROUPS! We considered teaching using another co-teaching model. This specific group of

students had varying levels and in order to teach them at their level, small groups would have made most sense to properly differentiate instruction. If we were able to divide them into small groups we could tailor our instruction to the specific needs of the group. We later opted for an alternative teaching method (Friends, 2011) which allowed us to team teach for our introduction and conclusion and pull students into small groups as needed.

Would it be easier if we did our own thing? I then started to question myself and wonder if I was really as flexible as I thought. Was co-teaching for me? I struggled with straying from the lesson plan. Sara was used to constant review and wrap around with interventions. This is where I began to learn that what we needed was to practice listening. When giving our lessons we needed to listen to each other talk in order to meaningfully respond. The sixth step in successful co-teaching was to take risks and grow (Marston, 2015). In taking risks, we needed to be all in and it was easy to zone out and be busy thinking about what you wanted to say instead of listening to your partner.

Thursday arrived and we were introducing a lesson on predictions. To my amazement, students were completely unaware of how to make predictions. Sara and I wrote on the board and had them repeat: *Prediction=Predecir*. That was how we translated the term for the kids. We began to read *Love You Forever* by Robert Munsch (1986). This was one of my favorite books growing up and was great for making predictions as it has a repetitive pattern to follow. As we read

through the book, I recognized that students knew how to make predictions but simply had not known what the term was. By the end of the book, Jazmin, Joely, and Ivan were crying. I couldn't blame them, as I was also shedding a tear. I learned then that Joely had been crying because she had sick grandparents and the story reminded her of them. Leo, a little insensitive, began to make fun of Ivan for crying. Darian started to get on my nerves because he constantly wanted to talk and didn't allow the other students to talk. Jazmin felt comfortable speaking, as her grandmother was someone she felt safe around. Ivan, on the other hand, had gotten so comfortable that he couldn't balance his joking. I then had to take into consideration that being a sixth grader in the midst of sixth and seventh graders could be challenging. The week ended and I was just so glad it was over. Sara's world and mine were still colliding, but we were starting to address the problem by recognizing it.

Week Five: How Comfortable is too Comfortable?

We had been focusing on family and decided to test our students on our family vocabulary (Appendix H). I created the test and Sara looked it over quickly as she had pulled another student out to work with one-on-one during our prep time. The test was incredibly short. It was ten questions long but required students to read, write, and look for adjectives in a sentence. It was only then that I noticed how difficult it really was for them. The test took over thirty minutes to

complete. For a native English speaker, the assessment would have taken less than five minutes. There were probably some issues with the way I worded a few things.

While working students were now talking freely, both in English and in Spanish. We wanted to promote speaking but it was becoming a very serious issue to the point where it was now interrupting our classroom instruction. Joely and Roger finished first and Aida and Kelvin took longer. Part of this was due to the lack of focus we saw early on. At any moment, Marc would get up and start singing and dancing at his seat and Darian would join him. It could be humorous at times but that's not what we wanted during instruction. Sara looked at me and I looked at her, and we both knew what needed to happen. We had a very stern talk brewing. We expressed how much we loved them and how much we loved teaching them. We expressed that there was a time and a place for everything but daily interruptions had to stop. Our kids were once again quiet. Darian, as bold as he was, tried to make a joke at a serious point of the conversation. I was angry at that moment by his audacity to make a joke at such an inappropriate time. I asked him to wait in the hallway. Why did he always have to make everything a joke? Learning a new language could be an enjoyable process but the levity had started to affect the other students in the room.

We then had students write about what they were feeling and how they could make things better. During this time, we circled the room and Darian was allowed

to come back inside. Students were given an option to write in whichever language was easiest for them as long as they were honest in every response they provided. Sara and I wanted nothing more than to provide an environment where students felt comfortable speaking English and sharing their ideas. I read through some of their writing and Eleni, who was so inaudible, wrote bold, loud, and very clear words. She had no problem stating how mad it made her when other people were rude and were constantly calling out. Darian called Sara over to his desk and said “I didn’t realize that you both felt this way about me.” From where I was sitting I could see the distress in his face and could hear it in his voice. I believe he thought I didn’t want him to talk in class.

After class that day, Sara and I discussed the assessment I had made and I realized where I had gone wrong. I had asked, “What are the names of my parents’ mom and dad?” The correct answer would have been “grandmother and grandfather,” but some students had actually written the names. I should have asked “What are the words used to describe my parents’ mom and dad?” instead. Sara agreed to sit with me next time and make assessments together as co-teachers should.

The next day, we read *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera B. Williams (1982). We had been focusing on making predictions and identifying basic story elements such as characters, setting, and plot. Students were intently reading when we realized that maybe our talk had achieved something. While reading, we asked

this question, “Who bought the chair?” Sara asked students to get up and pick a side of the room to determine if mom, grandma, or the little girl had bought the chair. Hugo and Darian chose to stay on the side that showed that the mother bought the chair. As more context clues were given, students worked together to reevaluate their answers. The students began to move around the room. Darian and Hector stayed in the same spot the whole time. They had chosen the wrong answer but stuck to it. I found that throughout this exercise, students easily walked around to a spot because someone talked them into it versus them really thinking about it. This scared me for them as students. Anyone could get them to change their minds so quickly. With a little voice inflection and the right facial expressions, I could have gotten them to believe that the chair was given to the family as a gift. During class, it was obvious that Darian was upset. He was quite stubborn and had a long face. I had never seen him this way. I decided that maybe he and I should have a talk after class. He had an attitude in class and I couldn’t imagine why that was. After talking to him, I learned that he thought that my corrections were personal attacks on him. He thought that not always calling on him indicated that I did not like him as my student. I needed to explain to him that it wasn’t that we didn’t like him as a student, it was that there were so many other kinds of people in that room. The quiet ones needed a quiet place to think and learn. The talkative ones needed to talk things through to understand. I told him that I understood him. I myself oftentimes have to talk through a situation over

and over again to gain new understandings. I explained to him that out of respect, I needed to be fair and pick other people even when they were unsure of the answers. When I am in a room with people I have to let them speak their minds, too. How can I learn new things when I am the only one doing the talking? Darian began to understand and relaxed a bit in his seat. He left the room less angry.

Sara and I needed to debrief what had actually happened. She was annoyed with how immature Darian was being. He was almost being selfish. I then wondered: was he doing this to get our attention? Was he doing this to get the attention of his classmates? Why was he so upset? Sara and I decided that this was something we were just going to have to let go. He needed to get over it as well. Sara and I spoke to his classroom teachers and they said he always wanted to do the talking in their classes too. Sara and I decided to use ClassDojo to randomly select names for participation instead. I did also find out that week that Darian was dating Aida and Miguel was dating a newcomer and that Kelvin was dating some girl in his class. These kids were dating and most of the pairings were happening within our classroom. How comfortable is too comfortable? Had our positive classroom climate been the fuel for these hormones?

Week Six: Cultural Shock

The students were expected to walk into the room, read the warm-up on the board and get started. The warm-ups helped students to stay focused and

allowed them get started right away as they trickled in the room from different classrooms. The warm-ups were varied; some were reading, and other were writing or math. Our warm-up was to read for fifteen minutes. Some students had brought books from class and some students borrowed ours and put book marks in them with their names for future class periods. Students walked in and grabbed their favorite books and started reading. We then reviewed families and how they help each other and work together. Then we reviewed the vocabulary that we posted on an anchor chart.

We then presented a School House Rock video called the “The Melting Pot”. We wanted students to understand that the United States was composed of different families from different parts of the world. As the video began, that students broke out laughing. We paused the video to ask what was so funny. They said the music to them was funny. I then realized, the music wasn’t anything out of the norm for me but they had never heard such a thing. The music was outdated and semi-old-fashioned but nonetheless music. Sara and I needed to explain that the music was a traditional type of American music that was from a few decades ago. Students were curious about it and questioned things like “Really Miss? We don’t listen to stuff like that!” Miguel was most surprised. The students smiled and a couple of them chuckled under their breath as the video was played again and they were instructed to listen to the lyrics. The video did a good job explaining what Ellis Island was and its historical significance to our country.

Students were amazed in a scene to find the name of Puerto Rico on the screen. They were ecstatic that someone had “remembered” where they were from. The video ended and we created a new anchor chart titled “The Melting Pot”. Ivan spoke up twice and tried to speak in Spanish. We needed to slow him down because he seemed rushed to talk. When he slowed down he was able to speak in English with a few words in Spanish such as “*caribe*” and “*sur america*” (Caribbean and South America). While scanning the room I could see Eleni, who had become such a mystery at this point, quiet and emotionless.

The use of the anchor chart was important for this lesson. Students were able to see the voyage that many people made to the United States in search of a new land where they could be free. This was intended to teach students about other cultures. We had taught about our immediate family, then taught about their cultures, and then transitioned over to countries from around the world. We planned a field trip to a historical plantation to show what life was like for people when they first arrived to Pennsylvania and what the culture was like then. The next day, students completed survey two (Appendix I).

Sara and I were curious to know how our kids were feeling in their general education classrooms. I had noticed that they were mildly uncomfortable speaking in class but I had never realized its severity. They commented about being nervous and I wondered if their teachers knew this. I learned that they really felt uncomfortable in math but I then realized that was probably because the math

teacher was the only teacher on the middle school team who wasn't bilingual I decided to ask teachers similar questions the next week to compare answers. Students were then given the opportunity to write as their warm-up. Students were asked to describe how they were feeling that day. While walking in through the doors, Leo said "What's Soap?" He meant to say "what's up?" It took me to say "what's up" three times before Leo became aware that he had said something incorrectly.

While writing, Roger asked how you say "*frío*" in English. He wanted to say how you refer to someone "*frío*" (cold). He then stated "*mi mamá, me dice que los gringos son fríos.*" He said this in regard to his classmates and his "white" teachers. We told him to just write that. He said "okay, I'll just write the gringos are cold." Roger was trying to describe the differences between his classmates and teachers here in the United States versus Puerto Rico. It was such a cultural shock for him that everyone was at arm's length. I knew the exact feeling he was talking about. You couldn't hug or kiss your friend like you would back home because if you do, you're the weird one. Roger had only been in the United States for about a year. He came from Puerto Rico where the culture is different from here. The Hispanic school culture is a bit more nurturing than what our schools here provide. In elementary school, upon arrival, students greet their teachers with a hug and a kiss on the cheek. The fact that he was used to terms of endearment and affection while at school made his transition difficult. He didn't feel

emotionally connected or feel a sense of belonging like he did back home. He enjoyed our ESL class because he was with students that shared a similar culture and he felt like he would in his home country. His mom told him that he just needed to adapt to how different the people here were in comparison to where he was from. There are a lot of differences from our upbringing and as a kid I remember thinking the same exact thing. Why are my teachers so dry? Why don't they talk about themselves or their families? Don't they love them as much as I love mine? As a child I questioned these very things when my "white" friends said they hated their siblings. That was like sacrilege in my house. I would ask my mom the same question and get the same response Roger got. They are just "cold." They didn't show emotions like we do. I learned to live with these answers and then saw my very questions manifested in Roger.

We often times taught our students coping skills for the real-life problems they faced. As I was the person who escorted the seventh graders to lunch, it was there that they asked me questions about how to handle various situations or about the cultural differences they grappled with. I found myself teaching valuable life skills in and out of the classroom. Leo asked me for the word "comfortable" and "where" while writing because he confused them to be something else. Kelvin asked me about the word "*desmayar*" which means faint. Kelvin was writing about how he would faint if he asked another girl out and she would say "yes".

We reviewed the vocabulary of the week by reading through the lists of English and Spanish terms. The list consisted of the words culture, melting pot, Hispanic, immigrants, celebrations and countries. This vocabulary was not tested as it was vocabulary we were using and would continue to use throughout the rest of the unit. We then presented students with a video called “American Kids Eat Lunches Around the World.” Students were talking amongst themselves, about what they would eat and wouldn’t eat in other countries. Some were grossed out but some were more daring. My quiet bunch of girls kept giving me that look that screamed, “Oh please turn this off, and it’s so gross!” When they were asked to discuss what foods they’d eat with a partner, I momentarily left the room and came back to Sara scolding them. Apparently in my absence, the kids had stopped listening to her and were not showing her the same respect they showed me when I was speaking. I was taken aback by this since this was “our” classroom and students normally responded the same to both of “us”. This was definitely a shocker but it got me thinking: Why?

I needed to find a way to get them involved. I was very upset that in my absence the kids were not well-behaved for Sara. Now I wondered if this was because I had built a rapport with them at lunch since I had them for lunch duty. Was it because I was a little more assertive when it came to the older grades? Was it because I originally handed them the papers for this study? Sara and I discussed how we felt about what happened. Later that day Sara disciplined one of our

classes and moments after I added in. At the end of the day, she questioned whether or not the lack of respect was because I chime in right behind her. Honestly I didn't know but I could see how this would have bothered her. I can see how students were responding because I gave them the warning the second time instead of her. We decided that when one of us was disciplining, neither one of us was allowed to add, help, nor modify what the other person was saying. That way, she and I would both be seen as the teachers and both receive respect from our students. We agreed that day and we've never had that talk again. When she corrected their behavior I remained quiet and she did the same for me.

The next day, Sara had another obligation to cover another lunch duty and I started class by myself. Students walked in and panicked to see only me. Miguel and Ivan were most concerned with her absence. I half-jokingly made them feel guilty for hurting her feelings and said that she wouldn't be in class until she recovered. I know that may have been wrong but I was still disappointed with the fact that they disrespected her so badly. Their behavior began to change. I think they genuinely felt bad for hurting her feelings and students were focused and on task. They got started right away I didn't need to tell them to do their work or tell them to listen: they just did. I set a timer to get them in their seats, one for the warm up, and one for discussion. They responded very well to this to my surprise. Do they use timers in their other classes?

We began this lesson reviewing short E and short I vowel sounds. Students had made a list and someone had wrote “cet”. Sara walked in and reviewed that “cet” wouldn’t be pronounced with the /s/ sound but with the /c/ sound. Leo then proceeded to ask what “lit” means. I then turned the lights off and referred to our pet turtle’s light to demonstrate how it is lit. I turned on the lights showed him how the room was now lit. Leo still seemed confused and I said *alumbrado*, and then he understood. Ivan wanted to know what “let” was and someone said *dejar* and he didn’t need further explanation. I found that in lessons like these, sometimes pictures just don’t help in developing the understandings of our students. Providing that one word in their native language was enough to shed light on their understanding. It made me happy to have them ask questions like these. I was almost positive they wouldn’t have asked these questions in their general core classes. There is a difference in what you can say in a class where everyone is learning the same skill as opposed to when the language is a barrier in a content based class.

Days like these make me proud to be an ESL teacher. I felt like I could finally help them with something. I taught them new words and taught them how to properly pronounce consonant-vowel-consonant words (also known as CVC words) that they probably had no idea existed

Week Seven: Research Projects Finally Begin

By this point in the study, after reviewing responses to surveys, Sara and I discovered that students really wanted to do a project. Sara and I had discussed in detail what we wanted the projects to look like. We wanted each language domain to be covered. We planned sections devoted to reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students would research a country and its culture to learn about. As a class we had spent time learning about our families, our cultures, the cultures of those around the world and the culture and history of our area. It was our hope to have students to do research, complete graphic organizers, write an essay, create a poster and present what they had learned. It was my belief that if Krashen's theory of the affective filter was a determining factor in acquiring a second language, students should be interested in what they were learning (Hadley, 2001) (Reiss, 2012). We made a rubric for their writing (Appendix O), a rubric for their oral presentations (Appendix P) and wrote them a letter before they began. I felt prepared to begin this monster. Sara was excited as it was something the kids really wanted and we managed to agree upon it. I questioned myself about whether or not straying away from our initial plan would be okay. I then realized that there were many skills that were needed for a research project. Our unit was about our families. It transitioned into our cultures, then to the cultures of others. This was key, as the research project required them to study another country. If we let the kids pick a country, they'd probably pick another Latin American country, so Sara and I decided to make a list of countries. Our students would be

randomly selected by an online name generator that would select their name, a partner and a country for both of them to study. This name generator is something similar to The Wheel of Fortune.

Monday, Sara and I were still working through the very fine details of the research project and decided to let our students write. We still wanted to know more about them, especially our kids who seemed so mysterious, like Aida, Jazmin, Eleni, and Hugo. They appeared to let us know what they wanted us to believe about them and kept the rest a mystery. Today our kids were to write about a moment when they felt most embarrassed. Students wrote rather quietly because it was something that mattered to them. We also made it a habit to have students share their writing to cover all domains of English learning: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students were given the choice to share or not depending on their level of comfort. Given that some of our students were rather shy, we asked for volunteers to share their writing. Sara and I willingly volunteered first to break the ice. Roger shared how he was embarrassed when his mom told his science teacher that he didn't speak English and his teacher said he didn't care and spoke to him in English anyway. Roger did not read directly from his journal while speaking because he had been very honest about what he had been thinking.

While I read their journals after class, I was surprised to see that students with limited English proficiency could still master the social language perfectly.

Leo shared how he was embarrassed about talking too fast. Darian shared how his pants fell off in the pool and a little girl saw him. Ivan shared about how his alarm clock went off in class. Marc shared how his class had embarrassed him about a girlfriend. What did I need to do to get them to talk? I hoped the research project would serve as motivation to get them talking. I did learn though that the ones who were most motivated to learn English always spoke up and never cared about making mistakes.

Tuesday was the start of the project. The kids were excited and to my surprise, it literally took the whole class block to simply talk about the project and assign partners and countries. The students were upset and riled up because they wanted to work with whomever they wanted. They were not happy that we picked for them. We presented both rubrics and read through our letter with them. Students seemed as excited to begin as were we. We were so excited to get the ball rolling, and then Wednesday the classroom teachers had a field trip planned and they didn't let us know until lunchtime. At moments like this one I wished our classroom teachers had better communication with us. I realized that the life of a classroom teacher is so busy, that they rarely get a chance to check their emails let alone send any to support staff. I should have been more proactive and confirmed our class sessions with the classroom teachers daily. Therefore I sent the middle school team a list of questions (Appendix J) related to how teachers felt our students were doing in their class.

The first thing we learned was that the math teacher said our students rarely spoke up in her class. I also noted that the other teachers on the team spoke Spanish to some capacity whereas the math teacher did not. After comparing the second student survey (Appendix I) with the teacher questions (Appendix J), I noted that some teachers were aware of their insecurities while some were not. The Language Arts teacher commented that because she spoke Spanish, she felt that her students didn't struggle as much. The social studies teacher noted a boost of confidence in her students as a result of our instruction. Reading her response made me feel proud.

Thursday came and we finally got the chance to start the research project. Students were allowed to freely go into Google Images and search for images of their assigned countries. Ivan wanted to speak only English which was a great improvement from other class sessions. Kelvin was on his own and Aida and Jazmin worked together. During this time, Sara was sitting on one side of the room and I was sitting on the other side. The Reading Specialist came in and sat at the kidney shaped table with me, Darian, and Roger. While working Leo asked "How do you say 'beat' in English?" Sara told him that beat had two meanings. Darian was playing some music from Algeria since he was researching this country for his project. Ivan asked for headphones to listen to music because it helped him to stay focused.

Darian: How do you read so much?

Reading Specialist: I read things I like.

Darian: I can't find a book and spend my whole day reading a book. It's not interesting.

Reading Specialist: You have to find a book you like.

Darian: I don't like any books. None of them are interesting.

Reading Specialist: Then read a book in Spanish.

Darian: I don't have any.

(I suggested that he go to his LA teacher who has a wonderful selection in Spanish.)

Reading Specialist: I think I like you better with hair. (Darian just got a haircut.)

Darian: My dad cut it so I won't look gay.

Reading Specialist: What does it mean to look gay?

Darian: I don't think there's anything wrong with liking a boy. We are all people and liking a boy doesn't make you less of a person or less smarter. My dad says God did not make us to be gay. I wish I could be able to go back and change the future.

Reading Specialist: Sounds like you don't agree with your dad.

Darian: (nods) Are books what make you funny? Because I want to be funny too.

Reading Specialist: Sometimes.

Darian: Oh. I will be moving to Florida in December. My step dad has family there and my mom has to go too. My dad is in the Dominican Republic. He is a drug *addicto* and is in and out of jail. I want to ask him why he won't just stop stealing and live with me again. My mom always listens to her husband and never says what she think. I think it's because she is scared that her husband will send her to the Dominican Republic.

Listening to Darian and the Reading Specialist talk reminded me of all the baggage that these kids were constantly carrying. It was this week where I also learned that Hugo had an IEP that had him at a first grade reading level. Unfortunately, no one at the school knew of this information and that week his mom came in with paperwork. Hugo had been on all of our watch lists, but we never had documentation and were documenting his growth over a year's span to get him evaluated. When mom dropped by that week to deliver his paperwork, we were able to implement a plan with the Special Education teacher to have him start classes with her as soon as it was possible.

I also learned that Jazmin had been abused by a grandfather before coming to the United States. The situation repeated itself a couple of times, so it was no wonder she didn't talk. This child was probably 11 years old and was carrying these awful memories. Jazmin's stepmother had come in and requested a meeting to discuss her grades. In this meeting she shared important information about

Jazmin. I unfortunately could not be present at the meeting because I needed to provide coverage in the cafeteria for breakfast. Sara went and we discussed the information afterwards. Jazmin believed her mother died from cancer which was also a story she was told. Her stepmother mentioned at the meeting that Jazmin's mom was actually stabbed to death. Do classroom teachers realize the baggage these kids carry around with them on a daily basis? I know I for one was learning more about them. Were we being sensitive enough and providing a safe place to learn? I knew the information I received overwhelmed me but the pieces of the puzzle were coming together for me. Hugo was a reluctant reader and writer because he really just didn't know how to write. Jazmin was quiet because she felt insecure about herself and was carrying a lot of hurt and was creating barriers between herself and others. Darian wanted to be an actor and make other people laugh because that is how he coped with all of the terrible things he had been going through with his father. This may have been a time for kids to research another country, but this was certainly my time to research them as people.

Week Eight: What did I get myself into?

The week began on a lonesome note. Sara's daughter was out sick and she needed to stay home to take care of her. Now, as a classroom teacher, one would think I would be used to working alone, but gosh was it hard! I don't think it was difficult because I was dependent on Sara, I think it was just because I was used

to having someone else in the room with me to break down ideas with. The students were disappointed to only see me. I'm not sure how any other teachers would have taken this, but I took it as a compliment. Our kids liked to learn from both of us and to see only one of us there clearly made them sad. The students began working on their projects; I noticed that they were still looking at pictures. I showed them where to put the pictures they wanted to use. They didn't know how to save them or how to transfer them into a word document. I thought these were things they already learned to do. I made that assumption because every year students were expected to complete what we called MDPs (multi-disciplinary projects). Each class did this toward the end of the year. The biggest mistake I had made was to assume they had prior knowledge, when actually I and should have explicitly taught them each step. On the board, I wrote some ideas of what they should look for (they were to look up the food, music, clothing, maps, languages, population and anything else they thought would be important and exciting to learn about).

By Wednesday, I learned that perhaps instead of having expectations, I should have presented the rubrics first (Appendix O and P). I spent the class period discussing the specifics of the rubrics. On Thursday we decided to show students how to write an introductory paragraph about their countries. I modeled a paragraph for them and had them copy this example into their journals where they took notes and completed all warm-ups. With colored pencils or highlighters, I

had them identify the hook sentence, the three supporting details and facts and a closing statement. Students did this successfully. Sara wrote on the chalkboard about ways to hook the reader: Ask a question, tell a story, and describe your senses. Students seemed to grasp the concept. Jazmin agreed to volunteer to discuss the closing statement and did so very quietly. I was happy that she was starting to feel more at home and was speaking up more on her own. I was happy about modeling for the kids how to appropriately write a first paragraph.

By Friday, I discovered the difficulties they were having were because the students needed examples of ways to hook the reader. Students were to imitate what Sara and I did the day before. They wrote and literally copied what I wrote on the board the day before and tried to pass that off as their own work. Hugo needed help. Roger had barely anything written and everyone started the sentence the same way I did. Writing styles in English are completely different from how they are in Spanish. Sara and I discussed how the students needed to see a very concrete example in writing and we provided them with an outline, a graphic organizer, and a map (Appendices L, M, and N) to organize their notes and to help structure their writing. This group was amazing at telling stories but struggled to write what they wanted to say. The graphic organizer helped them to be successful.

I struggled growing up because I wrote the way I spoke. In my Hispanic culture, we spoke in circles and in and out of topics that eventually end up back to

the point at which you started. The English way of writing is usually more succinct and the kids were now being forced to learn in this very rigid way. In English writing, there is a very specific order and structure to your writing. You must follow the rules, whereas in the Hispanic culture, it's not like that.

Writing was frustrating in first grade but not like this. I think it was because our students could handle more content than first graders but language was a barrier. At times students came up to ask me in Spanish how to say something in English. Sometimes students came up and gave me fragments with several words in Spanish and asked how to improve their sentences. That afternoon Sara and I sat down to debrief the week. We looked at our resources for some ideas and created a graphic organizer (Appendix M) that seemed like it would work. It was very detailed with each category we wanted students to write about. Underneath each category we provided three lines for them to write a fact on each line. When completed, we crossed our fingers in hopes that it would make paragraph writing more comprehensible for the kids during our next class session.

Week Nine: Busy at Work

This week proved to be interesting in the sense that we practiced step four: *Discuss Individualized Education Plans and regular education goals* (Marston, 2015). We held ESL meetings with classroom teachers.

Our meetings with our staff members was laborious and exhausting because they each lasted an hour and there was one for each grade in the school (kindergarten through seventh grade). We discussed our worries about some of our students. We noticed that many of our teachers were unaware as to how they could effectively help the ELLs in their classrooms. It was my job to help classroom teachers understand what it means to speak a language and how long the process takes. At the meetings we discussed how long each student was in this country and what they had scored on the WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment). We then discussed their strengths and weaknesses. In language development, speaking and listening come first. Reading and writing come last. Several of our students were just beginning to develop their writing skills.

I was able to see which teams worked together and which teams didn't. I could see which teams thought the meetings were pointless. Some teachers accepted me into their classrooms where I was allowed to freely walk in and assist. Others made it known that I was overstepping boundaries. I was able to walk in to two classrooms a day to provide in class support to my students during the built-in push-in time embedded into our co-teaching schedule. Sara spoke and I observed and when I spoke, Sara observed. It was a great example of teamwork.

Week Ten: A Walk Back In Time

This week, our students visited a Historical Plantation. We did this as part of our unit on families and cultures. They studied their families, their cultures, and cultures around the world. They also learned about the history and culture of the hometown of their school. Due to this field trip, we didn't have class every week. During the few classes we had, students were working on formulating their rough drafts of their projects using all handouts we provided them. I was content with their efforts.

When I first started working as an ESL teacher, I was told that these kids had never had a field trip. I was shocked by this and didn't know why that was. The weeks prior to this trip consisted of planning and gathering permission slips to attend this trip. We had discussed our individual cultures, the cultures of the country of study and then the culture of Pennsylvania. Many of these students had no idea what the history of this area was. I helped arrange a field trip for every grade level we taught. The school took care of transportation for us and we were responsible for the cost of the visit. We did fundraising to pay for those who couldn't afford it. The big day had come and our students were excited. Sara and I went into each classroom pulling out each and every student and checking our list to make sure we got everyone. We quickly loaded the bus and we were on our way. The plantation was only ten minutes away from our school but quaintly hidden. When students arrived they were in awe. Leo said it reminded him of his house back in Puerto Rico. Other students said it also reminded them of their

homes in Ecuador. There were farmhouses and horse stables. Students listened intently to details on how farmers lived here in the 1700s. They beat the wheat and tasted apple butter. They used a quill pen and learned some German. They learned and saw things there that we could never have taught them in our classroom. They powered through a horse-operated mill system and learned that life on a farm was a very difficult life to live. They learned the jobs and chores of pre-teens like them. Some said they would prefer to live like that. My best guess was because it was simple. It reminded them of home and that's where they wanted to go back to.

Given the fact that we were the only group to visit from our school, we were able to take home a traveling trunk. The trunk was large and needed to be carried by two people. When students got on the bus, they thanked us. Why they had thanked us was really something I was unsure about, however I assumed it was for letting them experience something they didn't even know existed in their own backyard. They were now a little more aware of the area in which they lived.

I felt honored to have taken a group like that one. They were a sweet bunch of students who were grateful. It made me happy that I could expose them to a little piece of Pennsylvania's cultural heritage. I would like to plan another trip for them, but it would have to be culture-based. I think students who move to a new country should be made aware of the history of that place.

Week Eleven: So Close I Can Almost See It!

The study was coming to an end and strange things started to happen. Darian and Leo hadn't been themselves lately. I know that when boys fight, they usually get over it rather quickly. It had been a week and there were no signs of letting up. I spoke with Leo and Darian separately at lunch. They had each been mad at each other for about a week now. It was during this time that I could tell how angry they were either with comments or dirty looks exchanged. I kept Darian after class to discuss why he was angry. He explained that sometimes he thought Leo was being stupid. I asked him how he came to that conclusion and this was the dialogue that took place:

Darian: "Miss, sometime he just stupid. I don't understand what he says. He does something like this....mumumumu.... He talks too fast and I don't understand him."

Me: "Darian, let me explain something to you. You are from the Dominican Republic. Leo is from Puerto Rico, and so am I. We all talk really fast."

Darian: "No you don't Miss, I understand everything you say."

Me: "Darian, that's because I am using my teacher voice. But when I'm not teaching, I talk really fast! I can't help it."

Sara: "uh hum"

Darian: "Really Miss Cruz?"

Me: “Yes Darian, that doesn’t mean he’s stupid, it just means we do things different because we are from different countries.”

Presentations would be happening at the end of this week. I looked forward to seeing each presentation as I was curious to see the fruits of our labor. Kelvin worked beside me most of this week because he needed me to constantly keep him on track. That week, students printed pictures and with our art supplies they created posters on poster boards they either brought in or we provided. The visuals and the writing were clear and beautiful. Complete sentences were written and each picture had a title.

Presentation day finally arrived. I sat at my desk with a stack of rubrics (Appendix P) in hand. Students were nervous and some were shaking at the fact that it was now their turn to present. I waited to see what the day would bring. I realized that our laborious efforts paid off. Students were given time to rehearse what information they wanted to talk about with the class and on flash cards evenly divided their talk time with their partner. Our students were sitting attentively to other presenters and each of them equally contributed to the project. Each person spoke approximately five minutes in English without letting one word in Spanish slip out. The only feeling I felt at this point was pride. They did it! They were successful and were able to show what they learned through their posters and writings (Figures 5, 6, and 7). I had to ask a few questions at the end to ensure understanding versus rehearsed speech.

China

Have you ever gone to china and felt the climate? Have you tasted the food? Have you seen how how they dressed? One cool thing of china is the greatest wall. China is a big country with a lot of different things.

The climate is cold, Mid, warm, subtropical and tropical. The Chinese language is standard Mandarin. The color of the flag is Yellow and Red. The population of china is 1.36 Billion of People. The sports that they play are Basketball, soccer and Bad minton. The president of china is Jining. The location of china is in Southwest Asia. The Capital Beijing.

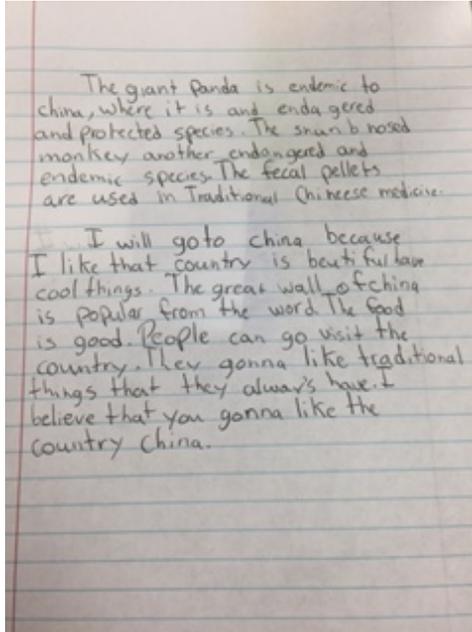
Figure 5

Some foods from china Rice, Sea cuisine, Kang Cuisine, The Cuisine, Northern, Taiwan, Mongolian and Tibetan. One of the traditional food is kang cuisine. The poor area of china eat only rice. The food of china is good. The food of china sometimes cannot look good.

One of the famous people is Zhenwei Wang who is a Movie Actor. Another Movie actor is Jet Li. Yao Ming play Basket ball in the Rockets of Houston. Lang Lang is a pianist. Lin Dan is a Bad minton player.

The traditional clothing is the chongsan is very traditional. The Chinese civilization traditional costumes play an important role in the country's history and culture. The traditional clothing they use china plot. Sometimes they use normal clothing.

Figure 6



The rubrics we provided were helpful and students responded well to them. They knew what was expected of them and they succeeded as a result.

Figure 7

Sara and I met to discuss what we noticed and what we learned about our project. We learned that with the necessary supports put in place and the clearly defined scaffolds, our kids could do anything that we asked them to. The rubrics we provided were helpful and students responded well to them. They knew what was expected of them and they succeeded as a result.

Week Twelve: Final Thoughts

During my RTII block, I took some time to administer the same interest survey (Appendix F) with our students they completed at the start of the study.

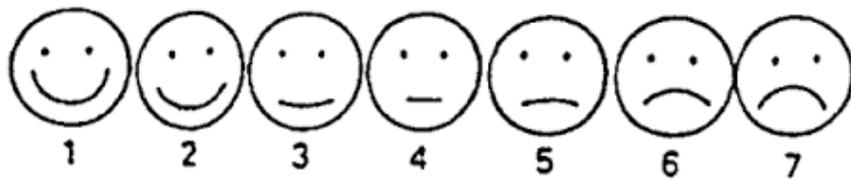


Table 4

Question Number	1.	3		3	3		1	2
	2.	10		1	1			
	3.	8	1	1	2			

	4.	5		3	2			1
	5.	1	3	3	3			3
	6.	1	1	3	1	1	2	4
	7.	6	1		1		2	2
	8.	6		1	2		1	2
	9.	7	1	2	2			
	10.			2	2	2	1	4
Feeling and Number of Students Who responded To Each Question								
* 10/12 students like learning English * 4/12 students prefer to work in partners or groups * 8/12 students feel comfortable being spoken to in English * 7/12 students like working in pairs								

In looking at their final English Language Interest Survey, I was able to find out that our students' attitude towards learning a language had changed. Joely, our most resistant learner, once gave all her ratings a seven (being the lowest in regards to her interest to learn English). Her interest increased and she gave ones the highest rating on her attitude towards learning English and being spoken to in English. Hugo also changed how he viewed himself as a reader. He ranked his ability to read in English as a one. Once he got the support he needed and the scaffolds during lessons he felt more successful. Over these twelve weeks, I was able to see some students flourish while some simply stayed a mystery. I learned a great deal about myself and learned that flexibility is an important quality. I handed out the survey as a warm up at the beginning of class and students didn't

question it not once. They completed the surveys and placed them in a pile in the middle of their table.

I reflected back upon my experience as a researcher and my field log to find that I spent a great deal of time confused. I saw bits and pieces of information and never saw a whole. This often left me worried and uneasy but seeing where we were now and having learned all that I learned, I realized that every piece makes up a part of the puzzle. Sometimes it was more gratifying to put the pieces together without knowing what it held than to walk in knowing what to expect. There was an element of beauty to the mysterious unknown. Sara and I indeed struggled in successfully co-teaching but we managed. It was a rewarding experience through which I learned empathy toward a fellow teacher. We identified what our teaching styles were and collaborated to make instruction cohesive in our classroom. We broke down our own walls of fear practiced in step three of co-teaching: discuss strengths and weakness (Marston, 2015). Sara was organized like no one I had ever met before. I was organized but nothing like her and learned a few tips by watching. I uncovered a fault which was the fact that I am quick to act and speak and with Sara I learned to watch and then act or speak. I was good at planning for the long haul and Sara learned how to plan a scope and sequence to make cohesive units that aligned both with standards and the classroom teachers. We planned goals for specific students and stuck with them. Time passed and we got better at addressing interruptions and problems as they

came. We came together as a team and our students saw us as such. We were able to successfully complete all of the six steps to successful co-teaching (Marston, 2015) but the most difficult was the last step: take risks and grow! The biggest risk we took was to trust each other. The students had changed because of us and we had changed because of them. We were a classroom filled with students and teachers equally learning from one other.

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

While conducting my study I was able to see the evolution of my initial question and the sources used to collect data. I had not been astonished by this as I carefully reviewed and analyzed the data to see in what ways my students had grown. Through this analysis, I was able to gain insight into my students and their achievements.

Fall and Winter Aimsweb Scores

Students were given the Aimsweb reading fluency test at the beginning and at the conclusion of this study. Table 5 represents the Lexile levels of the students. Within this table, one can see the progression of students in their overall reading fluency. These students were in sixth and seventh grade. Native English speakers in grades 6-8 who read on grade level should be reading at approximately a Lexile level of 950-1040L. This class was composed of many newcomers and therefore the Lexile levels presented are not on grade level yet. Several students were on the cusp of reaching grade level.

While analyzing the data, Darian (pink) was the only student who was close to being on grade level. With additional support, he was able to reach grade level in reading. This was impressive given that this was his second year in the United States. Eleni and Aida (orange) came next. They were reading at a fourth to fifth grade reading level. Joely (yellow) was reading between a third and fourth grade reading level. Ivan, Roger, Leo, Kelvin, and Miguel (purple) were reading at a third grade reading level. Marc and Jazmin (blue) were reading at a second grade level and Hugo (green) was reading at a first grade level.

Table 5

	Fall Lexile Levels	Winter Lexile Levels
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Marc	460L	510L
Jazmin	395L	515L
Hugo	185L	250L
Eleni	N/A	815L
Ivan	N/A	710L
Roger	715L	705L
Aida	690L	840L
Joely	625L	780L
Darian	890L	940L
Leo	520L	585L
Kelvin	N/A	670L
Miguel	N/A	630L

From the students listed above, Joely made the most progress in her reading fluency. She increased 155 Lexile points in her Lexile score. Aida increased 150 Lexile points. Jazmin increased 120 Lexile points. Hugo and Leo increased 65 Lexile points. Marc and Darian, increased 50 Lexile points. Kelvin, Miguel, Ivan, and Eleni were not present for the fall Aimsweb assessment and therefore the data gathered was solely on their winter score and growth could not be measured. However, Roger regressed by lowering his Lexile score by 10

points. Towards the conclusion of the study, Roger became unfocused and this may or may not have affected his performance. There are other variables to consider for this regression. Due to the amount of growth that was recorded for Darian, he is now being monitored and was placed back with his general education classroom.

The ESL strategies *Allot Extra Time* and *Allow Extra Wait Time* (Reiss, 2012) were useful when students were reading. They gave students the opportunity to read at their own pace without them feeling rushed, or focusing too much on accuracy while they read aloud. When asking comprehension questions, students were given the proper amount of time to properly formulate their answers.

Fall and Winter Spelling Inventories

When analyzing the students’ initial Fall Aimsweb Scores and Spelling Inventory (Tables 5 and 6) I learned that my students were behind in reading and writing. I needed to provide as much support as was necessary to get my students to progress in reading. At times this was challenging as my students resisted reading and writing.

Table 6

Student:	Fall English Spelling Inventory	Winter English Spelling Inventory	Fall Spanish Spelling Inventory	Winter Spanish Spelling Inventory
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Marc	Complex Consonants	Complex Consonants	Inflected Endings	Inflected Endings
Hugo	Complex Consonants	vowels	Inflected Endings	Inflected Endings
Jazmin	Complex Consonants	Complex Consonants	Inflected Endings	Accents
Miguel	Complex Consonants	Complex Consonants	Inflected Endings	Silent letters
Ivan	vowels	Complex Consonants	silent letters	Accents
Eleni	vowels	Complex Consonants	Accents	Accents
Kelvin	vowels	Complex Consonants	Inflected Endings	Inflected Endings
Darian	vowels	Complex Consonants	silent letters	Off the Chart
Leo	Complex Consonants	Complex Consonants	silent letters	silent letters
Aida	vowels	vowels	Accents	Accents
Joely	vowels	vowels	Diphthongs	Off the Chart
Roger	vowels	vowels	silent letters	silent letters

regression
no progress
improvement
above progress

I used various ESL strategies such as *Spark Interest*, *Use Graphic Organizers as Assignments*, *Use visuals and graphics*, and *Grade Written Work with a Rubric* (Reiss, 2012). These strategies assisted and helped in keeping students motivated and allowed my co-teacher and I to create lessons to address their individual needs.

Table 6 demonstrates the growth students made in both their Fall and Winter English Spelling Inventory. It also demonstrates the Fall and Winter Spanish Spelling Inventory. Through the analysis of this data, I was able to identify which students progressed in either English only, both English and Spanish, or those who regressed in either language.

All students improved in their Lexile levels (Table 5), however several improved in their spelling of English and Spanish and others improved in their spelling of Spanish but stayed the same in English. This allowed me to see what skills to focus on in class to help them reach their goals for the spring. I wrote reflective memos based on the data, and these helped to analyze specific details in my study, which in turn helped me to see the bigger picture.

Hugo regressed in his English Spelling Inventory and showed no progress in his Spanish Spelling Inventory. Marc, Leo, Aida, and Roger, showed no progress in either English or Spanish in their Spelling Inventories. Jazmin and Miguel showed no progress in their English Spelling Inventory, however improved in their Spanish Spelling Inventory. Eleni and Kelvin showed improvement in their English Spelling Inventory yet showed no progress in their Spanish Spelling Inventory. Ivan showed growth in both English and Spanish Spelling Inventories. Darian made adequate growth in his English Spelling Inventory and showed above average progress in the Spanish Spelling Inventory

as his final score was off the charts. Joel made no progress in her English Spelling Inventory yet made above average growth in her Spanish Spelling Inventory.

The strategies we taught such as *Use Visuals and Graphics, and Grade Written Work with a Rubric* (Reiss, 2012) helped our students to become better writers and they helped some of our students improve their spelling. The data show that most students made growth whether it was in their native language or the second language of English.

Pre and Post English Language Survey

I administered identical English Language Surveys (Table 7 and 8) as a pre- and post-survey to get a feel for the students' feelings towards the English language and reading. At the beginning of the survey students were rather resistant to learning English.

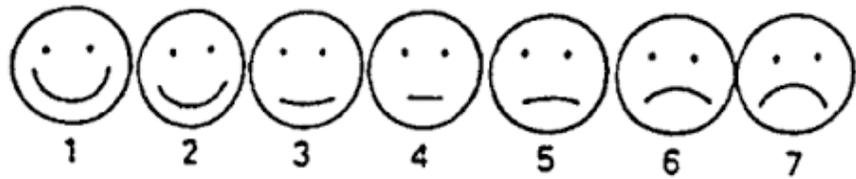


Table 7

Question Number	1.	2		2	1	1		3
	2.	6	2					1
	3.	3	2	1	1	1		1

	4.	2	1	1	2		1	2
	5.	3			3	1		2
	6.	2			1	2	2	2
	7.	4	1	1	2			1
	8.	2		1	3	1	1	1
	9.	5	3			1		
	10.	1			2	2		4
Feeling and Number of Students Who responded To Each Question								

Through our co-teaching efforts, at the conclusion of our study our students stated that they felt more comfortable learning the English language. This was a great improvement for Joely, who had resisted learning the English language from the beginning. Joely initially scored her response as feeling uncomfortable (seven) in English to very comfortable (one).

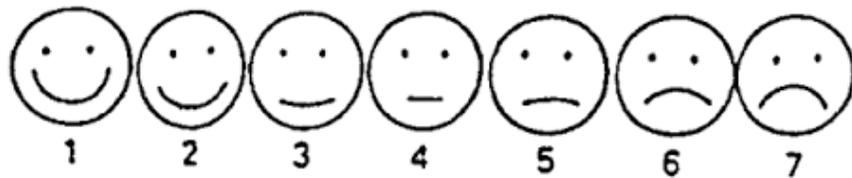


Table 8

Question Number	1.	3		3	3		1	2
	2.	10		1	1			
	3.	8	1	1	2			

	4.	5		3	2			1
	5.	1	3	3	3			3
	6.	1	1	3	1	1	2	4
	7.	6	1		1		2	2
	8.	6		1	2		1	2
	9.	7	1	2	2			
	10.			2	2	2	1	4
Feeling and Number of Students Who responded To Each Question								

Hugo, who had initially given himself seven for being a good reader, gave himself a two at the end because he felt he could read. Now, with these two students as an example through the analysis of their responses, I can say that the students who felt most uncomfortable with reading and learning the language became more at ease and stated so in their final survey. It is my belief that through the ESL strategies implemented and our collaborative co-teaching efforts, such as *Allot Extra Time and Allow Extra Wait Time* (Reiss, 2012), our students were able to successfully grow in the language and as students.

Initially six out of nine students liked learning English. Five out of nine students preferred to work with partners or in groups. Four out of nine students were still being read to in English. Four out nine students disliked working alone. At the end of the study, 10 out of 12 students liked learning English. Four out 12

students preferred to work with partners or in groups. Eight out of 12 students felt comfortable being spoken to in English and seven out of 12 students preferred to work in pairs.

Students showed an increase in wanting to learn English, however, they seemed to lose interest in working in larger groups and preferred to work in pairs. I would like to believe this is because of the example provided with our co-teaching. However, there are many variables to consider-such as the exact pairings-used that could have affected their feelings. A large portion of the class felt comfortable enough with listening to someone speaking to them solely in English.

Bins and Codes

While analyzing the data in my field journal, I began to organize my common data sources into specific codes in which I highlighted in my journal, assigning each code a color. Within this process, I began to review and analyze the student work and surveys, and started to find common themes within my data. Through extensive review of the data, I recoded my field log journal. I then began to use the data in my field journal, the student work, and assessments given. I

consolidated all of my data into **Classroom Culture & Setting** seen in Figure 8. Figure 8 demonstrates the important codes and bins related to my study. I then proceeded to create theme statements for the bins I had also created. The theme statements summarized and provided a conclusion to what I had learned and gathered as a researcher.

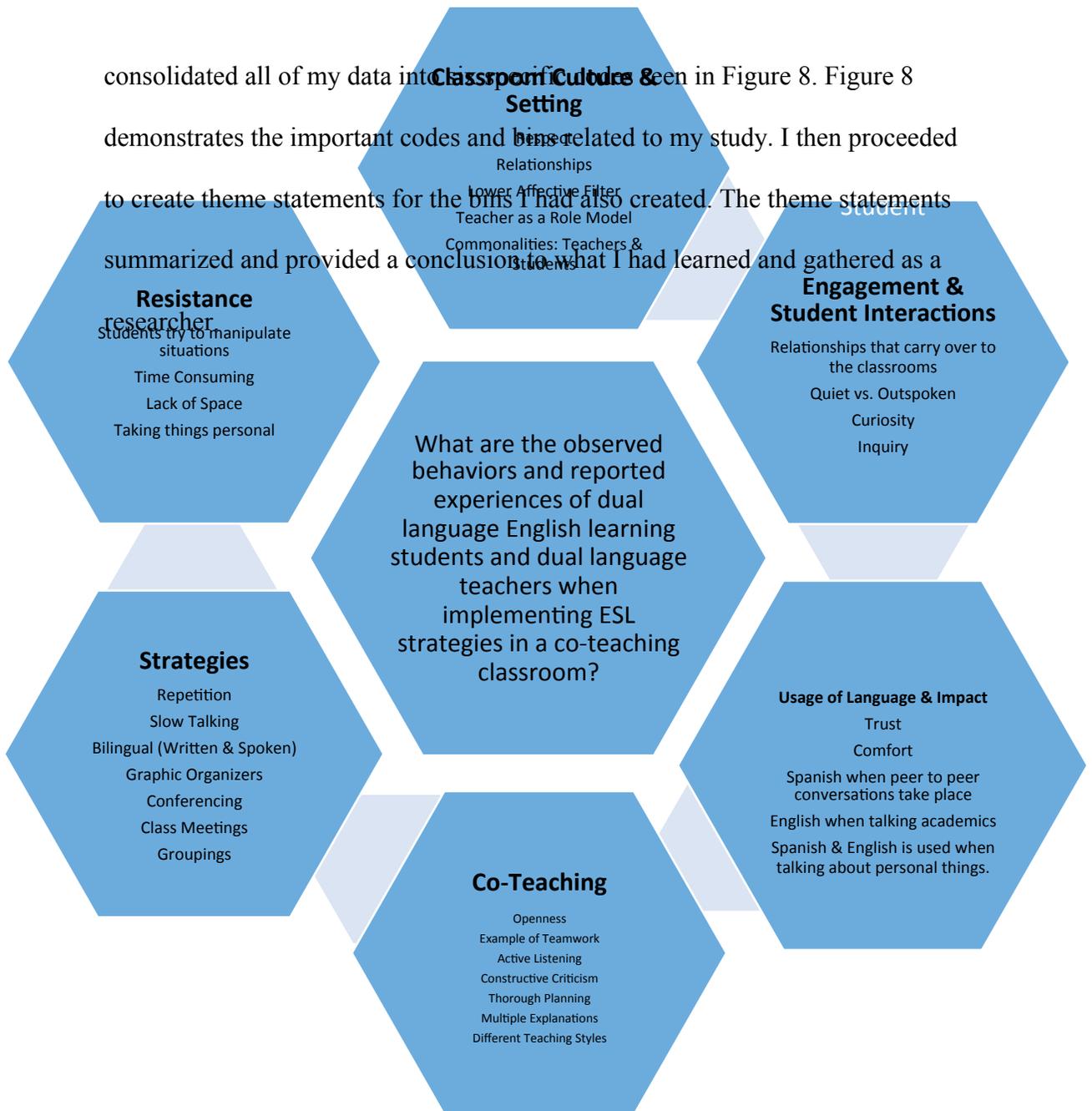


Figure 8

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Frustration

Frustration from both students and teachers can occur within a world language classroom when there is not a sufficient amount of scaffolding

embedded within the lessons and activities. Frustration can also occur in response to the social and political logistics of a school.

I learned the importance of giving slow, clear directions that were simple. Even though one can become frustrated by the situation one is in, one needs to put forth the effort and give it all. We can only control so much; we cannot afford to worry about the rest, and should instead maintain focus on our core goals. The constraints serve as barriers, not limitations.

“A deepened consciousness of their situation leads people to apprehend that situation as an historical reality susceptible to transformation. Resignation gives way to the drive for transformation and inquiry, over which men feel themselves to be in control” (Freire, 2000, p.85).

When people are within a situation it often becomes difficult for them to see that situation changing from its existent reality.

When Freire refers to “deepened consciousness” I believe he is referring to that very moment where you achieve wholeness and are fully aware of yourself (as a person) and your feelings. When you realize that you are in a position that is not as you expected or hoped, feelings of resignation take over and you lose hope. Resignation comes when you feel you have no control and that moment then leads you to question and wonder.

Once people resign themselves to the fact that the situation is reality that motivates them to ask questions and seek answers to change what is. This allows the people to feel in control of the situation at hand.

In relation to my study, I struggled to wrap my brain around the change in my position. Sara struggled with the concept of letting go and trusting someone else with her students. We both needed to let things go in order to ask the right questions to lead us in the right direction in our collaboration and instruction.

My deepened consciousness led me to the point where I realized that I needed to do something more. I came to accept what was and what wasn't, and learned that I needed to make the best of what was in front of me. Sure, I had been upset with the change in my position as I was notified abruptly and had little to no time to process the information. I then realized that I had to be the best of me no matter where I am for the sake of my kids. If I was placed in something I was less than ecstatic about I needed to find reasons to feel excited about it. I then decided to ask questions about what questions led me to my study. I have a motto in life: Do everything you do with love. The moment you stop loving what you're doing, then you stop doing it. I needed to find reasons to love this new position. Upon meeting my students, my whole perspective changed. They taught me that my initial feelings were misplaced and that they were really the root of why the decision was made. They needed someone who was knowledgeable about how to

teach them best. It was they, who taught me that my deepened consciousness was an important lesson and a part of my growth as a person and as an educator. I needed to resign myself to what was before me. I asked questions that empowered me to move forward and accept and grow to love what I was doing in my classroom.

Joely refused to speak English and acculturate here in America. Her language skills were limited compared to those of Darian, who said that if he was here and they speak English here, he would learn. Darian had made leaps and bounds in a year versus Joely over a span of three years.

Anxiety

Anxiety experienced by students in a world language classroom may appear through both physical and verbal cues and may hinder or even halt the acquisition of new knowledge and language, and can further prevent students from mastering and applying their current understanding.

When students are struggling, as the teacher, one would need to make the decision whether or not to push that child harder, or allow them to develop at their rate. Our students are in the United States and it would be false to state that they are here by choice. Some regret moving here and others figure that while they are here they'll make the best of it. Those who are most resistant demonstrate the highest level of anxiety. (Hadley, 2001)

Classroom Management

Classroom rules must be followed consistently to produce an environment that is conducive to learning and that provides positive student-to-student and student-to-teacher interactions. Consistency in classroom management is key in producing a classroom where students are aware of expectations and held accountable for their actions.

If classroom management is inconsistent, it provides the opportunity for students to test the limitations and boundaries. Once clear rules have been set they must be enforced every time.

“My own caveat about interpreting the raised voices with which some teachers, usually African American, talk to children, is that it is important to listen to their words, not just their tone. Good teachers may be telling the children that they are “too smart” to be acting the way they are acting, or submitting the kind of work they are turning in (or not turning in). When a teacher expresses genuine emotion and a belief in a child’s ability to do better, that is a message that many children are eager to hear, regardless of the medium” (Delpit, 2012, p. 81).

Delpit expresses that good teachers may have a stern tone of voice but one should also focus in on the message being said. Students are eager to hear a teacher who wholeheartedly believes in their ability to do greater things than they are currently doing. When a good teacher expresses their beliefs of students and

their capabilities, students don't mind how it's stated because they can sense the genuineness behind it.

My students frequently came in with low self-esteem and tried to use that as an excuse to not do work. Unfortunately, they exhibited a learned helplessness. Throughout my study, I have witnessed many of my students sit around and wait for answers instead of trying because they thought they couldn't do things. I sometimes I needed to get down and up close in their face and tell them they could do it no matter what. They had to try because if they didn't, they were going to leave the same way they came. As is so commonly quoted in our room, "it is okay to make mistakes, but it is not okay to not try." I spend a great deal of time convincing my students of their worth in society. There were times when I needed to be tough because sometimes they wanted to stray from their work to play. I have observed through my study, that when they receive the stern, genuine, and sincere talking-to, they genuinely felt bad and then tried because they didn't want to disappoint us again. Classroom management was part sticking with it, but being stern, and showing that we cared. (Gandara, 2015)

Strategies

Age appropriate strategies and scaffolding are crucial within the classroom setting to ensure the success of its students and to provide a classroom setting, where students are motivated and not afraid to try new things.

The English Language Strategies used motivated students to complete tasks with little to no frustration. When assignments and work were given with little scaffolding and/or use of effective strategies, students became weary and couldn't get past the idea of completing the assignment. With the strategies in place, students were able to complete their work in sections that felt more manageable to them, and this allowed them to enjoy the process.

“To be clear, I believe that the ideal teaching of “skills” should be intentional and explicit, as well as be: (1) situated within engaging activities; (2) embedded in real writing, reading, and communication or, if taught in isolation, put immediately into the context of real writing, reading, and communication; and (3) taught flexibly when needed, rather than as an unvarying curriculum” (Delpit, 2012, p. 64).

Explicit and intentional instruction is what our students need to succeed. It should be found in real reading and writing and in context. Students need to participate in activities that are engaging and that are meaningful and allow students to make real-life connections. When skills are taught in isolation, students will struggle to make real-life connections with what they're learning. (Goodrich, Lonigan, & Farver, 2013)

Our studies are intended to craft our teaching in way that ultimately benefits our students. The previous quote reminded me of how important it was to

plan ahead in preparation to the study. We had the Santillana Spotlight curriculum. My colleague and I looked at all of them and found a common trend between all of the manuals but when looking at every teacher's curriculum map, I became worried. I discovered that we would be teaching things that were in isolation and not put into real context. I then needed to create thematic units that encompassed and integrated what they were learning in their general education classes along with bits and pieces of our curriculum. The study had given me the freedom to look at my instruction and decide how to bring it all together in a way that was most real to them. As we worked through a unit, students wanted to do a research project. We modified our initial planned unit to allow our students to take ownership of their own learning. Our students are researching other countries and their cultures. It is through this that we have had to demonstrate flexibility with the curriculum. We teach reading and writing skills necessary in order to conduct research. I believe our students were benefitting as they were able to produce a final product. Students found the skills and strategies we taught to be meaningful as they used them in real ways that could help them prepare for real life situations.

Relationships

Relationships are an important aspect within a classroom setting that require students and teachers alike to show mutual respect to build a community

of learners. It is through building relationships that students and teachers feel comfortable with each other and themselves to grow and make mistakes freely through the learning process.

The relationships built were incredible. Students helped each other without judgment and teachers helped each other to grow. Because of these relationships a community of learners formed, in which all students and teachers grew in our understanding of one another.

“Children can imitate a variety of actions that go well beyond the limits of their own capabilities. Using imitation, children are capable of doing much more in collective activity or under the guidance of adults” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 88).

Vygotsky discusses something in this quote that often gets overlooked. Children love to imitate. They imitate anywhere they can because essentially that’s how they first learn something: through imitation. By imitating others, students can see something being done and produce the same thing with little to no effort. Students would not be able to do the same thing independently had they not seen it first. With the guidance of an adult they are much more capable of doing greater activities. (Alanis, 2013)

I find that this quote relates to my study because my students are always imitating their native English speaking peers and their teachers. It is common to find them walking, talking, or acting like the people around them. I find this to be

so because when learning English, they are seeking role models they can emulate. They know what they want to look like and sound like and they use those ideas to find someone who fits the image they created. I find this to be true when they imitate the teachers because they want to be “cool”. I am not bothered by this because to me, it seems relatively normal and acceptable for second language learners to imitate and emulate others they consider role models.

“Although I contend that teachers of all ethnicities are capable of successfully teaching African American children, most of the teachers I have described here are themselves African American. Their success is not because their skin color matches their students’ but because they know the lives and *culture* of their students. Knowing students is a prerequisite for teaching them well” (Delpit, 2012, p. 87).

The teachers Delpit found to be most successful at teaching African American students were African American. This wasn’t because they were the same color but because they were aware and knew the students’ culture. Because they knew *who* their students were, they were able to teach them most effectively.

As I look back into my study, I also had this very question. Can the fact that I come from the same background as my students have an effect on them? This is something that I tried to uncover. I believed that because I knew their culture, I used examples in instruction that were tailored to them. I knew what I

could or could not say that may or may not have offended someone. I knew what they liked or didn't and could use examples based on that information. When you know the way a student is within the classroom and outside the classroom, you can teach them better. My students were able to relate to us in a way that was incredibly meaningful. They knew that I came from an upbringing that was very similar to their own, and they looked up to me as their role model. I was what they one day wanted to be. They wanted to be active members in society who are not afraid to take risks. They saw our love and our passion for what we do, and they wanted to be just like us. I felt honored to be teaching them and privileged to have the opportunity to teach a group of students who perhaps never had a positive experience in seeing someone with similar roots in (our profession.) It is my belief that I gave my students hope to be more and go further, despite the facts that many things in their lives may seem to go against them. We gave them courage to fight.

Communication

Communication must be clear and concise to produce a positive outcome within a collaborative setting. By maintaining open communication, lessons run more smoothly, with instructional time maximized.

There were times when paths of communication were blocked and it made everything much more difficult. Leaving things as implied never helped anyone involved. With open and honest streams of communication, one can accomplish a lot more in a more coherent manner.

“This is a testament to demanding critical thinking, not accepting anything as a given, understanding one’s own agency in the process of education, and connecting teaching and learning to the students’ own worlds” (Delpit, 2012, p.133).

One must demand that our students think critically. We must teach our students to think for themselves and not accept anything the way it’s given to them but to question it further. We need to teach students on a greater level to make connections with the real world. In mathematics they should be taught understanding over the operations. When students make connections to their own world, the learning process has begun. (Billak, 2013)

In relation to my study, students have struggled to write a research report. I had been giving examples to help them through yet they continued to struggle. I had learned that my goal was not to teach them to copy information, nor follow my example to the “t”, but to think for themselves. How can they hook a reader into their writing? They were struggling to grasp this concept and were relying heavily on my examples. We demanded critical thinking from our students and expected

nothing less. They had to think. To help them along with their research papers, we read aloud the work of a couple students who used our examples as a springboard for their own creativity. When students saw that these examples were produced by other students, they worked harder to come up with something uniquely theirs. We needed to effectively communicate as a team and to our students what we expected of them. They worked hard to produce quality work but we needed to open the lines of communication with them first.

Co-teaching

Co-teaching is an experience that can only be successful through open communication and active listening. The relationships created between co-teachers require both parties to agree and accept to be brutally honest along the way. The relationship created between teachers and students is deepened when classroom management is consistent and all students' opinions and feedback are taken into account.

Co-teaching is an experience for the strongest of heart. It requires you to be critical not only of your classroom instruction, but of yourself, and of your teammate. The students are aware of your efforts to collaborate for their benefit and they respect the effort and the example provided to them. Our students emulated the example of teamwork and teaching and therefore there were barely any arguments between students. Students began to act like us and put differences

aside for the sake of the task at hand. Students often referred to our collaborative efforts as an example of collaboration when they were unable to collaborate. This allowed them to resolve their problem by accepting the fact that it was okay to disagree and still be friends. Co-teaching requires dedication and time. It requires both individuals to fully know and understand why they are doing what they are. The process teaches you to look at what is most important and provides meaningful feedback for critical analysis of one's own practice. Students were receptive and appreciated the fact that they always had someone who could listen and someone who could help. Co-teaching provided the opportunity for everyone's voice to be heard and the learning process was enhanced for everyone involved even if it was at the personal level. (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012)

Usage of Language and Impact

Students tend to use their native language to communicate with each other on topics that are personal to them. Within the academic setting they emulate the expected behavior of speaking in the target language. Once students become comfortable enough in the setting they may venture into bilingual conversations with bilingual teachers.

When the students are comfortable they begin to speak up more in the target language. The students initially only spoke Spanish with us as their bilingual teachers because they understood that we could understand them. Once we grew

to know them and they grew to know us, there was an equal level of respect that eventually led to students attempting to speak to us in English only. On occasion students would resist and speak Spanish but a simple reminder from us was usually enough to get them to respond in English. When students needed to express a concern to us that was crucial for them at the time, they did so in English because they knew they needed the help right away. When they worked on projects and weren't in a hurry, they would try to speak English. Our students translated for a peer until the other felt confident enough to speak up independently. It was exciting to see our students flourish. They initially were quiet and unwilling to try new things and eventually opened up within our classroom setting. Students who didn't like to speak up were raising their hands. Students who were afraid became more confident. Giving students the opportunity to grow and having patience, helped our students to flourish as English language learners. (Espinosa, 2013) (Billak, 2013) (Freeman & Freeman, 2011)

NEXT STEP

Looking back on our co-teaching experience, I am reminded of how important communication is. When teachers come together and effectively communicate with each other, the classroom instruction is much more efficient and coherent. While co-teaching, we discussed and planned together which helped

us succeed. The moments when we assumed something about each other are the times we struggled. In the future, I will always ask and verify and never assume. Through open discussion one can work most efficiently.

I oftentimes felt that I was looking into a stranger's window. I was someone who was trying to look into the lives of my students and my co-teacher. It often felt like my students were strangers that I saw every day, yet never fully understood them until they invited me into their lives. I oftentimes felt that they saw me and my co-teacher as strangers and were just as interested in getting to know us as teachers as we were about them as students. The ESL position was new to me then and at times it felt like I was standing behind a window watching and trying to learn but was not on the inside. This often led to confusion and at times frustration as I wanted to understand and didn't know how. My students let me in but they also struggled with feeling they were on the outside. They struggled socially in their classrooms and struggled to make friends. They sought friendship among themselves as they were in this together. They were looking in on the average life of an American teenager in hopes to one day be invited inside.

Co-teaching gave me the opportunity to step inside and fully get to know my students, my co-teacher, and other teachers in my building. I learned a lot from my co-teacher. The strategies I learned I had previously not seen as important, but then I saw her implement them and realized their significance. I

had always been impulsive and acted quickly while my co-teacher was always calm and observant. She always watched and waited before acting. I learned the importance of slowing down and fully thinking about every action and word I produced. She learned to be more flexible and to be more social. It was through this similar yet very different pairing that we co-taught. Next time, I will learn to not take things so personally. There were times where I took things personally that were simply observations from my colleague and she took things personally because I struggled to properly express my observations that led to misunderstandings. I needed to step back and look at the situation without bias and allow some transparency. Our students looked to us as models for collaboration and problem solving. They often times imitated the way we problem-solved and worked together.

The ESL strategies we implemented were important in getting our students to understand. Next time, I will not assume my students know how to do something. With the projects we did, my biggest mistake was assuming that they had some background knowledge. This caused moments in which things moved a lot more slowly than anticipated. I felt like communication had been hampered in identifying the special needs of some of my students. It is my intention in the future to ask questions to foster an open flow of communication between teachers.

The students made growth in all areas except for Hugo who regressed. In this case, I should have sought out more opportunities to check in with his teachers about his growth in their classes and found time to work with him one on one. When presented with a similar situation, I will work eagerly in taking the initiative to help that student succeed. Students like Joely and Eleni are still shy, and for students like these I will spend time working on pronunciation and oral language. These students were quiet because they were insecure about the way they sounded while speaking English. With speaking practice, their confidence levels will improve.

As a teacher, I learned that it takes time and patience to see results. I was accustomed to working with first graders that learned a concept and one could see the results almost instantly. I was accustomed to seeing the fruit of my labors come quickly, however in middle school it was different. The changes and growth came with time. Students needed to feel “at home” first. Once students had warmed up to us as teachers and our teaching styles, they produced. They got to know us as people and put forth the effort because they knew we believed in them. At that point, no one was looking through a stranger’s window. We were all inside a place that became home.

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APPENDIXES
APPENDIX A
PARENT CONSENT FORM

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I am currently working towards earning my Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. As part of the program, Moravian requires that I conduct a systematic study of my own teaching practices. As a result, from September until December, I will be conducting a teacher action research study where I intend to examine the observed behaviors and reported experiences of primary dual language English learning students and a dual language teacher in finding a balance in when implementing ESL strategies in a co-teaching classroom. The focus of my teacher action research is increase language acquisition and get students to feel comfortable in an English speaking environment and to make connections to and from their first language as necessary to bridge over to the English. Students will be introduced to group work and partner work within our classroom. Students will be working on specific concepts to improve their language

skills. In these groups, students will be working on vocabulary building, listening and comprehension skills, writing skills, and overall speaking skills.

I will be gathering data to support my study through surveys, interviews, weekly listening tests, and my own teacher observations. While all students will be engaged in the study as part of the ESL curriculum, I will only use information collected from the students who have permission to participate in the study. All student names will be kept confidential, as will teachers, and school name. Any work that reveals a student's identity will be altered to ensure anonymity. I am asking for your permission to use your child's data in my study. Participation in the study is voluntary and will not impact a student's grade in any way. A student may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, in which case all information pertaining to that child will not be included in the final write-up and you may contact me to withdraw your child at any time.

If you have any questions regarding my action research study, please feel free to contact me here at school. [redacted] the school principal, has approved this study and is also available to answer questions at [redacted] ext. [redacted]. My faculty sponsor at Moravian College is [redacted]. He can be reached at Moravian at [redacted] and by email at [redacted].

Please check the appropriate response below, then sign and date the form. I would appreciate if the form was returned at your earliest convenience. Thank you very much for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Deborah Cruz

Please detach and return to Miss Cruz in Room [redacted] [redacted] ext. [redacted] or at [redacted]

I attest that I am the child's legal guardian and that I have received a copy, read, and understand this consent form. Please initial the appropriate box below.

_____ I am willing to have my child participate in this research study.

_____ I am not willing to have my child participate in this research study.

Parent/Guardian signature: _____

Child Name: _____

Date: _____

FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO DE LOS PADRES

Estimados padres/tutores:

Actualmente estoy trabajando para obtener mi maestría en currículo e instrucción en el Colegio de Moravian. Como parte del programa, Moravian requiere que realice un estudio sistemático de mi propia práctica docente. Como resultado, desde septiembre hasta diciembre, llevaré a cabo un estudio de investigación de acción docente donde pretendo examinar los comportamientos observados y registrados de experiencias de los estudiantes de aprendizaje de Inglés de primaria bilingüe y profesora de lenguaje dual en la búsqueda de un equilibrio en la transición de L1 a uso de L2 en el aula. El enfoque de mi investigación para la acción docente es incrementar la adquisición de la lengua y que los estudiantes se sientan cómodos en un ambiente de habla en inglés y para hacer las conexiones desde su primera lengua como puente necesario hacia el inglés. Los estudiantes se introducirán en trabajos de grupo y pareja dentro de nuestro salón. Los estudiantes trabajando en conceptos específicos para mejorar sus habilidades lingüísticas. En estos grupos, los estudiantes trabajando en la construcción de vocabulario, habilidades de escucha y comprensión, escritura y habilidades generales para hablar.

Se estar reuniendo datos para sustentar mi estudio mediante encuestas, entrevistas, pruebas de escucha semanales y mis propias observaciones del profesor. Mientras que todos los estudiantes participarán en el estudio como parte del programa de ESL, sólo voy a utilizar información obtenida de los estudiantes que tienen permiso para participar en el estudio. Todos los nombres de alumno se mantendrán confidenciales, como voluntad de profesores y nombre de la escuela. Cualquier trabajo que revela la identidad de un estudiante será alterado para asegurar el anonimato. Pido su permiso utilizar los datos de su hijo en mi estudio. Participación en el estudio es voluntaria y no impactará la calificación de un estudiante de cualquier manera. Un estudiante puede retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento sin penalidad, en cuyo caso toda la información relativa a que el niño no se incluirá en la redacción final y pueden comunicarse conmigo para retirar a su hijo en cualquier momento.

Si tienes alguna pregunta acerca de mi acción estudio de investigación, por favor no dude en contactarme aquí en la escuela. La Sra. [REDACTED], Directora de la escuela, ha aprobado este estudio y también está disponible para responder preguntas en [REDACTED] ext. [REDACTED]. Mi patrocinador de la Facultad en Universidad de Moravian es el [REDACTED]. Puede ser contactado en Moravian al [REDACTED] y por correo electrónico a [REDACTED].

Por favor compruebe la respuesta apropiada a continuación, luego firme y feche el formulario. Le agradecería si el formulario fuese devuelto a la brevedad. Muchas gracias por su cooperación y apoyo.

Sinceramente,

Deborah Cruz

Por favor separar y volver a Miss Cruz en [REDACTED] ext. [REDACTED] o en [REDACTED]

Testifico que soy tutor legal del niño y que he recibido una copia, leer y entender este formulario de consentimiento. Por favor inicial en la casilla correspondiente a continuación.

Estoy dispuesto a que mi hijo participar en este estudio de investigación.

No estoy dispuesto a que mi hijo participe en este estudio de investigación.

Firma del padre/tutor: _____

Nombre del estudiante: _____

Fecha: _____

APPENDIX B

PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

Dear [REDACTED]

I am currently working towards a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. This program is based on teacher action research, helping me to create the best learning experiences for my students as I investigate and implement teaching strategies that research suggests are most effective. This semester, I am required to conduct a systematic study of my own teaching practices. The purpose of my study is to examine the observed behaviors and reported experiences of primary dual language English learning students and a dual language teacher when implementing ESL Strategies in a co-teaching classroom. I hope to achieve these goals by using a variety of visuals, listening and speaking activities, along with content that is relevant to the general education classroom to ensure their success through necessary and age appropriate skills. Students will be working on specific concepts to improve their language skills in both whole group,

small group, and pairs. In these groups, students will be working on vocabulary building, listening and comprehension skills, writing skills, and overall speaking skills.

Students will be taught strategies that they can use to help themselves. Spanish will be used when appropriate and only when necessary, especially when students are expressing their needs or would like more clarification. It my goal to use their L1 to assist in the acquisition of their L2 of English. The usage of the student participant's native language will be used in conjunction with their second language learning of English to allow student participants the opportunity to make connections between both languages. Should the participant need to explain something and cannot do so in English, they may use their native language, and/or draw pictures, use picture dictionaries, or have another participant help them to express their idea or concern.

This study will take place in my classroom from September to November 2015. I will gather data to support my study through observations, student surveys, and student work samples. I will only use information collected from students who have parental permission to participate in the study in any written reports of my research. All of the students' names will be kept confidential, as will the name of the school and any participating faculty members. Any child may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. In the letter to parents, I have listed my contact information. If a parent or child does not feel comfortable contacting me directly to discuss or withdraw from the study I have also included your contact information as well. If a child is withdrawn, I will not use any information pertaining to him or her in my study.

My faculty sponsor is [REDACTED]. He may be contacted at Moravian College by phone at [REDACTED] and by email at [REDACTED].

If you have any questions or concerns about my in-class project, please feel free to contact me at school. If not, please sign and return the bottom portion of this letter. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Deborah L. Cruz

.....
I attest that I am the principal of the teacher conducting this research study, that I have read and understand the consent form and received a copy. Deborah L. Cruz has my permission to conduct this study in her ESL classroom at [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] : Principal

_____/_____/_____
Date

APPENDIX C

ADULT/STAFF CONSENT FORM

Dear Colleague,

I am currently working towards earning my Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. As part of the program, Moravian requires that I conduct a systematic study of my own teaching practices. As a result, from September until December, I will be conducting a teacher action research study where I intend to examine the observed behaviors and reported experiences of primary dual language English learning students and a dual language teacher when implementing ESL Strategies in a co-teaching classroom. The focus of my teacher action research is increase language acquisition and get students to feel comfortable in an English speaking environment and to make connections to and from their first language as necessary to bridge over to the English. Students will be introduced to group work and partner work within our classroom. Students will be working on specific concepts to improve their language skills. In these groups, students will

be working on vocabulary building, listening and comprehension skills, writing skills, and overall speaking skills.

I will be gathering data to support my study through surveys, interviews, weekly listening tests, and my own teacher observations. While all students will be engaged in the study as part of the ESL curriculum, I will only use information collected from the students who have permission to participate in the study. All student names will be kept confidential, as will teachers, and school name. Any work that reveals a student's identity will be altered to ensure anonymity. **I am asking for your permission to use your observations as a classroom teacher and am asking for permission to interview you periodically to evaluate the progress of our student participants.** Participation in the study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, in which case all information you provided will not be included in the final write-up and you may contact me to withdraw from this study at any time.

If you have any questions regarding my action research study, please feel free to contact me here at school. [REDACTED], the school principal, has approved this study and is also available to answer questions at [REDACTED] ext. [REDACTED]. My faculty sponsor at Moravian College is Dr. Joseph Shosh. He can be reached at Moravian at [REDACTED] and by email at [REDACTED]

I would appreciate if the form was returned at your earliest convenience. Thank you very much for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Deborah Cruz

Please return to Miss Cruz in Room [REDACTED] ext. [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]

I attest that I am a teacher at the [REDACTED]. I have read and understand the consent form and received a copy. Deborah L. Cruz has my permission to use information provided by me during interviews or may use some of my observations as a classroom teacher to conduct this study in her ESL classroom at [REDACTED]

Name: (print) _____

____/____/____

Date

Signature: _____

APPENDIX D STUDENT ASSENT FORM

My teacher and my parents read and explained to me what Miss Cruz will be doing in our classroom.

Miss Cruz can use my work for her research project at Moravian College.

Mi maestra y mis padres me explicaron lo que Srta. Cruz va a hacer en nuestro salón de clases. Srta. Cruz puede usar mi trabajo para su proyecto de investigación en la Universidad de Moravian.

I, _____, give Miss Cruz permission to use my work for her Project at Moravian College. (*Yo le doy permiso a la Srta. Cruz usar mi trabajo para su proyecto en la Universidad de Moravian.*)

Sign (firma): _____

Date (fecha): _____

APPENDIX E

CORE Phonics Survey – Record Form

Name _____ Grade _____ Date _____

SKILLS SUMMARY

Alphabet Skills

- ____/26 Letter names – uppercase
- ____/26 Letter names – lowercase
- ____/23 Consonant sounds
- ____/5 Long vowel sounds
- ____/5 Short vowel sounds

Reading and Decoding Skills

- ____/10 Short vowels in CVC words
- ____/10 Short vowels, digraphs, and *-tch* trigraph
- ____/20 Short vowels and consonant blends
- ____/10 Long vowels
- ____/10 Vowel diphthongs
- ____/10 *R-* and *I-*controlled vowels
- ____/24 Multisyllabic words

Spelling Skills

- ____/5 Initial consonants
- ____/5 Final consonants
- ____/5 CVC words
- ____/5 Long vowel words

Skills to review: _____

Skills to teach: _____

CORE Phonics Survey—Record Form, Page 1

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65



1. Letter Names – Uppercase

Say to the student: *Can you tell me the names of these letters?* If the student cannot name three or more consecutive letters, say: *Look at all of the letters and tell me which ones you do know.*

D A N S X Z J L H
T Y E C O M R P W
___/26 K U G B F Q V I

2. Letter Names – Lowercase

Say to the student: *Can you tell me the names of these letters?* If the student cannot name three or more consecutive letters, say: *Look at all of the letters and tell me which ones you do know.*

d a n s x z j l h
t y e c o m r p w
___/26 k u g b f q v i

3. Consonant Sounds

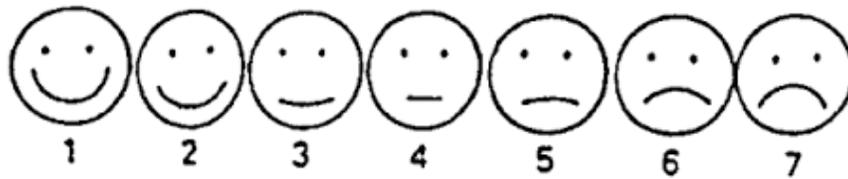
Say to the student: *Look at these letters. Can you tell me the sound each letter makes?* Be sure to ask if he or she knows of another sound for the letters *g* and *c*. If the sound given is correct, do not mark the Record Form. If it is incorrect, write the sound the student gives above each letter. If no sound is given, circle the letter. If the student cannot say the sound for three or more consecutive letters, say: *Look at all of the letters and tell me which sounds you do know.*

d l n s x z j
t y p c h m r
___/23 k w g b f q v

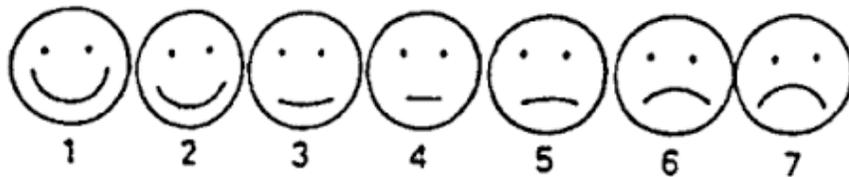
APPENDIX F

English Language Learning Interest Survey

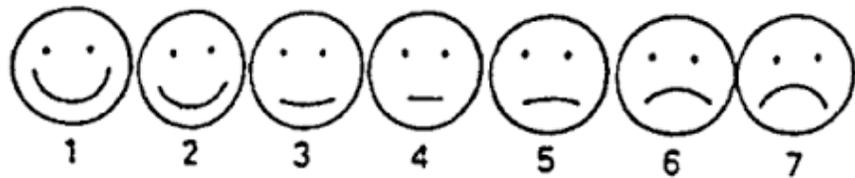
**1. Do you like to speak
English at home?**



**2. Do you like learning
English?**

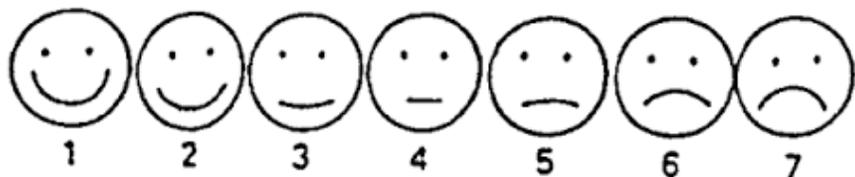


**3. How do you feel
when someone**

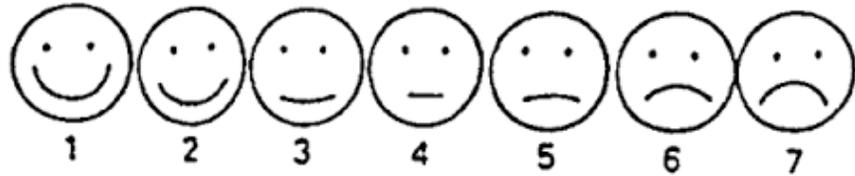


**speaks English to
you?**

**4. How do you feel
when you speak
English to someone
else?**



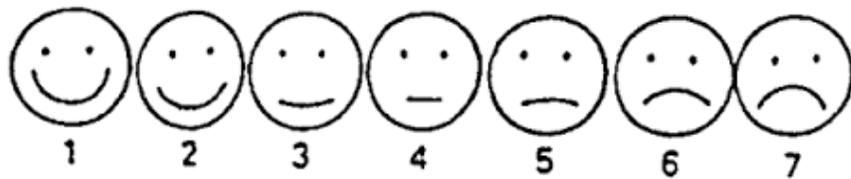
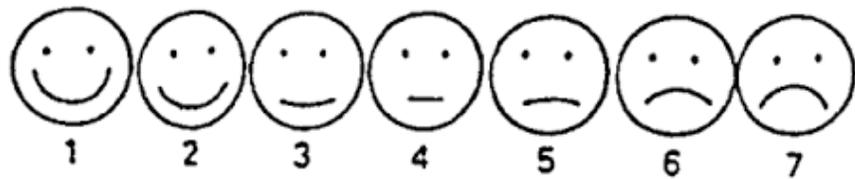
5. Are you a good



reader?

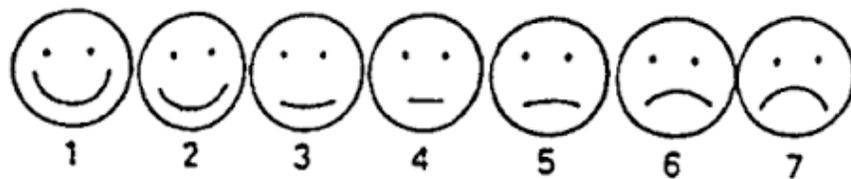
**6. Does anyone read to
you often?**

7. Does anyone read to



you in English?

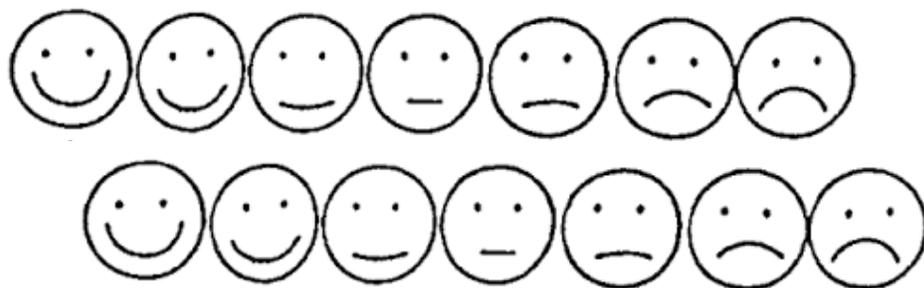
8. Do you like to read



in English?

**9. How do you feel
when you work in
groups/partners?**

10. How do you feel



when you work alone?

APPENDIX G

Name: _____

Warm Up: Survey #1

Please answer the questions. Be honest and write in either English or Spanish. ■■■
■■■■ and I want to know what you think. (Conteste las preguntas honestamente. Escribe en español o inglés. La ■■■■■ y yo queremos saber lo que tú piensas.)

1. How do you think ■■■■■ and I work as a team? (¿Cómo tú piensas que la Sra. González y yo trabajamos como un equipo?)
2. What is the best part of us working together? (¿Que es la mejor parte de tenernos a las dos trabajando juntas?)
3. What is the worst part of us working together? (¿Qué es lo peor de tenernos a las dos trabajando juntas?)
4. What do we do that helps you? (¿Que hacemos que te ayuda a ti?)
5. What can we do better? (¿Que podemos hacer mejor?)
6. How do you feel in our classroom? (¿Cómo te sientes en este salón?)

7. What are some things you want us to try? (¿Qué clase de cosas quieres que tratemos aquí?)
8. What is confusing to you? (¿Que te confunde?)

APPENDIX H

Name: _____

Unit 1 Vocabulary Test

Your _____ is your mom's brother.

Your _____ is your dad's sister.

My aunts and uncles have kids. They are my _____.

What is a fancy name for mom? _____

What is a fancy name for dad? _____

What are names of my parents' mom and dad?

What are the names of my grandparent's mom and dad?

We make a _____ to guess what will happen in a story.

Circle the adjectives in the sentences.

Santa is a tall man. He has rosy cheeks. His beard is white.

Write a sentence using adjectives to describe Rafael's house.

APPENDIX I

Name: _____

Warm Up: Survey #2

1. How do you feel about speaking English in your other classes?
2. Do your teachers help you understand what they are teaching?
3. What things could your teachers do to help you?

4. How do you feel in your classes when listening to your teacher or other students?

APPENDIX J

Hey 6th & 7th grade team!

I have some questions at this point. You can print this out and fill it out and hand it to me or put it in my mailbox. You can reply, or you can just stop by to chat.

1. How do our ELL's behave in your class?
2. How did our ELL's used to act or react towards English in your room?
3. How do these students currently act or react towards English now in your room? (Speaking, listening, etc...)
4. Do students make comments about RTI? If so please provide examples.

Again thanks so much for your help!
Miss Deborah Cruz
ESL Teacher

APPENDIX K

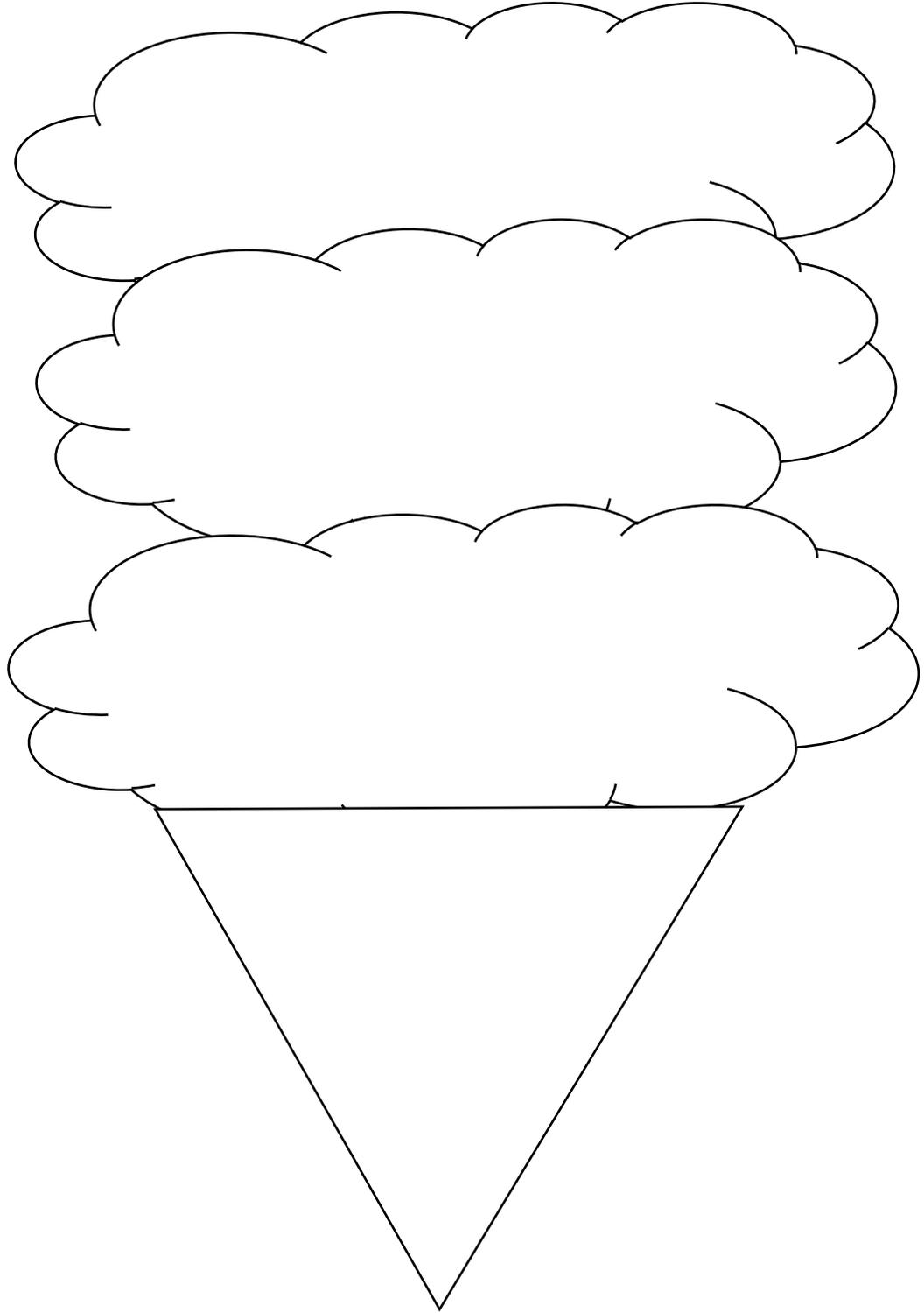
<p>Traditional Clothing</p>	<p>Music</p>
<p>Other Facts</p> <p>Language: _____</p> <p>Flag:</p> <div data-bbox="581 1220 857 1325" style="border: 1px solid blue; width: 170px; height: 50px; margin: 5px 0;"></div> <p>Location (continent): _____</p> <p>Captial: _____</p>	<p>Food</p>

Climate	Famous People
Animals	Other Facts Population: _____ President: _____ Sports: _____ _____ _____

Country

APPENDIX L
Informative Writing

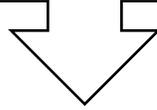
HOOK:



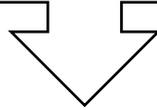
APPENDIX M
Informative Writing

Title: _____

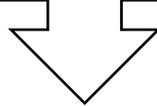
Topic Sentence	
----------------	--



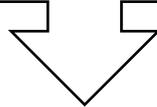
Fact #1:	
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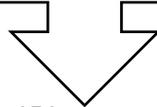
Fact #2:	
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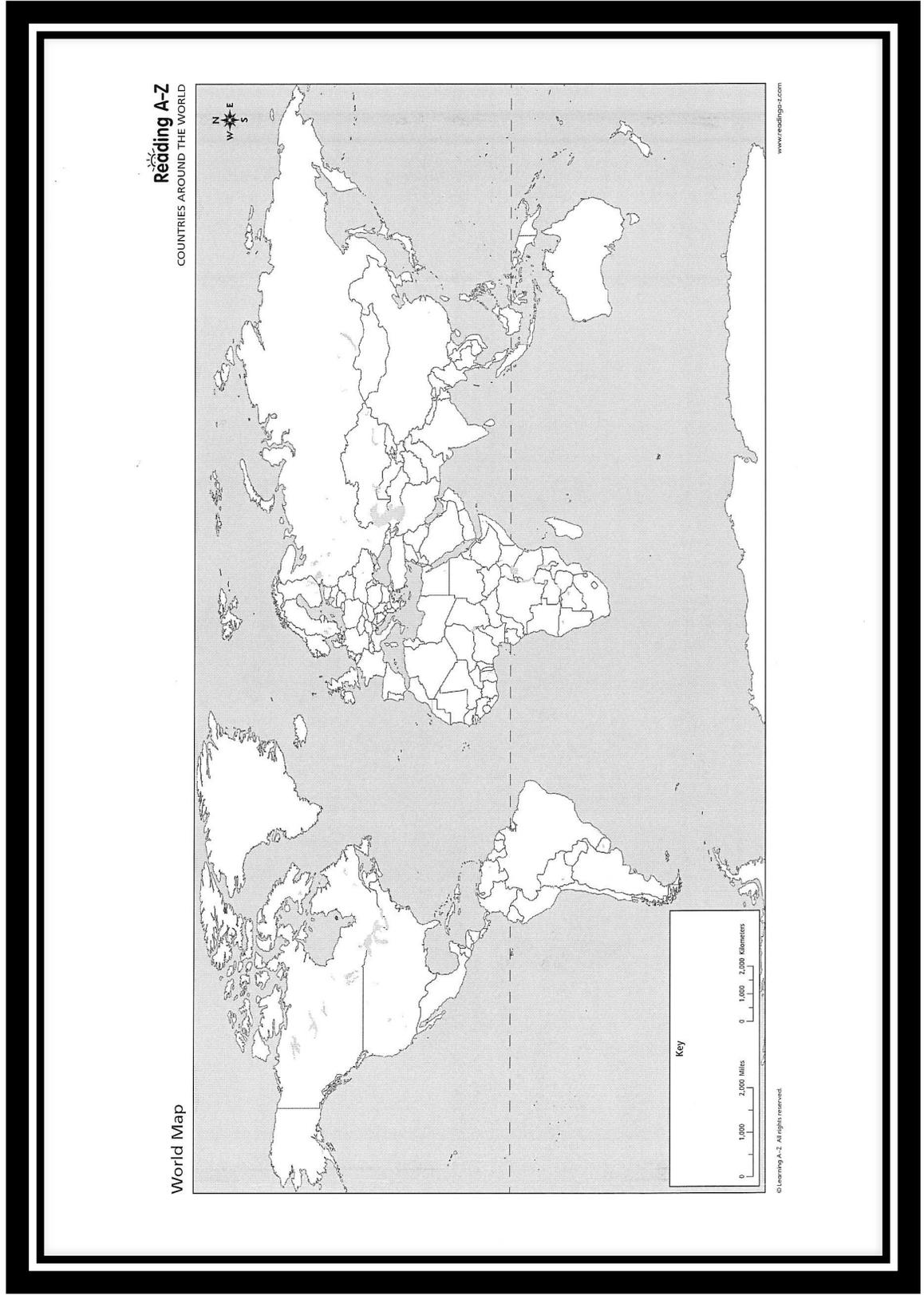
Fact #3:	
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Conclusion:	
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APPENDIX N



APPENDIX O

Research Report : Countries

Teacher Name: **Ms. Cruz & Gonzalez**

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Notes	Notes are recorded and organized in an extremely neat and orderly fashion.	Notes are recorded legibly and are somewhat organized.	Notes are recorded.	Notes are recorded only with peer/teacher assistance and reminders.
Graphic Organizer	Graphic organizer or outline has been completed and shows clear, logical relationships between all topics and subtopics.	Graphic organizer or outline has been completed and shows clear, logical relationships between most topics and subtopics.	Graphic organizer or outline has been started and includes some topics and subtopics.	Graphic organizer or outline has not been attempted.
Amount of Information	All topics are addressed and all questions answered with at least 5-6 sentences about each.	All topics are addressed and most questions answered with at least 3-4 sentences about each.	All topics are addressed, and most questions answered with 1-2 sentences about each.	One or more topics were not addressed.
Quality of Information	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes all supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It provides several supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. Some details and/or examples are given.	Information has little or nothing to do with the main topic.
Mechanics	No grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.	Almost no grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	A few grammatical spelling, or punctuation errors.	Many grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.

DLC 10-20-15

APPENDIX P

Oral Presentation Rubric : Countries

Teacher Name: **Ms. Cruz & Gonzalez**

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Time-Limit	Presentation is 5-6 minutes long.	Presentation is 4 minutes long.	Presentation is 3 minutes long.	Presentation is less than 3 minutes OR more than 6 minutes.
Speaks Clearly	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100-95%) the time, and mispronounces no	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100-95%) the time, but mispronounces one	Speaks clearly and distinctly most (94-85%) of the time. Mispronounces no	Often mumbles or can not be understood OR mispronounces more
Preparedness	Student is completely prepared and has obviously rehearsed.	Student seems pretty prepared but might have needed a couple more	The student is somewhat prepared, but it is clear that rehearsal was	Student does not seem at all prepared to present.
Content	Shows a full understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of parts of the topic.	Does not seem to understand the topic very well.
Posture and Eye Contact	Stands up straight, looks relaxed and confident. Establishes eye	Stands up straight and establishes eye contact with everyone in the	Sometimes stands up straight and establishes eye contact.	Slouches and/or does not look at people during the presentation.
- Please Choose -				

DLC 10-20-15

APPENDIX Q
Observation and Implementation Journal:

Week # _____ Week of:

Inquiry Project Topic:

WHAT DID I DO?	TIME	WHAT STUDENTS DID	MODIFICATIONS/FUTURE INSTRUCTION/FEELINGS
Monday:	40 min		
Tuesday:	40 min		
Wednesday:	40 min		
Thursday:	40 min		
Friday	40 min		