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This is a dissertation study regarding effective leadership practices in language immersion programs. Much of the previous research concentrates on students' academic achievement in immersion programs. The purpose of this research is to discover actions, attitudes, knowledge, and skills that immersion leaders of successful programs exhibit. Using a basic qualitative model, I interviewed principals, assistant principals, teachers, and parents at three schools with Spanish/English dual immersion programs. The findings indicate that the immersion leader must establish a positive culture through building trust, building community with parents and teachers, and showing commitment to the program. In addition, the leader must provide program and teacher support in a variety of ways, including the provision of professional development, differentiated professional development for international teachers, resources, and leadership opportunities. Finally, effective immersion leaders must possess specific knowledge and skills in order to lead a successful immersion program, including program knowledge, advocacy skills, and the ability to apply a shared leadership model. Being bilingual is considered an asset, but not required. Immersion leaders can learn from the applications for practice in their respective settings. Future research in this should include a wider range of program models and a more balanced pool of participants, including native target language speakers in dual immersion programs. Future research should also include a critical pedagogy lens in studying dual immersion programs specifically.

Keywords: immersion, effective leadership, immersion principal

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN LANGUAGE IMMERSION
PROGRAMS

by

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Approved by

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Dedicated to the memory of Maywood Modlin Scarborough,
a model educator and grandmother

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CHAPTER I

PROBLEM AND PURPOSE

Problem Statement

Language immersion programs are on the rise in the United States. The number of programs has increased dramatically in the past several years across the country. The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) has attempted to track this growth, noting in a 2011 report identification of almost 450 programs in the United States, while in 1995 there were 187 programs (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2011). Closer to home, in 2009 there were 40 immersion programs of various sizes and models in North Carolina K-12 public schools, and in 2018 the number has grown to over 140 immersion programs (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2018). This explosive growth in North Carolina has been a grassroots effort, largely driven by local districts and individual schools. This national and state growth is in part due to the recognition that language skills are necessary in the global economy, but also because of the proven achievement benefits that are associated with immersion programs (Howard & Christian, 2002).

With such rapid growth, there are not enough instructional leaders in schools with experience as immersion program administrators. In Delaware and Utah there has also been rapid growth in immersion programs, but unlike in North Carolina, the Delaware and Utah state departments of instruction set forth program requirements and provide guidance and training (Delaware Department of Education, n.d.; Utah State Board of

Education, n.d.). There are various models for immersion programs, but little direction from the NC Department of Public Instruction as to how immersion programs in NC should be designed, and until the last two years, almost no professional development was provided by the state. This leaves many questions for teachers and administrators. It seems that in many cases those involved with programs across the state are continuously “reinventing the wheel” and all are looking to one another for guidance. Administrators in schools with immersion programs are often not aware of the unique needs of the program regarding curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher qualifications. Many immersion administrators do not speak another language proficiently and do not understand the process of language acquisition. In some cases, these programs are imposed upon the principal without his/her input, while in other instances principals have driven the effort to establish a program.

Principals have great impact on the success, or lack thereof, of special programs such as language immersion. Teachers and their students are directly affected by principals’ leadership. The principal can help attract students to the program or can drive parents away, depending upon his/her actions. With such rapid growth in the amount of language immersion programs and little guidance provided by the state, principals need resources to help them lead these unique programs effectively.

Need for Research

Research has been conducted regarding effective leadership in schools, but not a great deal of this research relates to leadership behaviors specifically in language

immersion programs (Hunt, 2011; Jacobson, 2011; McKinney, Labat Jr, & Labat, C., 2015; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). Research regarding schools in general indicates that climate is an important factor in a school's success, and that teacher trust in leadership is an important component of positive climate (McKinney et al., 2015; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). If this is the case, then it is important to examine stakeholder perceptions of school climate, how leaders affect climate, and how principals' attitudes and actions affect the success of a program. Other researchers describe the need for the principal to focus on building relationships with stakeholders (Brown III, 2015; Garza, Drysdale, Gurr, Jacobson, & Merchant, 2014). Newmann, King, and Rigdon (1997) discuss the need for principals to have "organizational capacity" in order to lead effectively (p. 41). All of these characteristics are important regarding school leadership in general. However, it is also important to learn about various aspects of leadership in unique programs such as language immersion, in which leadership practices are crucial to the programs' success or failure (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; Hunt, 2011). While there is a small amount of research in this specific area, as reflected in the literature review that follows, there is not a great deal of information to guide principals regarding effective leadership in these specialized programs.

Researchers have found that immersion programs have positive effects on student achievement, as well as providing other advantages for students (Collier & Thomas, 2017; Lindholm-Leary, 2005; Thomas and Collier, 1997, 2003, 2012). One of the typical benefits of these programs is that students are in classes with diverse populations, they have teachers from other countries, and appreciation of other cultures is naturally

integrated into the curriculum (Howard et al., 2018). Immersion program students are often racially and socioeconomically diverse and students constantly interact with peers from different backgrounds in positive ways (Thomas & Collier, 2012). This builds relationships and cultural understanding among students of different backgrounds. Especially in dual immersion programs where there are two native language populations, students recognize the need to learn language from one another and in doing so, gain cultural knowledge and understanding. Effective leaders help establish an environment in the school that promotes cultural awareness and understanding and builds relationships, thus promoting inclusiveness as part of the students' academic experience.

Given what we know regarding effective leadership in schools, the benefits that immersion programs provide, and that immersion programs have specific needs, it is important to examine how leadership behaviors affect the success of language immersion programs. Research indicates that climate is an important factor in a school's success, and that teacher trust in leadership is an important component of positive climate. Research also addresses the need for shared leadership practices and strong managerial skills in successful schools. But these are characteristics that can be generalized to any educational setting. Principals of language immersion programs also must understand the uniqueness of these programs and how to apply their leadership skills in these settings. There is little research that indicates what other skills may be important for successful immersion programs, or how leadership practices affect these specialized programs, either positively or negatively.

Through this research project, I examined the connection between principals' leadership practices and language immersion program success. I sought to identify actions, decisions, and attitudes that are beneficial to programs, as well as those that are detrimental. This included investigating stakeholders' perceptions of principals' behaviors, as well as principals' own observations, and data that indicates programs' outcomes.

Purpose and Significance

This project helps to highlight characteristics and leadership practices of the principals of successful language immersion programs. Success can be exhibited by program growth and academic achievement. The findings of this research may help principals become more effective leaders of language immersion programs by being aware of specific effective leadership practices that have positive effects on immersion programs. This project adds to the body of research regarding these specialized programs and the implications for effective leadership so that the goals of the program can be achieved.

Several findings related to effective leadership practices in schools with immersion programs align with the research regarding effective school leadership in general, but I also found that there are characteristics and actions needed that are specific to the success of language immersion programs. These are distinctive programs and therefore require specific knowledge and skills of the leadership in order to be effective. The purpose of my study was to explore these practices.

Research Questions

One primary question drives my research in this study:

- In schools with successful immersion programs, what are the principals' leadership styles, actions, and attitudes, as described by themselves, teachers, and parents?

As part of answering this question, I also explored the following sub-questions:

- What actions do principals take that are supportive to immersion programs?
- What actions do principals take that are detrimental to immersion programs?

Definition and Description

Language immersion programs come in two basic models, but the premise is the same. Students learn language and content simultaneously, so that the acquisition of language is a natural process, embedded in the subject area content instruction of the classroom (Howard, Lindholm-Leary, Rogers, Olague, Medina, Kennedy, Sugarman, & Christian, 2018). As Lindholm-Leary (2005) states, "instruction and classwork take place in two languages, with the non-English language used for at least 50 percent of the students' instructional day" (p. 56). Immersion programs usually begin in Kindergarten and grow with the students as they move through the grade levels, ideally continuing through 12th grade. The two models are dual, or two-way immersion, and one-way immersion. The choice of model depends upon the population being served. In one-way immersion, all of the students are native speakers of the same language while in two-way or dual immersion, half of the students are native English speakers and half are

native speakers of the target language, whether it be Spanish, Chinese, or another language. Typically in a one-way program all of the students are native English speakers, but there are also developmental bilingual programs. These are one-way immersion programs in which all students are native Spanish speakers. The most common dual language immersion (DLI) programs in the US are Spanish/English, but other language programs exist as well (CAL, 2011). In both two-way and one-way programs, the goal is for all students to become bilingual and biliterate (Howard & Christian, 2002; Howard et al., 2018). This means that the students served by an immersion program might vary, depending upon the population of the school or community and the needs to be addressed.

As stated above, language immersion programs begin in Kindergarten because of language acquisition and immersion methods. In order for native English speaking children to begin to learn in another language, the language must be comprehensible and must be simple enough to be represented by visuals, manipulatives, and other methods without using translation (Howard & Christian, 2002; Howard et al., 2018). As such, the Kindergarten curriculum is the perfect place to start. A Kindergarten classroom is already rich with visual and tactile resources and the instruction must be hands-on for students, concepts critical to appropriate immersion instruction. In this way, students are able to easily grasp the content concepts as well as the target language. As their language skills grow, students are able to learn increasingly complex content through the language. Native English speakers typically cannot begin in an immersion program after first grade, at the latest, if they do not have prior experience with the language because by

that point, the content would be inaccessible to them. In a DLI or developmental program, native speakers of the target language can enter at later grade levels because they would be able to understand the instruction in that language, even if they might not have the English skills of the other students.

Positionality

I am the World Languages Program Manager for a large, urban school district in North Carolina. I have worked with language immersion programs for the past 12 years and have learned a great deal through working with various principals and teachers. Though I did not know much about immersion when I first became the district coordinator for language programs, I have worked to educate myself by reading relevant research, attending conferences, talking with experts in the field, and visiting other programs. In my work I have seen programs grow due to effective, dedicated leadership, and have experienced working with principals whose leadership was detrimental to the immersion program. While I have worked with immersion programs as a district administrator for several years, my position is somewhat unique because I am not the actual leader of the school. I can work with the principals to provide support, and at times can make recommendations, but I am not actually in charge of the programs. Depending upon the receptiveness of the principal, my recommendations may or may not be applied. As a result of my experiences, I am interested in how leaders' actions and attitudes affect language immersion programs and I want to gather information regarding effective leadership practices in order to help inform the profession.

I am aware that my role and experiences give me a biased perspective in some ways, especially because of the emotion involved with my personal connection to the immersion programs (Glesne, 2016). Not only do I work with immersion programs as a part of my job, but I also have been an immersion parent. I am a White native English speaker, but have a background as a Spanish teacher and wanted my child to be bilingual as well, and so he began in an immersion program in Kindergarten. I understand the need for reflexivity as defined by Glesne (2016), “reflecting upon and asking questions of research interactions all along the way” (p. 145). In one situation with an ineffective principal, I was involved both professionally and personally, as my child was in the immersion program at that school. The principal’s actions and attitude affected me both at work and home, so I have opinions and attitudes based on my involvement with this situation. As Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) describe, I acknowledge my place as it relates to the research and will engage in self-reflexivity as described by Pillow (2010). As Pillow (2010) recommends, I worked to counter my bias by carefully considering the interview transcripts, reading and re-reading them multiple times. I kept a research journal to collect thoughts and reflections during the research process. I fully acknowledge my personal and professional interest and attachment to the topic.

In the chapters that follow I include a review of current literature regarding effective leadership practices in schools in general, as well as specifically in language immersion programs. The literature review also includes information about the benefits of immersion programs as well as student populations served by immersion programs. Then I describe the theoretical framework, and methods for conducting the

research and data analysis. Also, I present ethical considerations relevant to the project and my role as the researcher. There are three data chapters that present the research findings, including positive culture, program and teacher support, and the principals' knowledge and skills. Finally, I conclude with analysis and application, limitations, and implications for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is well known that the leader of a school affects the success of the school (Brown III, 2015; Jacobson, 2011; Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010). In an article highlighting effective practices that principals implement, Spiro (2013) states simply that “school leadership matters to student achievement” (p. 21). The Wallace Foundation (2013) concurs, stating “leadership is second only to classroom instruction among school-related factors that affect student learning in school” in a report about the principal as a leader (p. 5). In a 2010 report of a national survey regarding effective leadership in schools, Louis et al., focus on three leadership behaviors that affect student success, including a focus on instruction, trust, and shared leadership. Jacobson, (2011) found that “the existence of essential core leadership practices...[is] necessary for improved student achievement” (p. 41). These core practices include setting a vision and establishing positive school culture (Jacobson, 2011). Others note the need for strong organizational skills and a focus on data (Brown III, 2015; Spiro, 2015; Newman et al., 1997). According to these researchers, effective school leaders establish positive culture and climate, they utilize shared leadership practices, and they have strong organizational skills which affect factors such as scheduling and establishing professional learning communities.

However, all of this research is about schools and education in general. It is difficult to find research that speaks to specific skills that may be needed for specialized programs, such as language immersion. While many effective leadership qualities may be common to all schools, if a program has unique components and characteristics, then it stands to reason that leadership practices in such a program may be unique as well. Through this project I explored principals' actions and attitudes in successful language immersion programs. This includes how common leadership behaviors affect such programs, as well as the behaviors and characteristics specific to being a principal in a language immersion school.

In the literature review, I will first describe what is known about effective leadership practices in general. This includes establishing a positive climate and culture and trust, and how teachers' perceptions affect those components. I will also explain how the research addresses the need for shared leadership and organizational skills. Following the general research, I will share what has been documented regarding leadership specifically in language immersion programs. Finally, I include research regarding the outcomes of immersion programs.

Effective Leadership Practices

There are various practices that are a part of general effective leadership. Below, I describe two major components, due to the repetition with which these occur in the literature, and their connection to the leadership theories I am applying to this project. In any setting, it is apparent that the principal must establish a positive climate and culture

in order to lead a successful school. As a part of climate and culture, the leader must establish trust with staff members. Mutual trust among staff and leadership is an important factor in fostering a positive climate. In addition, effective school leaders establish relationships with parents as they are important stakeholders. The use of shared leadership practices is related to trust, relationships, and culture, and is another aspect of effective leadership. Finally, I describe the need for principals to employ specific organizational skills in order to lead effectively. All of these practices are a part of applying instructional, shared, or transformational leadership theories, which I will describe more thoroughly in the theoretical framework.

Positive School Climate and Culture

There are several factors that affect school climate and culture. A positive climate is an important factor in a successful school. Teachers need to feel respected and supported by leadership as a part of a positive culture. The leader contributes to the climate by establishing rapport and trust with teachers, which is part of a positive and supportive working environment. In addition to teachers, the principal needs to establish relationships with students' parents as a part of the culture of the school. Part of developing trust and a supportive environment includes the use of shared leadership, involving staff in planning and decision making. Relationship building with multiple stakeholders, establishing trust, and giving teachers leadership opportunities are significant components in establishing a positive school climate and culture.

Positive climate and school culture are important aspects of successful schools, and these aspects are significantly influenced by school leaders. In their meta-analysis of effective school leadership behaviors, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) found that establishing a positive culture was one of 21 leadership responsibilities with the highest correlation to student achievement. They state that “an effective leader builds a culture that positively influences teachers” (p. 47). In a qualitative study of 64 schools urban and suburban schools about the correlation of trust in leadership, school climate, and student success, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) found that “principals have both a direct and an indirect relationship to student achievement, through their influence on school climate” (p. 82). This component of success is dependent upon the leaders’ behaviors. Spiro (2013) states that “a good principal knows how to shape a culture...which means fostering a supportive environment” (p. 29). This positive culture comes from establishing a common vision as well as shared expectations for behavior and other processes in the school (Brown III, 2015; Garza et al., 2014). Garza et al. (2014) used previously reported case studies to investigate the principal’s role in school success. They state that in successful schools, teachers are “committed to working ...to achieve agreed-upon goals” (p. 805). If all staff are working together towards a clear, common purpose, within a positive environment, success likely follows in schools.

Establishing trust.

Related to establishing a positive climate, principals must also foster a sense of trust. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) describe the need for faculty trust in the

principal in successful schools. The administrator plays a large role in setting the tone and establishing the culture and climate of the school, which affects teachers' and students' performance (Hopson, Schiller, & Lawson, 2014; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgens-D'Alessandro, 2013). McKinney et al. (2015) present characteristics of successful principals found by studying National Blue Ribbon Schools. This designation is given by the U.S. Department of Education to schools with exemplary student performance or those showing great progress in closing the achievement gap (United States Department of Education, 2015). These are highly successful schools as measured by state standardized assessments. They found that one of the most effective shared characteristics of these schools was the rapport built by the principals with and among the teachers. McKinney et al. (2015) state that "the academic and social connection between the principal and teacher played a huge role in the success of these national blue ribbon schools" (p. 164). As in any other relationship, trust in a principal is built by the way in which s/he behaves and acts in the leadership role. Garza et al. (2013) note similar findings, describing the trust teachers had in the leadership, as well as the positive climate the principal established in which "teachers felt supported and appreciated" (p. 806). Teachers must feel valued by administrators in order to trust them. Principals need to "[see] teachers as respected professionals...who have expertise to be orchestrated and shared" in order to establish professional trust (The Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 20). By investigating the relationship of trust in school leadership to school climate and student success, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) found that "such leadership matters a great deal" (p. 82).

The establishment of trust and a positive climate depend a great deal upon the teachers' perceptions of the principals' leadership. The Blue Ribbon Schools study by McKinney et al. (2015) indicates "the development of a strong positive rapport between the principal and his or her faculty and staff as being significant to improving student learning" (p. 164). Such rapport cannot be built without trust and collegiality. If teachers do not perceive the leader to be trustworthy or have their best interest in mind, then positive rapport cannot be built.

Strong relationships with students' families.

This issue of positive climate and trust extends beyond relationships between principals and teachers. It also involves the principals' interactions with students' parents/guardians. Effective principals "[create] an environment of collaboration," not only with staff, but also with parents (Garza et al., 2014, p. 805). Multiple studies of successful schools speak to the importance of involving parents in intentional ways. Garza et al., (2014) describe the positive relationships principals built with parents that contributed to the success of the schools studied. In a case study of high achieving schools, Brown III (2015) also notes the importance of strong parent involvement as a part of school culture in high achieving schools. School staff cannot impact achievement alone, but need intentional parental involvement as well. Ishimaru (2013) describes this leadership practice of encouraging parent involvement as an "approach that focuses on developing relationships with parents to understand their priorities, concerns, and hopes for their children as drivers for programs and activities" (p. 42). While we often think of

the importance of pedagogical knowledge for a principal, this body of research indicates that relationship building skills beyond the school walls are also vital for successful schools.

Shared leadership.

Related to establishing positive culture in a school involves sharing leadership and providing administrative support for teachers. A principal of a successful school “understands that teachers who are responsible for the end result as well as the tasks associated with it are more likely to experience success” (McKinney et al., 2015, p. 164). A principal cannot do all of the work that affects improved achievement in a school. Marzano et al., (2005) address the concept of shared leadership, stating that all the responsibilities of a leader they identified in the research can be met “if the focus of school leadership shifts from a single individual to a team of individuals” (p. 99). The 2013 Wallace Foundation report supports this concept as well, stating “the more willing principals are to spread leadership around, the better for the students” (p. 10).

In a report of a national survey of teachers in the United States, Louis et al., (2010) also discuss the positive impact of shared leadership in schools. They state that “increasing teachers’ involvement in the difficult task of making good decisions and introducing improved practices must be at the heart of school leadership” (p. 332). Teachers do not work effectively when told what to do without understanding a purpose or reason. They need to be a part of the process to implement practices well. Spiro (2013) also addresses the need to cultivate leadership skills in others, stating that “one of

the most important things principals can do to improve student achievement is to spread leadership around” (p. 30). This means including teachers in decision making and encouraging them to take leadership roles within the school, such as facilitating professional learning communities or grade level meetings.

It is apparent that if teachers perceive the leadership to be collegial, rather than authoritative, they feel a part of decision-making processes and have buy in towards the outcomes. Teachers in Hunt’s (2011) case study investigating the role of leadership in three New York City immersion programs reported that the “principals acknowledge and request their opinions and suggestions when making decisions,” leading to the teachers’ understanding that their knowledge is valued by the leadership (p. 198). Hunt (2011) describes the way principals in successful schools build trust through shared leadership. She reports that that teachers perceived “themselves as part of the practice of leadership” in the collaborative environment established by the principals (p. 195). This perception affects the sense of shared leadership and support found in the school. Shared leadership helps teachers buy in to needed initiatives and gives them a sense of responsibility and accountability for successful results.

A positive school climate and culture is something that can be difficult to measure, but it is an important factor in successful schools. It involves the working environment, morale, and the feeling you get when you are in a school. School leaders set the tone for climate and culture by their actions and behaviors. In order to establish a positive climate, leaders have to establish trust and build relationships with teachers and parents/guardians. They need to exhibit respect and support for teachers. Using shared

leadership practices also contributes to establishing a positive climate by involving teachers in planning and making decisions that affect instruction.

Managerial and Organizational Skills

In addition to the importance of building relationships and establishing a positive culture, research also points to the need for principals to have specific “organizational capacity” (Newmann et al., 1997, p. 41). Principals of successful schools must know how to work with data, establish effective schedules, and implement professional learning communities. Marzano et al., (2015) found that one of the leadership responsibilities with the highest correlation to student achievement was order, or being able to “[establish] a set of standard operating procedures and routines” (p. 43). As Spiro (2013) states, “effective principals are good managers” (p. 31). While leadership of instruction is important, they must also be able to orchestrate logistics to support instruction. This means arranging “the school organization so that it supports the work in a...productive way” (The Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 20).

In a five-year qualitative study of schools that have been restructured, Newmann et al., (1997) found that the principals’ ability to organize both internal and external resources was a factor in the success of change. Scanlan, Kim, Burns, and Vuilleumier (2016) also discuss the effectiveness of “communities of practice” (COPs) when the principal is intentional about the organization and supports provided for these professional learning groups. The description of COPs is much like that of a Professional Learning Community in this 2016 report of a case study of 12 elementary schools by

Scanlan et al. They state that “school leaders can effectively scaffold rich and vibrant COPs” if they design and organize the groups well (p. 35). They cannot simply call a group of teachers working together a COP. In designing such a system of practice there is “intentionality [that] includes attending to the host of factors that affect individuals” (Scanlan et al., p. 36). It is not enough to tell teachers to work in collaborative teams and use data to inform instruction. The leader must implement the organizational structures and accountability measures necessary for these practices to be effective.

When leaders establish internal accountability structures, this promotes a clear consensus among staff regarding student learning outcomes and what is needed to achieve the goals. As Newmann et al., (1997) state, “strong internal accountability advance[s] organizational capacity in schools” (p. 58). Related to the need for shared leadership practices, the authors note that principals involved teachers in the organizational structure and design for meeting instructional needs. Scanlan et al. (2016) focus on the benefits of principals as organizers for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. They describe how school leaders can navigate transition processes through organization of effective COPs to “improve educational opportunities for CLD students” (p. 37). Accountability and organizational structures also involve the use of data to improve instruction. “Principals ... know how to exploit data for sound decision making (Spiro, 2013, p. 31). They use multiple data points to inform instruction and help teachers understand how to do so as well (Brown III, 2015; Corcoran, Peck, & Reitzug, 2013).

Brown III (2015) addresses the need to schedule creatively in order to support instruction. The principal must be able to create a schedule that protects instructional time as well as time for teacher collaboration through professional learning communities (PLCs) (Corcoran et al., 2013). Successful principals “encourage faculty members to collaborate with and learn from one another” through PLCs, but this must be done in strategic ways, as described by Scanlan et al., (2016) (Spiro, 2013, p. 30). At all levels of K-12 instruction, the schedule must allow for optimal learning and instruction. This includes deliberate decisions regarding when students receive support services, elective or specials classes, potential interruptions to instructional time, and when teachers are able to collaborate. Effective school leaders understand how the schedule can impact various aspects of instruction and learning, and intentionally construct the schedule for the benefit of students.

It is apparent that effective school leaders must do more than establish a positive climate and rapport with stakeholders. They must also have managerial skills in order to develop procedures and schedules that optimize learning for students. Principals must establish effective professional learning communities and design schedules that support time for such collaboration and data analysis for teachers. They establish accountability for teachers, helping them to use data and focus on student learning outcomes. Effective principals have to be intentional in their use of resources, including time and personnel, in order to maximize the use of instructional and planning time.

Leadership in Language Immersion Programs

If a principal's leadership behaviors are important to the success of a school in general, this is especially true in an immersion program. Parents have to choose to enroll their children in immersion programs, so they must prove to be successful in order to be maintained. In many areas language immersion programs are relatively new, and it is somewhat of a leap of faith for parents to choose these programs for their children. Language immersion programs are unique and require different kinds of instruction, staffing, and structures than a traditional educational experience. Presumably, this also means that there are unique leadership characteristics important for immersion programs, but there is little research to this effect. Though limited, there is some research that addresses effective leadership practices in immersion programs. This includes the level of commitment to the program that the principal demonstrates, and the knowledge the principal has regarding language acquisition, the program model, and immersion pedagogy.

Program Commitment

According to Alanís and Rodríguez, (2008) who studied characteristics of a successfully maintained immersion program in Texas, "the principal's level of commitment to a program is essential to implementing and maintaining enriched education programs such as dual language education" (p. 315). Leaders have to be fully dedicated to the immersion model and must understand how to implement and promote the program. Rocque, Ferrin, Hite, and Randall (2016) found a similar theme in their

qualitative study of immersion programs in Utah. In the results of their surveys and interviews, immersion principals agreed that “immersion proponent” is a key role for the leader of such a program (p. 810). Principals of bilingual programs “must be, or become, advocates, supporters, [and] champions...of dual immersion programs” (Rocque et al., 2016, p. 811). In their 2017 report regarding common dual language questions, Kennedy and Medina state that if the program is housed within a traditional school, it is important that the leader “ensure[s] that the dual language program is viewed as an integral part of the school rather than as a mere appendage” (p. 7). Even when the whole school is not immersion, the administrator must have strong commitment to the program in order to “advocate at the school and district levels” to meet the program needs (Kennedy & Medina, 2017, p. 7). Though the number of these programs is on the rise, they are still somewhat uncommon and unknown. Program success is partially dependent upon community buy-in and voluntary enrollment, so the principal must be committed to the program and able to promote it in the community with knowledge and confidence.

Program Knowledge

Leaders in an immersion program must be knowledgeable of and dedicated to the program model. Rocque et al. (2016) state that “the...principal need[s] to have specialized training in dual immersion, including knowing how to... lead teachers to be true to the instructional model” (p. 811). Instruction in two languages requires a different instructional model than would be evident in a traditional, monolingual classroom. Alanís and Rodríguez (2008) found that pedagogical equity and knowledgeable leadership were

important features of the programs. Pedagogical equity means that equal value is placed on knowledge and skills in both program languages and rigorous content is taught in both languages. In the Texas program the principals and staff “supported the notion of equal status of languages, as they were careful not to promote one language over the other” (p. 312). The leaders and teachers in these schools promoted a “positive attitude toward bilingualism” (p. 313).

Hunt (2011) also discusses the need for principals and staff to have a shared commitment to the bilingual model, noting that programs are successful “when the administration and teachers all truly believe in dual language programs as a means of preparing students linguistically and academically” (p. 199). If a principal of an immersion program does not promote such an attitude, and by his/her demands of staff, clearly values English over the target language, this contributes to low teacher morale and lack of commitment to the immersion model. As Hunt (2011) notes, the “lack of trust” on the part of the principal “lessens the strength of the learning community” (p. 198). In addition, Collier and Thomas (2004) found that fidelity to the model affects differences in student achievement. They note that “the principal is a key player in making the model happen as planned” (p. 13).

McGee, Haworth, and MacIntyre (2015) conducted a qualitative study regarding leadership practices to support English Language Learners (ELLs) in two schools in New Zealand. The two urban schools both had populations of ELLs; one was from a higher income area and one had a lower income population. The results of their study support the need for the principal to be knowledgeable of pedagogy and program design for the

ELL population. They state “the knowledge that leaders have about the learnings, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment is seen as highly important” (p. 102). If this is true for working with a specific population or program such as ELLs, then it can be related to immersion programs as well. It would be detrimental to a program if the principal shows that s/he does not “[understand] the nature of bilingualism and the importance of advocacy for teachers, students, and biliteracy” by demanding more English instruction and assessment earlier in the program than appropriate (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008, p. 316). Just as Alanís and Rodríguez (2008) describe, this push for English over the target language can happen if a principal does not have the necessary pedagogical understanding. A principal’s lack of understanding and support of the immersion program will slowly “overpower teachers’ best intentions and ultimately sabotage the program” (p. 316).

Thomas and Collier (2014) support this need for knowledge of bilingual instruction. They state that immersion administrators “need to understand second language acquisition [and] second language literacy” (p. 42). Principals and other staff who do not fully understand immersion programs create obstacles to effective implementation (Thomas & Collier, 2014). For example, if a principal does not understand to expect lower assessment scores in English in the early grades than in a traditional class, s/he may push teachers to use more English instruction than prescribed by the program model, “which can have serious implications for the effectiveness of the program” (Kennedy & Medina, 2017, p. 3). A principal cannot lead an immersion

program effectively if s/he does not have the knowledge of appropriate pedagogy and program structure in a bilingual setting.

Vision and Support

In the Texas immersion program, the teachers believed that “the principal’s support and knowledge regarding dual language instruction had been crucial in program sustainability” (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008, p. 315). In this case study interview, one teacher said that her principal was “a motivating force” in the success of the program (p. 316). In their book about dual language immersion programs to which 24 dual immersion administrators contributed, Thomas and Collier (2014) also address the importance of the principal developing trust with staff through a clear vision and commitment to the dual language model. Hunt’s (2011) study of leadership in bilingual programs supports these concepts as well, including that “the principal and the staff share a clear and unified vision” (p. 193). Rocque et al., (2016) expand on this concept, explaining that in a strand model where the immersion program is housed in a school with traditional, monolingual classes, “both immersion and nonimmersion teachers [need] to continually be made aware of the many goals and values that [unite] them” (p. 811). If the principal is not supportive and knowledgeable of the program, there cannot be a shared vision and mission.

It is apparent that there are leadership practices that are important for leaders of any school to employ. However, language immersion programs are different from a traditional school and therefore require additional skills and knowledge. The limited

research in this area indicates that immersion principals must be knowledgeable regarding immersion pedagogy and program models. They must understand how these programs are different from a traditional one, and what that means for instruction, staffing, schedules, and resources. Effective immersion principals also have to exhibit commitment to the program and show support for the program's vision and goals. A lack of such skills and behavior will negatively affect implementation of general leadership practices for effective schools, including establishing a positive school climate and trust with teachers.

Why Language Immersion?

Research shows that language immersion programs have various benefits. Students in immersion programs exhibit high achievement, typically at or above the level of their monolingual peers. Thomas and Collier (2012) have shown this to be true for multiple subgroups of students. In addition to academic achievement, immersion programs promote global competence and cultural understanding; this teaches students to respect differences among people. Immersion programs are beneficial in multiple ways, providing quality instruction in content, language, and the soft skills necessary for globally competent students. Additionally, dual immersion can be used to elevate the status of the Spanish language and Spanish speakers in our English dominant society. There is current debate in the field over who is being served in DLI programs.

Achievement Outcomes

Because of the need to address achievement of English Language Learners (ELL's) in many areas of the country, DLI programs have become popular and much of the research addresses these two-way programs specifically. Researchers have found that DLI programs “successfully educate native English speakers and English language learners within the same classroom and fulfill for both groups the goals of full bilingualism and biliteracy, grade-level academic achievement, and multicultural competency” (Lindholm-Leary, p. 56, 2005). What more could we want for students than that they achieve these goals? Marian, Shook, and Schroeder (2013) also note the achievement of both groups of students in such programs, stating that “bilingual two-way immersion education is beneficial for both minority- and majority-language elementary students” (p. 178). They studied achievement data for immersion students in the Chicago area, as compared with students of similar demographics in traditional, monolingual classes. In almost every instance, the 3rd-5th grade native English speaking immersion students “outperformed the mainstream classroom students” with the greatest differences shown in math (p. 178).

Researchers Virginia Collier and Wayne Thomas are well known in the field of bilingual education. In a 2004 report on various longitudinal studies of one-way and two-way immersion programs, they describe multiple instances of bilingual programs closing the achievement gap for multiple groups of students. More recently, Thomas and Collier conducted a longitudinal study of achievement in North Carolina DLI programs. Some early results of the study are included in their 2012 text, *Dual Language Education for a*

Transformed World. They used various DLI programs in the study, in both rural and urban areas. Thomas and Collier (2012) found that “both English learners and native English speakers in [these] dual language classes are outperforming their peers in all grades in which they are tested (3-8)” (p. 85). They found that no matter the subgroup – African American, low socio-economic status (SES), ELL – enrollment in DLI programs worked to close the achievement gap for all subgroups in both reading and math. Thomas and Collier (2012) state, “results from all of these NC analyses indicate that all groups of students benefit greatly from dual language programs. English learners and African American students especially strongly benefit” (p. 83). In earlier research Lindholm-Leary (2005) found similar results. According to her, “both English language learners and native English speakers in bilingual immersion programs demonstrated large gains over time in their reading and math achievement test scores,” and additionally in middle school, “both groups scored at or well above grade level in reading and math (p. 58). In a text reporting their experience with a dual immersion program in Colorado, Westerberg and Davison (2016) also found that students exhibited increased achievement in their immersion program, performing at or above the level of students in nearby traditional schools. In addition, they found “steady growth documented for reading, math, and writing” over time as the program became better established (p. 165).

Immersion programs naturally cultivate educational equity. Effective instruction in bilingual classrooms must include hands-on experiences and thematic units that are cross curricular (Christian, 1996). For language and content to be understood, teachers must use a great deal of visuals and modeling, language in context, and must check for

understanding constantly, in multiple ways (Howard et al., 2018). These are all aspects of effective instruction in any classroom, but are vital in a bilingual setting where some or all of the students are not native speakers of the language of instruction. As such, effective immersion programs provide high quality instruction.

As already stated, Thomas and Collier's (2012) research shows that dual immersion programs close the gap for all subgroups. This includes populations that are typically low performing, including racial minorities, low socio-economic status students, English language learners, and students with disabilities. Dual immersion programs have proven to be more effective for English language learners than traditional pull out services for English. Teachers in these programs value the students' native language by fostering literacy skills and content knowledge in that language as well as English (Thomas & Collier, 2012; Westerberg & Davison, 2016). In a dual immersion program, the two native language population groups constantly change in who has an advantage in the classroom. Some of the instruction is in English, so native English speakers are at an advantage, but at least half of the instruction is in the target language, so native speakers of another language have the advantage at that point. In a one-way immersion program in which all students are native English speakers, students are often at equitable educational levels, regardless of background, because they all have the same amount of experience with the target language. These aspects of immersion programs level the playing field for students, creating equitable educational opportunities for all students. However, in order for immersion programs to be successful and exhibit such results, leadership must be effective.

Other Benefits

Immersion programs not only contribute to academic achievement for language minority and language majority students, but they have other benefits as well. Some of these are less tangible than test scores and are difficult to measure, but are evident nonetheless. In our rapidly changing world, we know that “schools must prepare students to be *globally competent*” (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011, p. 97). In a 2011 report sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers and Asia Society, Mansilla and Jackson define global competence as “the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance” (p. xiii). Immersion programs prepare students for a global economy by providing both language and cultural skills. Globally competent workers are able to communicate with others effectively, “using appropriate verbal and nonverbal behavior, languages, and strategies” (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011, p. 39). Becoming proficient in languages other than English through an immersion program provides students with communication and cooperation skills needed in an increasingly interdependent world.

Bilingual programs promote cultural understanding and “sensitivity to culturally and linguistically diverse communities” (Collier & Thomas, 2004, p. 12). Even early in these programs’ development, Christian (1996) noted that dual immersion programs “[enhance] the language resources that minority students bring to school”, promoting an asset model in working with English learners where native language skills are valued, rather than a deficit one where they are seen as a disadvantage (p. 67). Students are in classes with diverse populations, they often have teachers of varying nationalities, and

appreciation of other cultures is a natural part of the curriculum (Howard, et al., 2018). This fosters a soft skill that is difficult to measure, but is vital in helping students to understand differences among people and establish connections with others. Bilingual programs promote global competence, producing students who “bring a pluralistic and respectful attitude to their interactions, recognizing difference as a matter of fact” (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011, p. 44). As previously noted, immersion program populations are often racially and socioeconomically diverse and students have a great deal of interaction with peers from different backgrounds (Thomas & Collier, 2012). This interaction helps to build relationships and bridge typical gaps in cultural understanding among students of varying backgrounds. Students learn language and culture from one another, enhancing their cultural awareness and acceptance of those different from themselves. Effective leaders establish a positive school environment that promotes relationship building and cultural understanding, providing students with global competency skills.

Teachers and school leaders in immersion programs must establish respectful environments that honor differences among people. Hunt (2011) states that “the strength of diversity must be cultivated among students and staff” and that staff in a dual immersion program cannot “fall victim to seeing diversity as an obstacle or a hindrance” (p. 190). In addition to the safety all students should feel by honoring and valuing diversity, immersion students feel safe in taking risks and in not always knowing the answer. Students in a language immersion environment have to learn to be comfortable with some ambiguity because they are not always going to understand every word the

teacher says. In learning a language, they will make many mistakes, so a positive learning environment is vital. Teachers have to establish an accepting environment where all students are treated with equity and differences are honored. Effective school leaders can help in this process, taking actions to ensure that both English and the target language are valued equally, and helping teachers to naturally integrate various cultural aspects as a part of the curriculum.

Student Population Served by Immersion

As previously stated, there are multiple types of language immersion programs. One-way programs target native English speakers, while two-way programs target native English speakers and native speakers of a target language, such as Spanish or Chinese. The goal for both types of programs is that all students become bilingual and biliterate. Howard et al., (2018) also include “sociocultural competence” as a necessary goal for dual immersion programs (p. 10). They stress the need for equity in these programs, as it “is crucial in the dual language program model with its emphasis on integrating students of different ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds” (p. 11). According to Francisca Sánchez, one of the contributors to Thomas and Collier’s 2014 text for administrators, dual immersion programs are to “use culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies...in classrooms that are responsive to all students” (p. xvi). For native speakers of the target language, this is an additive model, as opposed to subtractive, allowing them to build on their native language skills as well as learn English (Collier & Thomas, 2017; Howard et al., 2018). However, some researchers have

investigated Spanish/English dual, or two-way, programs in particular, with a critical approach to determine the focus of these programs and whether they are truly for the benefit of all students, or if they perpetuate “dominant hegemonic practices that have long existed in ‘English-only’ classrooms” (Alfaro & Hernández, 2016, p.9).

Valdez, Freire, and Delavan (2016) studied policy documents to discover “which student groups were positioned ... to benefit the most” from Utah’s dual language initiative (p. 601). They found that the documents emphasized “globalized human capital” and “economic themes” rather than goals such as promoting native or indigenous languages for marginalized groups (p. 612). Furthermore, in analyzing the requirements for teachers, they found that “having highly qualified teachers that could meet the target language needs of English-privileged students in DL was a priority,” yet teachers with English learners in the classes “were not expected to have any training in ESL or dual language methods” (p. 616). Through their analysis, Valdez et al., (2016) found that emphasis was placed on native English speakers learning Spanish, rather than raising the achievement of typically under-performing populations such as native Spanish speakers. The results of their analysis include exactly what Alfaro and Hernández (2016) warn against in their article about a need for critical pedagogy for dual language educators. Thomas and Collier (2014) state that English learners “are the group that most benefit from” dual language education, but that population does not seem to be the focus for the Utah model, according to the 2016 findings of Valdez et al. (p. 6).

With similar intentions, Scanlan and Palmer (2009) studied how two-way immersion programs approach “dimensions of diversity” in two different schools (p.

391). They identified two-way immersion programs as beneficial from a social justice perspective because of the “purposeful inclusion of such diverse communities as immigrant Latinos, native US-born Latinos, and Anglo children in the same classroom” (p. 392). However, in practice at one school they found that the timing of and restrictions on enrollment had the effect of segregating the school, with White middle-class students and some Latino in the immersion program, and the rest of the school being largely African American and Latino. Resources were available to the immersion program specifically, but not for the rest of the school, which “work[ed] to exploit the sense of entitlement of powerful members of the school” (p. 402). While the school began the immersion program as a strand within a school in order to diversify the school and meet the needs of native Spanish speaking students, in reality the focus became more on the middle class White students learning another language. This is similar to what Flores and García (2017) describe in their description of a change in focus for bilingual programs over time. They state that while dual immersion programs have “the possibility of challenging the marginalization of Latinx and other minoritized students,” these programs have become “boutique” programs, marketed “to powerful parents” (p. 16).

In the other school Scanlan and Palmer (2009) studied, the school intentionally worked to “[reduce] marginalization” of students, “[seeking] to recruit and retain a population that is diverse across language, but similar in being primarily Latinos of low socioeconomic status” (p. 404). The immersion programs at both schools “were founded in an explicit effort to address inequity and develop rich, diverse schooling environments,” but the execution was very different (p. 411). The program at one school

is seen as “elite” and “more challenging” than the traditional monolingual classes and some Latino students are denied access because of space restrictions, while at the other all Latino students are welcome (p. 411). The second program did a better job of meeting the needs of all students involved, without valuing the native English-speaking students over native Spanish speakers in implicit or explicit ways.

This strand of research may have implications for program design and professional development for teachers and leaders in dual immersion programs specifically. Alfaro and Hernández (2016) recommend that dual immersion staff “be aware and vigilant of their own middle-class preferences, including their biases against non-standard language use” in order to “ensure equity” in dual language programs (p. 10). If leaders and teachers are not aware of the unintended consequences that can occur due to implicit bias and English dominance, then Flores and García’s (2017) claim will be evident, that “the White English-speaking community [will profit] most from the boutique DLE programs” (p.27). Given such research, if a principal is the leader of a dual immersion program, it is important that s/he identify the specific focus of the program, whether to give native English speakers skills in a second language, or to raise the achievement of typically marginalized students, or possibly both. This focus will have implications for practices and policies in the program. If the focus is about pride in heritage language and culture and building native language skills for Spanish speakers, as Flores and García (2017) discuss, there will need to be intentional practices to overcome the realities of White/English dominance, such as ensuring that all students can see themselves represented by role models in the teaching staff, curriculum and resources are

representative of the student population, and that the staff engages in cultural competency training.

Why Not Language Immersion?

Given the research, especially data that shows improvement for all subgroups, language immersion seems an obvious choice for schools. Not only have these programs been effective in closing the achievement gap, positive results are seen for all students.

Thomas and Collier (2012) say it best:

What is amazing is that dual language programs close the achievement gap not only for English learners but also for other groups as well. Latinos fluent in English, African Americans, and students of low socioeconomic status from all ethnic backgrounds have greatly improved their test scores within dual language classes, *benefitting these groups more dramatically than other school reform models*. Fully meeting the needs of historically underserved and low-scoring groups is an important reason to expand access to dual language classes for as many student groups as possible (p.112, *emphasis mine*).

With such promising results, language immersion, whether one- or two-way programs, can be a strong model for schools. But as with any instructional program, it must be implemented with fidelity. The potential positive effects cannot be realized without the appropriate, knowledgeable implementation. Principals must be effective immersion leaders in order for this to occur. Although some research exists regarding effective leadership in immersion programs, it is minimal, and thus more research is needed on this topic to best support these potentially highly effective programs. Research has proven these programs to be effective for all students, including those who are

traditionally marginalized and not successful in school. Therefore, it is important to expand the research in this area so that principals can support these programs for the benefit of students.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework

In this research project I address effective leadership practices in schools, specifically in language immersion programs. As such, it is important to consider various theories of educational leadership. In the 1980's a shift began in American schools, from a focus on managerial or administrative leadership to instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2011). Much of the recent research deals with instructional leadership, transformational leadership, and shared or distributed leadership (Bush & Glover, 2014; Hallinger, 2011). These leadership theories provide a framework for the research and are evident in the literature review.

In a review of current leadership models and research, Bush and Glover (2014) describe leadership as “influence rather than authority” (p. 554). They describe leadership as an intentional process, and different from that of positional authority. Principals obviously have positional authority, but they must be intentional about how they use their influence and authority in order to apply appropriate leadership theories. In a review of empirical research about leadership in schools, Hallinger (2011) states that “leaders must adapt their styles to changing circumstances” (p. 135). He discusses multiple theories, including instructional and transformational leadership, but says that the context is important in determining which strategies to use in order to be

most effective. Language immersion programs provide a context that is different from that of a traditional school. In this project, I investigated how immersion program principals take this difference into account in order to apply leadership theories for the benefit of their programs. I will specifically describe Instructional Leadership, Shared Leadership, and Transformational Leadership theories in the following sections.

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership, which has somewhat evolved into “leadership for learning” in recent years, focuses “primarily on the direction and purpose of leaders’ influence” (Bush & Glover, 2014, p. 556). This theory is concerned with student learning outcomes and leadership practices that support learning. The tenet of instructional leadership include specific leadership behaviors found in effective schools, such as establishing vision and a positive climate, organizing the environment, and collaborating with stakeholders (Neumerski, 2012). Instructional leaders “work to integrate reflection and growth to build a school culture...for instructional improvement” by building trust and providing time for teacher collaboration. (Blase and Blase, 2000, p. 138). All of these are also characteristics described in the literature regarding effective leadership in general.

Leadership for learning requires a focus on vision and goal setting. Hallinger (2011) states that “clearly defined goals provide a basis for making decisions” throughout the school (p. 129). An instructional leader has to consider the vision and goals when s/he makes decisions regarding budgeting, materials, curriculum, staffing, schedule, etc.

A school vision that clearly targets student learning exhibits a focus on instruction. However, in an instructional leadership model, the principal “manage[s] and reward[s] staff members toward a predetermined set of goals” rather than involving the staff in the development of the goals (Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam, & Brown, 2013, p. 448). Proponents of a shared or distributed leadership model, as described below, would be critical of this aspect of instructional leadership since it does not help to build buy in towards the vision and goals.

In a comparison study of transformational and instructional leadership theories, Shatzer et al. (2013) state that implementation of instructional leadership requires the principal to manage the instructional environment by “supervising instruction in the classroom, managing the curriculum, and monitoring students’ progress” (p. 446). This also includes organizational skills described in the literature review by protecting instructional time and allowing time for intentional teacher collaboration (Shatzer et al., 2013). The results of their study involving teacher perceptions of leadership in 37 schools in the western United States show that these factors contributed to an increase in student achievement. This supports findings by Blase and Blase (2000) in a study of teacher perceptions of instructional leadership. They found that effective instructional leaders promote professional growth through reflective conversation and teacher collaboration.

A meta-analysis of 27 studies conducted by Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) shows that instructional leadership had “three to four times” the impact of transformational leadership (p.665). They state that this is because transformational

leadership is about relationships, rather than instructional practice. The results presented by Shatzer et al. (2013) corroborate the data that Robinson et al. (2008) present. They found that when teachers rated their principals as utilizing instructional leadership rather than transformational, as determined by nationally normed instruments, student achievement was higher. As a result of their study, Shatzer et al., (2008) recommend that principals learn instructional leadership theory as a part of administrative training programs.

Shared Leadership

Shared, or distributed leadership, is significant in that it is “uncouple[d] from positional authority” (Bush & Glover, 2014, p. 560). It is not that the leader delegates authority to others, but rather that decisions are made collaboratively, utilizing teacher leaders and other staff as a part of the leadership process. For principals who need to enact change in a school, shared leadership can provide a “framework for instructional leadership that will produce sustainable school improvement” (Lambert, 2002, p. 38). Because the implementation of shared leadership doesn’t depend upon just one person, the principal builds capacity throughout the school by developing teacher leaders and leadership skills in other staff. As Spillane (2005) states, “leadership involves an array of individuals with various tools and structures” (p. 143). Shared leadership can be beneficial because as Lambert (2002) states in a report about the shared leadership framework, “one-person leadership leaves the substantial talents of teachers largely untapped” (p. 37). The principal does not have to be the only instructional leader in the

school. Teachers and other staff have much to contribute and will do so if a school leader implements a shared leadership model.

Spillane (2005) insists that distributed leadership is not about specific actions, but rather interactions between administrators and teachers. He states that distributive “leadership practice typically involves multiple leaders some with and some without formal leadership positions” (p. 145). This may include administrators, instructional facilitators, coaches, and teachers. Effective shared, or collaborative leadership “empowers staff and students” and promotes “shared accountability for student learning” (Hallinger & Heck, 2010, p. 662). By enabling others to take on leadership roles and promoting such collaboration, Hallinger and Heck (2010) found that this type of leadership had an indirect, positive effect on achievement “through building the academic capacity in schools” (p. 670).

As with instructional leadership, aspects of the shared leadership model were also evident in the literature review of effective leadership practices. However, Spillane (2005) cautions that a distributive leadership model is not “a cure-all for all that ails schools” (p. 149). He notes that there is a need not only for more data on the effects of this type of leadership on achievement, but also that the model needs to be better defined by scholars. Lambert (2002), however, would disagree. She argues that it is not practical to look to the principal as “the lone instructional leader” because that practice ignores the knowledge and talents of others (p. 37). Rather, she promotes the idea that the principal must intentionally “develop the leadership capacity of the whole school community” in order to positively affect instruction and learning (p. 40).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership indicates a need for change in current practice. In a somewhat dated, but often cited primary article intended for the business community, Bass (1990) states that transformational leadership “occurs when leaders...generate awareness and acceptance of the ...mission of the group and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group” (p. 21). In a review of a range of research conducted regarding transformational leadership, Leithwood and Sun (2012) state that transformational leadership theory involves leaders providing support such that “organizational members become highly engaged and motivated by goals” (p. 388). Related to the need for vision and clear goals in instructional leadership theory, transformational leadership theory has practical application in schools, as teachers need to understand the vision and goals of the school, and their role in accomplishing those goals. Bass (1990) describes transformational leaders as those who work to meet the individual needs of staff and provide intellectual stimulation in order to solve problems effectively.

Transformational leadership is just that – it requires that there is a change in practice in order to achieve desired outcomes. This may mean that a school has consistently been low performing and data indicates that something needs to be significantly different in order for the school to be successful. Transformational leadership is slightly different from shared or instructional leadership theories, which can be used to lead small changes or improvement in practice. In Cuban’s 2013 text addressing school reform, he distinguishes between change and reform, arguing that

unless something “significantly change[s] how teachers teach”, the achievement results will continue to be low because the changes will be just that – small changes, rather than actual, fundamental reform (p. 50). Transformational leadership addresses the fundamental reform that Cuban (2013) describes. In their 2010 text addressing school improvement, Davidovich, Nilolay, Laugerman, and Commodore agree, noting that new methods or resources “will not produce change unless leaders create the opportunities for teachers to let go of...their current practice” (p. 50).

This need for working differently indicates a need for significant professional development. School leaders apply this theory by providing differentiated support for teachers, supporting them with professional development, and providing opportunities for collaboration to meet students’ needs. Davidovich et al. (2010) discuss the need for this kind of leadership as a part of school reform. They state that such leaders facilitate “endeavors that transform the *system* of education”, which leads to improved student performance (p. 28). Immersion is a transformative model. The pedagogy is different from that of a traditional classroom, as the teachers have to take into account both language acquisition and subject area content objectives.

Leithwood and Sun (2012) temper their discussion of transformational leadership theory, stating that it “offers only a partial ‘solution’ to the leadership ‘problem’” in schools where student achievement needs to improve (p. 389). By requiring change in practice as a part of transformation, components of instructional leadership are also necessary in order to help teachers improve their practice. This suggests that there is not just one leadership theory that is appropriate for schools in general or for immersion

programs specifically, but rather elements of various theories may be beneficial. As Hallinger (2011) discusses, school leaders must apply leadership theories according to the needs of the context and situation. Additionally, Shatzer et al., (2013) caution against the sole use of transformational leadership theory. They propose that transformational leadership does not have the clarity of practices that instructional leadership provides, stating that using transformational theory “may leave a principal asking what transformational leadership looks like” (p. 455-456).

In a study of 24 restructured schools analyzing the use of instructional and transformational leadership, Marks and Printy (2003) found that using these leadership theories in isolation was not as effective as integrating them. They state that “where integrated leadership was normative, ...students performed at high levels on authentic measures of achievement” by .6 standard deviation (p. 392). Therefore, it seems most beneficial to understand multiple theories and apply them as necessary. In a three-year study of elementary and secondary schools in England undergoing long term improvement, Day, Gu, and Sammons (2016) also found that a combination of leadership theories was beneficial, as “neither instructional leadership strategies nor transformational leadership strategies alone were sufficient to promote improvement” (p. 238). More specifically, they found that principals used components of these theories more or less at times, depending upon the phase of improvement in which the school was involved. The principals made “judgements about what works in their particular school context” in applying strategies from both leadership theories (p. 253). Day et al., (2016) indicate that not only does effective leadership involve using a combination of theories,

but that the timing and context of the school's status and staff needs affects the strategies that should be used, and that the principal must make these decisions with intentionality.

Application to Research

All three of the leadership theories above can be applied to language immersion programs. While there are some basic characteristics of effective leadership as described in the literature review, leadership is also dependent upon context (Hallinger, 2011). Different situations and environments call for different types of leadership. Just as there is no one right way to teach a student, "there is no one best leadership style for fostering learning in schools" (Hallinger, 2011, p. 137). Effective leaders know how to use different types of leadership appropriate for the needs of a situation and their goals. The limited research regarding leadership in immersion programs incorporates aspects of all three types. Immersion principals must have the program knowledge described by Rocque et al. (2016) and Hunt (2011) in order to utilize instructional leadership theory. They can also build trust and establish a collaborative climate using shared or distributed leadership theory (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; Hunt, 2011). Given the achievement results that can be realized through immersion programs, (Collier & Thomas, 2017; Lindholm-Leary, 2005; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2003, 2012, 2014), aspects of transformational leadership might be appropriate if using immersion as a reform model in a struggling school. I sought evidence of all three theories as I conducted this research.

Methods

This is a basic, interview-based qualitative research study from a constructivist paradigm (Hatch, 2002). One of my goals in this project was to “[seek] to understand the world from the perspectives of those living in it” by interviewing teachers, principals, and parents about their experiences with language immersion programs (Hatch, 2002, p. 7). All of the research regarding leadership in language immersion programs and much of the general leadership research referred to in the literature review is qualitative. This is logical, since it would not be possible to study effective practices and behaviors without the use of qualitative data sources such as surveys, observations, and interviews. The leadership theories described above also lend themselves to use in a qualitative study. In order to look for application of these theories, qualitative methods were required.

I began this work with a pilot study, for which I received IRB approval, in which I specifically researched teachers’ perceptions of leadership in immersion programs. The dissertation study grew out of the pilot study and data from the pilot is included in this report, as it was enriching to the larger study. In order to understand stakeholders’ perceptions in depth, individual interviews are the best way to gather data and gain “a better understanding of the subject matter at hand” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 4; Hatch, 2002). I worked with three elementary school language immersion programs in North Carolina, as our state has had a rapid increase in the number of programs in the last ten years and the programs differ from district to district. All of the programs were Spanish dual immersion, or two-way programs. I conducted interviews with stakeholders from each of the three programs, including the principal, assistant principal, two teachers, and

two parents. I requested permission from the districts to conduct the research and once granted, I approached the principals of the three schools first to request their participation, and then worked with them to help distribute information to teachers and parents asking for volunteers. Two of the schools requested flyers to distribute to teachers and parents and the third school used email for recruitment. I also gathered data regarding school demographics, standardized test scores, and historical enrollment data in order to provide context for the programs. Most of this was public data, accessible either on the NC DPI website or on the school districts' websites.

Site Selection

I selected schools for the project based on the age of the immersion program and accessibility. Programs that have only been in existence two or three years do not have the longevity needed to assess long term success, or for stakeholders to be able to address factors that have influenced the program over several years. I used the list of programs provided by the NC Department of Public Instruction (2017a) to identify programs that have been in existence for six years or more. I requested access based upon location and type of program so that they were not all from the same district or area of the state. This helped to ensure a variety of programs and data sources. Two of the three sites participated in the pilot study.

Success of a program is defined by enrollment and standardized achievement test results. If a program has maintained or increased enrollment over the course of time, that is a measure of success since these programs are dependent upon parents choosing to

enroll their children. A decrease in enrollment would indicate some type of dissatisfaction with the program, which might be due to a multitude of factors, but would indicate a program is on the decline. Standardized assessment data is often used as a measure of success for a school, but there are various ways to measure success in this way. For the purposes of this project, I defined program success as those with average proficiency scores on the NC End of Grade standardized assessments that are higher than the state average.

Site Descriptions

Two of the programs in the study were whole school and one was a program within a school. All of the schools were public magnet schools and all of the programs were Spanish dual immersion, with native English and native Spanish speakers in the classes. All of the programs had English and Spanish partner teachers who plan together and teach the same groups of students. All three schools had well established dual immersion programs that have been in existence for 10 years or more (NC DPI, 2017a).

Cherry Elementary is a pre-K-5 school with an enrollment of 501 in 2016-17. The enrollment has been stable over the past 3 years but has not increased due to a lack of space for expansion. Cherry is half traditional with monolingual classes and half immersion classes. The immersion program is in high demand, as the school has had a waiting list of native English-speaking incoming Kindergarteners for immersion for the last 3 years, ranging from 28 to 61 students on the waiting list at the beginning of the year (district provided data). The school maintains a relatively strict 50% native Spanish speaker and 50% native English speaker population in the immersion classrooms. The

population is 5% African American, 32% Hispanic¹, and 56% White (District Website). The low SES population is 33.39% (NC DPI, 2017b).

Apple Elementary is a K-5 school with increased enrollment over the past three years. The enrollment in 2014-15 was 498 and in 2016-17 was 580. In 2016-17 the population was 5% African American, 50% Hispanic, and 40% White (District Website). The low SES population is 43.74%, and that has remained relatively constant for the past three years (NC DPI, 2017b).

Orange Elementary is a school with an enrollment of around 750 students in 2016-17. The population is 61% Hispanic, 16% African American, and 20% White (District Website). 25.89% of the students are classified as low income (NC DPI, 2017b). Enrollment at Orange rose slightly over the last 3 years, from 740 in 2014-15, to 763 in 2016-17. The demographics were relatively equal for those 3 years (District Website).

Standardized Assessment Data

Public schools in North Carolina are required to administer End of Grade (EOG) assessments in Reading and Math beginning in 3rd -5th Grades, as well as a Science EOG in 5th Grade. All EOG assessments are administered in English. The state assigns a School Performance Grade of A-F to each school based on proficiency scores and growth measures (NC DPI, 2017c). Students can score a 1-5 on the EOGs. A score of 1 or 2

¹ While the term “Latino/a” may be considered more culturally responsive, I have used “Hispanic” because that is the ethnic category used by NC in collecting school demographic data, as well as the term commonly used in the districts.

indicates that a student is performing below grade level expectations. A 3 indicates that a student has achieved Grade Level Proficiency, while a 4 or 5 indicates a student has achieved College and Career Ready status. The percent of students proficient on EOGs and School Performance Grades are typically considered to be a measure of the schools' success.

All three programs exhibit historical academic success. As presented in Table 1 below, the average percent proficient at each grade level has almost always been higher than the state average, and in many cases is more than 10 or even 20 percentage points higher than the state. The averages in the table represent the percent proficient for Grade Level Proficient status, or those students receiving a 3, 4, or 5 on the EOG. All of the schools have earned a School Performance Grade of “B” (NC DPI, 2017c).

Table 1. EOG Data

Average Grade Level Proficiency on all EOGs				
	North Carolina	Cherry*	Apple	Orange
2014-15				
Grade 3	60.4	64.4	71.3	77.8
Grade 4	57.5	81.0	46	77.3
Grade 5	58.4	51.9	58.5	75.4
2015-16				
Grade 3	61.2	66.3	75	81
Grade 4	57.6	72.9	63.6	60
Grade 5	62.4	68.2	51.6	82.1
2016-17				
Grade 3	60.7	68.9	66.2	66.9
Grade 4	58.1	65.3	67.1	69.8
Grade 5	62.4	75.9	71	72.3

*Cherry Elementary's scores are from only immersion classes.

This academic success is important for multiple reasons. The data shows that these programs are exhibiting results consistent with that of Thomas and Collier’s (2003; 2012) and Lindholm-Leary’s (2005) research. The students in these three programs have been consistently achieving well above state averages. The trend data shows that this success is not a fluke in one particular year. The schools all have diverse populations with high percentages of Hispanic students, and significant percentages of low SES students, both sub-groups which often do not exhibit high achievement. It is apparent that these immersion programs are successful for students, even though the standardized tests are in English, and they have been taught in Spanish at least 50% of the time since Kindergarten.

Participants

Table 2. Project Participants

School	Principal	Assistant Principal	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Parent 1	Parent 2
Cherry (DLI and Traditional strands)	Betsy: bilingual, native English speaker	Bill: not bilingual	Charlotte: bilingual, native English speaker	Gina: not bilingual	Virginia: bilingual, native Spanish speaker	Lynn: bilingual, native English speaker
Apple (Whole school DLI)	Sarah: not bilingual, some knowledge of Spanish	Vicki: bilingual, Native English Speaker	Anna: bilingual, native English speaker	Lea: bilingual, native English speaker	Judy: not bilingual	Jean: not bilingual
Orange (Whole school DLI)	Ashley: bilingual, native English speaker	Lou: not bilingual, limited knowledge of Spanish	April: not bilingual	Alex: bilingual, native English speaker	Lisa: not bilingual	Cecilia: bilingual, native Spanish speaker

At Cherry Elementary I interviewed the principal, Betsy, as a part of the pilot study. For the broader dissertation research, I interviewed the Assistant Principal, Bill, two teachers, Charlotte and Gina, and two parents, Virginia and Lynn. Betsy has been the principal at Cherry for 5 years. She was the assistant principal there for 2 years, and an administrative intern for a year before that. Prior to administration, she taught at multiple grade levels as well as abroad. Betsy is bilingual in English and Spanish. Bill has been at Cherry for 6 years as the Assistant Principal. He completed his administrative internship at Cherry. Charlotte has taught in immersion schools for 7 years and is bilingual. Gina has taught for 3 years in immersion as the English teacher in a pair with a Spanish teacher. Virginia has one child in the immersion program at Cherry who is in the 5th grade. She is a Spanish speaker, her husband is an English speaker, and they wanted the bilingual experience for their child. While she was interviewed as a parent, Virginia is also a teacher in the program. Lynn has two students in the immersion program, one in 4th grade and one in 1st grade. Like Virginia, her family is bilingual, so she and her husband wanted this experience for their children.

Apple Elementary also participated in the pilot study. At that time, I interviewed the principal, Sarah, and two teachers, Anna and Lea. During the broader dissertation study, I interviewed two parents, Judy and Jean, and the Assistant Principal, Vicki. Sarah has been the principal at Apple for 5 years. Prior to that she was principal at another school with an immersion program for 7 years. She has also been a classroom teacher at multiple grade levels as well as a central office administrator. She is not bilingual, though she does understand a fair amount of Spanish. Vicki has been the assistant principal for 1

year. Prior to that she was the assistant principal at a traditional school, and completed her administrative internship at Apple. She is bilingual and was a Spanish teacher. Anna has been a teacher at Apple for 6 years. Prior to that she taught in immersion programs at 3 other schools. She has taught at multiple grade levels, in various kinds of bilingual and traditional programs. Lea has been a teacher at Apple for 4 years. Prior to that she taught in 2 other immersion programs. Anna and Lea are both bilingual. Judy has two students in immersion, one in 3rd grade and one in 6th who is now at a middle school, but attended Apple. Judy wanted her children to be in the diverse environment of immersion, and felt the program would be an academic challenge for her children. Jean has two children in immersion, one in 4th grade and one in 6th grade, also at a middle school but attended Apple. Jean was familiar with the research regarding immersion and wanted “the experience both academically and ...culturally that immersion would provide.” Neither parent is bilingual.

Orange Elementary was not a part of the pilot program. The principal, Ashley, has been there for 3 years. Prior to that she was an ESL teacher and a central office administrator. Ashley is bilingual in English and Spanish. Lou has been the assistant principal at Orange for 8 years. He completed his administrative internship there and prior to that was a middle school English teacher. He is not bilingual, though he does understand some Spanish. April has been a teacher at Orange for 6 years, teaching in the English side of the program. She has also taught in traditional settings. Alex has been a teacher at Orange for 4 years. Prior to that she was a high school Spanish teacher, and she has taught at multiple grade levels in immersion. Lisa has two children in the

immersion program at Orange, a 6th grader and a 4th grader. She chose the program for her children based upon the research and her desire for them to be bilingual and have cultural diversity. Cecilia is a native Spanish speaker with three children who have been in the program at Orange. One has graduated high school, one is in high school, and the third is in 4th grade. She chose the program for her children so that they could have the advantage of being bilingual. The interview with her was conducted in Spanish. Her quotes in the findings are included in Spanish, along with English translations that I completed.

Data Collection

I used topical, semi-structured interviews to collect data. This enabled me to ask additional questions that arose during the process that were not on my original interview guide (Glesne, 2016; Merriam, 1988). All interviews were conducted in English, except one parent interview that was in Spanish. In the pilot study interviews were conducted via GoToMeeting, an online platform for video conferencing with recording capability. The interviews for the larger study were all conducted in person. I recorded these face-to-face interviews for later transcription. After analyzing the initial data, I asked follow-up questions of some participants by email to gain clarification and further insight. I asked a variety of questions, including ones about experience, background, opinions, and knowledge (Merriam, 1998). In the teacher, parent, and assistant principal interviews I asked questions regarding their prior experience with leaders other than their current principals. I asked principals questions about their teaching experience prior to going

into leadership, as well as about leading with an immersion program as a strand within the school compared with a whole school model. In interviews with parents, I wanted to understand why they feel the program is effective for their child and how they view the principal's leadership practices. I asked all participants questions about the principal's priorities for the school and what she does to support the immersion program. By interviewing multiple teachers, parents, assistant principals, and principals from a variety of schools, the project presents the montage of viewpoints that Denzin and Lincoln (2011) describe.

Data Analysis

The leadership theories described previously, instructional, shared, and transformational leadership, provided a theoretical framework for data analysis (Kilbourn, 2006). These theories informed the questions I asked in interviews, as well as the coding process in analyzing the data. Throughout the research project I looked for ways in which instructional leadership theory is applied by principals for the benefit of student learning in immersion programs.

Though I used leadership theories to determine some codes or categories before analyzing the data, I also used an inductive analysis approach to interpret the data collected during this research in order to ensure I did not overlook important findings that did not fall within the predetermined codes (Hatch, 2002). I transcribed each interview, and then went through the coding process multiple times with each interview (Hatch, 2002; Saldaña, 2009). This process allowed me to identify codes, categories, and themes

to organize the data appropriately (Glesne, 2016; Saldaña, 2009). I coded the teacher, parent, and assistant principal interviews first, since those provided an outside view of leadership, as opposed to a principal's self-description and reporting. I was able to incorporate the themes and categories from the pilot study into those of the dissertation project. Then I analyzed the principal interviews to see if the same categories emerged, or what differences I would find among the data from the various stakeholders. I expected principals to address many of the same concepts as the teachers did, but to also address aspects of leadership that the teachers did not. I also expected parents to contribute a point of view that would differ from that of the educators. In addition to using leadership theories to influence interview questions analysis, I looked for evidence of intentional and unintentional implementation of leadership theory in the data. The findings helped with understanding how various leadership practices affect programs and stakeholders.

Trustworthiness

I addressed trustworthiness by interviewing stakeholders from different schools in order to gain multiple perspectives. I interviewed teachers, parents, the assistant principal, and the principal at the same school, in order to employ triangulation and compare responses from different viewpoints regarding the same program (Glesne, 2016). As needed after analyzing the transcripts, I asked follow-up questions of participants by email. I conducted member checking by sending the categories and themes to the participants for their feedback and asked if this was the meaning they

intended (Glesne, 2016). I sent the categories and themes from the parent interviews to the parents, the data from the teacher interviews to the teachers, and the data from the teacher, assistant principal, and principal interviews to the assistant principals and principals. I received positive responses from a majority of the participants, indicating that the data resonated with them. A few participants offered follow up comments and questions, which prodded my thinking in writing about the findings and analysis so I included their additional thoughts. Throughout the project I kept a research journal to “[reflect] upon [my] subjectivities” in order to be aware of my bias and subjectivity both in collecting data and conducting analysis (Glesne, 2016, p. 53). This reflective process helped me to ask meaningful questions in interviews and begin to connect the preliminary data before beginning the official coding process. The reflection also helped me to begin to apply some learning to work in my own school district, as I will discuss in the final chapter.

I was upfront with interview participants regarding my role and interests. As Glesne (2016) notes, I presented myself so that participants would welcome me and be comfortable, by being friendly and opening the conversation with appreciation for their participation and giving of their time. In full disclosure, I was already acquainted with the principals of the schools due to my involvement with immersion at the state level, but I did not know any of them well. I did not know the other participants prior to the interviews. In conducting the interviews, I was aware of the need to “set aside assumptions that [I] know what [the] respondents mean”, and asked follow up questions to ensure I understand the participants’ meaning (Glesne, 2016, p. 134). I intentionally

did not respond in ways I would have if the interviews had instead been conversations with colleagues about the programs. I wanted the participants to provide as much information in their responses as possible, without any interjections or information from me that might influence what they would say. Several researchers talk about the power relations between the researcher and participant, but I did not feel that in this study I had the upper hand of power (Glesne, 2016; Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2007). I approached the participants as the experts with knowledge and opinions from which to learn. I made the interviews as comfortable as possible, asking follow up questions when I feel the need, and commenting on participants' answers in a limited way to make the experience more conversational. As Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) recommend, I allowed for silence and time for participants to think and consider their answers and strove to build rapport during the interviews.

Ethics

Lincoln and Cannella (2009) state that “ethics are the responsibility of the researcher” (2009, p. 278). I felt the need to consider ethics more in the beginning or design stages of my study rather than in the data analysis or representation, as this project does not involve significant ethical dilemmas. As I stated, I knew some of the participants prior to the project and I agree with Glesne’s (2016) statement that “relational ethics is at the core of research” (p. 179). I admit that to a degree I used the collegial relationship I have with some immersion principals in North Carolina as a way to recruit participants to interview.

Regarding treatment of the data, as Glesne (2016) recommends, I took into account the possibilities of how a published report could affect the participants, and as such, have used pseudonyms for all of the participants, schools, and locations. Since I was asking assistant principals, teachers, and parents about their principals, both past and present, it is understandable that they might not want to be identified, especially if they had negative comments regarding someone's leadership. I considered using my own district as a site. However, I understand "the possible problems generated by [my] involvement" in the district's immersion programs, and the potential reactions of the principals. (Glesne, 2016, p. 48). Based on this, I decided it would not be in my best professional interest to recruit participants in my district since I need to maintain positive working relationships with the principals. Some of them might not welcome this project and it could damage relationships, so I chose only sites outside of my district.

The ethical considerations for this project largely deal with my own positionality as the researcher and the need to protect participants' anonymity. I believe I addressed those concerns as explained above. By being aware of my role and bias, and participants' potential concerns, I took those into account throughout the research project.

The next three chapters are findings chapters based on major themes that emerged from the research. Through the interviews it became clear that all stakeholders felt it was important to establish a positive school culture. Details about what this entails are provided in Chapter 4. The interview data also revealed the need for program and teacher support, which involves various components. Chapter 5 includes these findings and how this was present in the three schools. In Chapter 6 there are findings from the interviews

related the skills and knowledge the immersion principal needs to have. Each of the data chapters includes connections to previous research. Lastly, Chapter 7 includes implications for practice, limitations of the study, and possibilities for future research.

CHAPTER IV

POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

The purpose of this project was to identify attitudes and actions of leaders in successful immersion programs. One theme that emerged was the need to establish a positive school culture. This need was also evident in the literature review. School culture is defined by Hanson (2001) as “a particular combination of values, beliefs, and feelings” (as cited in Marzano et al., 2005, p. 47). All of the stakeholders in the project referred to the work of school culture (see chart on p. 53 for a list of all participants). Bill, the assistant principal at Cherry Elementary, said that creating a positive culture in the school was one of the principal’s top two priorities. There were four components relating to high teacher morale and positive school culture that became apparent in the interview data. These were (a) administrators exhibiting trust in teachers; (b) intentionally building relationships with parents, including specifically reaching out to Hispanic parents and communicating in both languages; (c) building community with teachers; and (d) showing commitment to the program. All of the stakeholders noted how the principals intentionally involve and build relationships with parents. This includes intentionality in working with Hispanic parents and making them feel comfortable in the school. A part of the positive culture is how the principals work to build community in the school, both with teachers and parents. A high sense of morale and a positive culture also come from the principals’ commitment to the immersion program. It is evident that

the buy-in of the principal contributes to the positive atmosphere in the school because teachers feel that they and their program have value. The Principal at Orange Elementary noted this need to focus on school culture, stating that the school “is a special place and it (culture) is something to be nurtured.”

Trust in Teachers

Teachers and administrators indicated that trust in the staff was an important component of the success of their immersion programs. As a part of a positive culture and high morale, three teachers specifically referred to the trust they felt the administrators placed in them, believing the teachers to be the experts. Teachers noted that because the principals exhibit trust in them, they feel respected for their knowledge and opinions. It also means they feel there is a psychologically safe atmosphere in which they can try new strategies in the classroom without fear of what will happen if they fail.

Teachers and administrators at all of the schools referred to the need for professional trust as a part of program success. In talking about her relationship with Sarah, her principal, Lea, a teacher at Apple Elementary stated, “I feel that if I have a problem I can go to her. I also feel that she trusts me and that she trusts my judgment so there’s a mutual respect there.” She went on to say that “[Sarah] hires us as an expert and expects us to be experts.” Anna, the other Apple teacher, also talked about feeling that Sarah has faith in her as a teacher. She felt that the principal “appreciates [her] efforts” and has “been a strong supporter” of her as a teacher. Sarah, the principal at Apple stated

that she “consider[s] every teacher in the building a professional” and that she trusts them to do their job without micromanagement.

The teachers at Cherry Elementary echoed the sentiments expressed at Apple, with one teacher, Charlotte, explicitly stating “[Betsy]...really trusts her staff.” Bill, the assistant principal at Cherry also expressed his trust in the teachers. In speaking about Betsy and himself, he said “we really go out of our way to empower our faculty, to trust our faculty...to show them we know they’re experts.” He reported that teachers have told him they feel this sense of trust because they see the administrators “as co-conspirators in this work that we do.” It is evident that the administrators have established trust with the teachers and that the teachers feel respected.

Ashley, the principal at Orange, expressed her faith in the teachers, stating her belief “that teachers have all the answers and that we gotta listen to our teachers.” Lou, the assistant principal at Orange, expressed a similar sentiment, noting that he and the principal build trust and relationships with teachers by “being active and participative in the total school model,” actively participating in planning sessions and team meetings with teachers, being present often in the classroom, and modeling best practices for teachers. He stated that these actions “[validate] the efforts of our staff” because the administrators are “walking the walk.” The attitudes exemplified by the administrators towards their faculty members that the teachers and administrators describe show the trust they have established with the staff.

Vicki, the assistant principal at Apple, noted that idea of trust in the teachers is not just about faith in their abilities and knowledge. She explained that an atmosphere of

trust also means that teachers feel they are able to try different strategies and activities with students. She stated that it is important that administrators allow teachers “to feel like they can take risks, giving them flexibility.” The teachers at Apple have a sense that they have some autonomy to make instructional decisions because they are trusted by administrators and considered highly knowledgeable. This concept of risk-taking as a part of trust did not specifically arise in interviews at the other two schools.

Teachers, assistant principals, and principals at all three schools discussed trust as a key component that contributed to a positive school culture. The teachers expressed feeling respected by their administrators and that their opinions have value. Administrators specifically reported that they trust the teachers and regard them as experts in the classroom. At one school trust was also referred to as a sense that teachers can take instructional risks. It is evident that an atmosphere of professional trust has been established at all of the schools.

Building Community with Parents

Principals in the project schools worked to intentionally build community with parents. Principals built community in three ways. First, they built relationships with parents, which included communicating in both languages and caring for children as important parts of relationship and community building. A distinction between relationship and community building arose in the interview data as participants specifically talked about the goals principals have for building community among families in the schools. They talked less about individual relationships, and more about a

larger sense of community. Second, whether English or Spanish classes, dual immersion or traditional classes, all are treated as one school together, rather than completely separated. Lastly, schools hosted specific events meant to bring parents and families together in order to build a sense of community.

Intentionally Building Relationships with Parents

The interview findings exhibited the need for administrators to intentionally build relationships with parents. Principals built relationships with parents in general by inviting their input and involving them in decision making. In addition, specifically reaching out to Spanish speaking parents and communicating in two languages was an important part of establishing relationships with parents. There was a cautionary message with regard to clear communication from the leaders. Also, principals exhibited genuine concern for students and created whole school communities. It was evident that the leaders realized the importance of involving parents in the work of the school as a part of a successful program.

Principals built relationships with parents by inviting them to provide input and establishing an open atmosphere. The principals at Cherry and Apple have activities intentionally designed to involve parents and hear their input, such as a morning when parents can come to have breakfast with the principal. Lynn, a parent at Cherry, said that the principal is “very open” and she feels she has “easy access” if she has concerns. Virginia, also a parent at Cherry, said that this principal “listens to parents” and supports the activities of the PTA. She said that Betsy shares district information with parents to

that they can contribute their input. It is apparent that the principals have established a positive environment in which parents feel that they can raise concerns or bring ideas to the principal and they will be heard. Lynn said that Betsy encourages home visits to involve parents when their schedule does not permit them to attend school events. Likewise, Virginia mentioned home visits, saying that “some of our parents in dual language [have] 2 [or] 3 jobs...[and] they have limited time, so it’s better just to go there.” This gives parents a way to be connected to the school when they aren’t able to go at specified times due to other responsibilities.

Vicki, at Apple, discussed the intentionality of building relationships with parents and said that “we’ve created an environment where parents feel like they can speak up and have a voice.” This was accomplished through a variety of practices, including making the school a welcoming place for parents by offering opportunities such as language and technology classes for parents. This also includes support programs that were established for families, which are discussed more in Chapter 5. Jean, a parent, reported that Sarah works a great deal with the PTA in order to encourage parent involvement and input. Judy agreed that Sarah encourages parent input, saying that if a parent has a “problem then she has the time and she has the space” to hear from the parent and address the issue. She reported that Sarah is welcoming to parents, holding PTA board meetings in her office, “right in the middle of her business,” which helps to create open relationships with parents. These actions are intentional on the part of the principals and are effective in building relationships with parents. Judy also said that “there are parents in the building all the time...[there is] an open door policy.” The

parents feel welcome in the school and feel that they can approach the principal with any concerns. While the teachers feel that the school leaders trust them, the parents also have relationships built on trust with the principals.

Many of the interviewees addressed how the principal specifically reaches out to Spanish speaking parents in order to ensure they are involved in the school. As Hill and Torres note in their 2010 meta-analysis of Latino achievement and family engagement in schools, “many Latino parents often feel unwelcome and misunderstood,” typically due to language barriers and lack of familiarity with the U.S. education system (p. 98). Therefore, in a dual immersion environment where there are native English and native Spanish speaking families, this is an important component of building relationships with parents. At all of the schools the principals are able to communicate with parents in Spanish in some way, although the principals at Cherry and Orange reported being highly proficient in Spanish and the principal at Apple was not as comfortable with her skills. This allows parents to communicate directly with the principal, rather than through an interpreter, which helps to build relationships. As Lisa, a parent at Orange, said, the principal has to “[figure] out a way to communicate clearly and effectively to a very diverse population” in order to involve parents. Cecilia agreed, saying that Spanish speaking parents need information “en español que es el PTA para que más padres se involucren” (in Spanish what the PTA is so that more parents get involved). At all the schools it was evident that they place importance on sending information home in English and Spanish to ensure that all parents can understand the communication.

Cecilia, another Orange parent, described the way the principal requests input from Hispanic parents, stating that she is “interesada por la opinion...de la gente hispana y siempre nos está preguntando como queremos que lleguen los mensajes” (interested in the opinion...of the Hispanic people and is always asking us how we want messages to arrive). She described how this principal is intentional in communicating with Hispanic families, ensuring that information from the school is sent in multiple ways so that they are sure to be informed. She went on to say that “ella nos hace sentir como que somos importantes y somos bienvenidos en la escuela” (she makes us feel like we are important and we are welcome in the school). The principals at the participating schools are specifically addressing the issues presented by Hill and Torres (2010) with regard to involvement of Hispanic families in schools. Spanish speaking parents feel that they have a place in the school environment and a relationship with the principal.

Principals also built relationships with parents by showing genuine concern for students’ well-being. Parents at Apple and Orange discussed the principals’ care for their children. In describing how Sarah cares for students at Apple Elementary, Judy said that “she obviously spends time, quality time paying attention to [the students]” and that she knows the children well. At Orange, Cecilia described a situation in which Ashley cared for her son after an accident at school and went with him to the emergency room until Cecilia could get there. She described her emotion in this situation and how much she appreciated “que el director se interesa por mi hijo, por la salud de mi hijo” (that the principal is interested in my son, the health of my son). She said that she had never experienced that kind of caring from a principal before. She concluded by saying, “eso

fue para mí, super, super, emocionante” (for me that was very, very emotional). It is evident that not only do the principals build positive professional relationships with stakeholders, but they also show that they genuinely care for them personally.

Communicating in Two Languages

As previously described, the population of a dual immersion program is linguistically diverse, with the home language of some students being English, while others speak the target language of the program at home. While some parents whose home language is not English may be bilingual, others are not. In order to ensure all parents feel welcome in the school and a part of the school community, it is important to communicate with parents in both languages. As a parent at Orange Elementary stated, “everything that you present needs to be in both languages.”

Communicating with parents in Spanish and English was an evident priority at all of the schools in the study. It was apparent in the interviews that sending information to parents in both languages was not an afterthought, rather, it was a conscious habit. Charlotte at Cherry went so far as to say that the principal was “trying to elevate Latino families and their status, and the status of Spanish.” Because of the actions Betsy has taken to give the Spanish language equity in the school, the Spanish speaking parents feel that “this is their school, not just a school they’re guests in.” This environment is created by things that give equity to the two languages both in oral and written communication, such as posters in the school that are in both languages, sometimes with English first and sometimes with Spanish first so that one is not dominant over the other. Another

example is the hiring of bilingual support staff so that Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings can be conducted in Spanish when necessary, rather than in English with an interpreter for the parents. This shows that attempts are being made to ensure that the Spanish language is not secondary to English, rather, the aim is to have the two languages have equal status, which gives status to the Spanish speaking parents.

Conversely, Judy, a parent at Apple, described the climate with a prior principal who was not supportive of the immersion program as not being inviting for Spanish speaking parents. Interpreters were not arranged prior to meetings, and finding someone to interpret when needed “seemed more like a chore than something that was always happening.” Under current leadership however, meetings are conducted in both languages, “so there is a definite change for the better.”

Issues of Communication

While communicating in both languages was one of the main factors in building relationships with parents, there were also minor communication issues that were discussed by some participants. Parents and teachers referred to the need for clear communication from principals for programs to run effectively. Though this was not something the participants found to be a significant detriment, lack of clear communication was mentioned at two schools as something to be improved.

When asked if there is anything the principal does that is detrimental to the program, Lisa, a parent at Orange, said that “communication with parents could be better.” She gave an example of the car rider drop-off system changing one day without

notice and said this was confusing and frustrating for parents. She noted that while this is a minor issue, with families coming from diverse backgrounds and across a large area of the county, they need to feel extremely comfortable with the school, and said that “what seemingly are little communication snafus [have a] ripple effect of that is huge.” Clear communication is important for making parents feel they can trust school staff and have a high comfort level with how the school is run. Lisa was insightful regarding the relationship between clear communication and trust, saying “if you break trust on a little thing people don't trust you on a big thing, and so it's really important to be fully transparent, and communicate well.”

Alex, a teacher at Orange also addressed the issue of communication. She said that “to be a leader you have to have good communication, amongst your teachers, amongst your students, [and] amongst your parents.” She described a situation in which she felt that communication with parents had not been transparent and did not feel that was appropriate. However, she said that “intentions are always good in terms of communication” and did not think that the lack of transparency was intentional. This is similar to what Lisa noted regarding the need for clear communication in order to develop or maintain a trusting relationship with parents.

Likewise, when asked about anything the principal might do that is not supportive of the immersion program, Jean, a parent at Apple also said that sometimes communication from the principal is not clear because there is a lack of organization to the content. She said that Sarah has “a communication style that can be a little confusing when you're an English speaker, so if you're a Spanish speaker it might lose even more

[clarity].” This was an important point, that even if all written communication is provided in both languages, if the structure of the content is confusing, it will be confusing to all. However, she reiterated that this was not a major concern, as she understood how many things a principal juggles, so “if her communication with parents isn’t perfect every week I’m ok with that.”

Judy agreed that there were ways in which communication from the principal at Apple could improve, but her point of view was different from Jean’s. She described how some funds and programs were used to support their “fragile population” and that “there’s a lot of privacy surrounding families and neediness and some of the...complex situations that our Spanish speaking families often come to us with.” From her perspective, resources were allocated in certain ways to meet the needs of part of the school’s population, but all parents might not understand how or why that occurred. She described an issue with a special opportunity a group of students had to go to a large, metropolitan city, which was not advertised until after the group returned, and some parents were upset that their child was not given the opportunity to go. What was not communicated was that this was an opportunity for a group of “high risk girls.” Judy described a summer enrichment program that is only available for students “who didn’t meet grade level expectations” but it isn’t publicized in this way, so parents don’t understand why their child can’t attend and “feathers ruffle.” She felt that there “has to be a way to delicately explain” how funds are allocated for a certain part of the population “without breaching confidentiality.” While it seems that Sarah is trying to protect one population in the school, respecting their privacy, it is not clear to others why some

opportunities are not available for all children. As with the situations described at Orange, this could work to damage relationships with parents.

This issue of the leader as an effective communicator arose at Orange and Apple, but not in the interviews at Apple. It could be said that the leader communicating clearly and effectively is important at any school. However, as with other general leadership skills, this may be especially important in immersion programs where parents may feel they are taking a risk by placing their child in this unique setting. Parents need to be able to fully trust the program and the principal, so clear communication is an important part of building relationships with the parents. As Lisa stated, “communication is key.”

Whole School Community

Many of the participants discussed how the principal intentionally works to create a sense of community with students, parents, and teachers by not completely separating Spanish and English classes. This was particularly evident at Cherry where the immersion program is a strand, rather than school wide. While the classes used to be kept separate, they now mix for common activities such as lunch, recess, and field trips. This creates a positive sense of togetherness in the school and helps to build relationships with staff and students. Parents and teachers described how under previous leadership the school was divided, with the traditional and immersion programs kept very separate, which did not foster a positive culture in the school. One parent, Lynn, described the change in school culture due to Betsy’s leadership saying “she made a conscious choice to make it a whole school...a family, a community, an attitude...to try to avoid that

feeling of two separate schools.” Another parent, Virginia, said that now “there is always a sense of the two things together.” It was evident that the principal has worked intentionally to bring the immersion and traditional programs together to foster a whole school sense of community.

Principals also built a sense of community with school-wide events for families. Judy, a parent at Apple, noted that one of the principal’s priorities for the school is “bridging communities of different cultures...how to get families together with families that are different from them” in order to help build that sense of community within a school with a diverse population. At all of the schools, participants described school wide events that are designed to bring families together outside of the school day, such as international festivals at Apple and potluck picnics at Orange. At Cherry parent nights are held for the whole school, rather than separate nights for the immersion and the traditional programs, in order to bring parents together. These types of events help to promote community among families at these diverse schools.

A broad sense of community was an apparent part of positive school culture in the three schools. Principals intentionally reached out to parents in multiple ways in order to build community within the school. This outreach includes the use of both languages in multiple types communication with parents. At the school in which immersion is a strand and not the whole school, it was important to bring the programs together to foster a sense of community. Additionally, at all of the schools there were school wide events intended to bring families of different backgrounds together.

As a part of school culture, principals established trust with staff, but also intentionally built community with parents in three ways. First, they did this through establishing relationships with parents, including intentionally reaching out to Hispanic parents. Evidence of this came out in the interviews as an open environment where parents have the opportunity to talk with principals and can share their concerns. Intentional relationship building with Spanish speaking parents was also important, so that they feel they can have input and address issues just as English speaking parents do. Secondly, principals built relationships by communicating with parents in both languages. Because a lack of bilingual staff and access to translation “undermines the ability of basic acts of parental engagement...to foster relations between parents and teachers,” it is important that parents are able to communicate in their first language in order to have relationships with the principal and other staff (Hill & Torres, 2010, p. 99). However, principals need to be cognizant of communicating clearly with parents in order not to damage relationships. Lastly, principals showed care for students’ well-being, and built community by promoting whole school activities.

Building Community with and Among Teachers

Building community and a positive culture within a school is not just about communication with parents, but also fostering communication, relationships, and collaboration among teachers. Community building among teachers was done in three ways. First, the opportunity for co-planning and collaboration was important to several of the participants. Secondly, the use of instructional support staff for English and Spanish

teachers helped to bring the sides of the program together. Lastly, just as they did with students, the principals exhibit a genuinely caring attitude towards teachers and their personal needs, including the needs of new international teachers. These components helped to build a sense of community among the staff in the schools, which contributed to the positive culture.

One way that the principals helped to build community with and among teachers is through creating space for co-planning. At two out of the three schools, Cherry and Orange, this was discussed by administrators and teachers. Several participants gave examples of professional relationship building through collaboration and co-planning. Bill, the assistant principal at Cherry, specifically discussed targeting relationships among teachers as a priority in order to promote positive morale and culture. At these schools, the participants, especially the teachers, talked about the importance of co-planning and planning across languages in as a part of building relationships and contributing to the positive culture of the school.

In describing the culture at Cherry, Gina simply stated that the co-planning model “fosters more of [a] ‘we’re all in this together’ feel.” In trying to describe the positive morale and culture at Cherry, Charlotte said that “there is just something different about the way that people interact here” and that “the community trusts each other and works well together and collaborates.” Charlotte contrasted Cherry’s current environment with that of a previous leadership, describing how at staff meetings and workshops things were presented in such a way “that made it feel like we’re different from each other” and immersion teachers were separated from traditional teachers, but that now the messages

are holistic, emphasizing that the whole staff is working toward the same goals. Bill also described a change in culture that has occurred under the current principal, saying “we just really started planning things as a school, not as programs. It’s had a huge impact.” He also referred to the collaboration among teachers and across languages, stating that teachers “can’t just write lesson plans in isolation, they have to be with their counterpart at the same grade level who’s teaching in Spanish” in order to ensure alignment and consistency of instruction. Lynn, a Cherry parent, also noted the sense of community among the staff, saying that she “[sees] a lot of things in the school are done as teams.” It is apparent that the collaboration among teachers required by the principals is more than just effective with regard to instruction, but is also important for building community and positive relationships within the school.

Similarly to Cherry, at Orange Elementary the administrators and teachers described the importance of collaborating across languages of instruction. A teacher at Orange, Alex, described the positive climate that comes from collaboration, stating that “[we] need to work together and make sure [we’re] supporting each other, because one language supports the other.” Ashley, the principal, also talked about ensuring that “Spanish teachers are coordinating with the English” so that instruction is consistent across the languages. April expounded on this, explaining how she works with a partner teacher in another subject area and language so that there is consistency across the classes. Both teachers understand the other’s curriculum so that they can use strategies in both languages that “mirror one another” and support each other, such as the use of “dialectical journals” and “article[s] of the week.”

At Orange it was apparent that part of internal community building was having instructional support staff who work with English and Spanish classrooms. Ashley gave the example of in the past having instructional facilitators who only worked with either English or Spanish teachers, creating a divide and separation in instruction. Now she has a facilitator who works with both groups of teachers, “trying to cross pollinate,” which has helped to increase the understanding of instructional roles across language classrooms and build relationships among the staff. In describing a previous principal at Orange, April said that she was focused on data “to an extreme,” that she did not intentionally build relationships or community and it hurt the morale in some ways.

While fostering collaboration helped to build community among teachers at the schools, principals also built community and relationships with teachers by exhibiting concern for them personally. At two schools, various participants talked about how the principal shows that she cares for the teachers. In talking about both the principal and assistant principal, Gina at Cherry Elementary said, “they care about our well-being, they support us, not just with academics.” She described how the administrators surprised the staff with a salsa bar one day just to provide a snack when it would be welcomed. Virginia said that Betsy “cares about the staff [and] she cares about the community.” On a day I was at the school for interviews, Betsy mentioned that in a December staff meeting they would use part of the time for cookie decorating to give the teachers some social time and a mental break. Sarah at Apple said that in order to lead well, you have “to really get to know the faculty and what their needs are” in a professional and personal sense. Lea, one of the Apple teachers, felt that Sarah cared for her, saying “she helps

with personal things” as she described how different her own children are and that Sarah has helped her with that. These principals built relationships and community with teachers by showing their concern for personal needs, in addition to providing for professional needs.

Principals further showed their concern for teachers’ well-being by supporting new international teachers. These teachers often arrive shortly before the school year begins and must deal with all of the issues related to moving to a new country. Lea at Apple discussed how these teachers “are overwhelmed with life” because they have to find housing, transportation, furniture, get a driver’s license and set up a bank account. This can be a stressful time, all while getting settled in a new job, in a new school. Anna talked about how Sarah makes new international teachers feel welcome at Apple, working with the PTA to arrange a “welcoming group that welcomes the staff in, makes sure they get the apartment they need, the furniture, you know all those sorts of things.” At Cherry, Betsy described a similar program to support new international teachers, saying that they “[put] them in contact with...a buddy to help find housing, [a] car,...pots and pan sets, or whatever it is they need because they’re starting from scratch with a couple of suitcases.” This type of support for personal needs for new international teachers exhibits the principals’ care for teachers and helps to build community.

All of these collaborative experiences help bring teachers together, making the teachers feel a part of a community, which contributes to high morale and positive culture in the school. It was apparent that co-planning with other teachers and across languages was an important part of community, especially at Cherry and Orange. While PLCs and

collaboration are also common practice at Apple, teachers did not discuss this as a way of building community in the school. In addition, at one school specifically, the principal used instructional support staff to help teachers collaborate on both sides of the program. Also, principals showed teachers that they care for them as people, as well as professionals, which helps to build relationships and community within the school. As evidenced in the participating schools, the principal is responsible for leading efforts to build relationships and create a positive culture.

Principals' Commitment to the Immersion Program

All of the participants in the study discussed the leaders' dedication to and belief in the immersion program as a component for success. Conversely, when participants had experience with other leaders and programs, they noted the principal's lack of commitment as a reason the program was not as successful as it could have been. There were two ways that principals demonstrated their commitment to the programs in these schools. One was through expression of personal belief in the program. The other was how the principal saw the immersion program as the identity of the school, regardless of whether the whole school was immersion.

The principals spoke of their personal belief in immersion programs, to the point that two of them have their own children in the program. Betsy at Cherry Elementary spoke to her commitment, saying that "the dual language program is always at the front of my mind when I make decisions." This is especially important since the school has an immersion strand within the school, and has a traditional monolingual program as well.

She went on to say she feels “that our country is way behind in language acquisition...and so I think that dual language education is moving us to a position where we should be in creating citizens that are bilingual [and] biliterate.”

Sarah at Apple Elementary said that she did not intend to become a principal of an immersion program, but that “there are just certain things that I think make up a really great school” and “these things are necessary and critical in this environment.” She described how in a previous district administrative position she had a hard time getting teachers to do things such as providing instruction that would be comprehensible to all students or even using a backwards design model for planning, whereas in dual language instruction, teachers must work this way or instruction won’t be effective. Sarah expressed her belief in the immersion program as beneficial for all students, stating that she sees “the necessary pedagogy related to dual language education as the vehicle for being able to launch the innovations that we want to do as a school.” She also said that in reflecting on her own experiences, she felt “sheltered and unworldly” and did not want the same for her children. Sarah said that she loves how “kids [develop] cross-cultural competence in an organic way” in the immersion program, “whether they are an English speaker or Spanish speaker” and regardless of their home country. The teachers at Apple Elementary noted the principal’s commitment to the program, with one saying “she lives, breathes, eats it.”

The principal’s belief in the program at Orange was also evident. Alex described Ashley’s commitment to the program, stating that “her passion is that this program model works...it’s just her passion for the school program, that’s intentional.” Cecilia, a parent,

described Ashley's passion for the program, saying, "cuando una persona está haciendo algo que le gusta, va a tratar de tener el éxito no tanto para ella, sino para los demás también. Pienso que a ella le gusta su trabajo...y eso transmite para que los jóvenes tengan éxito" (when a person is doing something they like, they're going to try to have success, not just for themselves, but for others also. I think that she likes her work...and that transmits to children having success.) Ashley expressed her belief in the importance of the program, saying that prior to coming to Orange she had not been looking for a principal position, but when the superintendent encouraged her to do so, Ashley made it "very [clear] that [she] would only go into a dual language school" because she believed deeply in the value of the immersion program.

The interview data showed that the immersion program provides identity for the schools. When asked about the principals' top priorities for the school, teachers and administrators at all three schools included high achievement in both languages, or bilingualism and biliteracy as a part of their response. Whether a whole school program, or a strand within a traditional school, the immersion program and its outcomes for students are the focus for the school.

At Cherry, the commitment to the program for both administrators was evident. When asked in general about things that contribute to the success of the program, Bill stated, "I just think it's part of the vernacular here" and "the fingerprints of our dual language program are on everything that we touch." While this school has traditional classrooms as well as dual immersion, it is apparent that the bilingual program provides identity for the school. Charlotte stated that "it's very obvious to us as a school that

[immersion] is a priority for her,” “she’s just so steeped in it.” Lynn agreed with the principal’s dedication, stating, “she’s very committed to the dual language model so I think that’s really important for the program’s success.” The immersion model is the focus for the school and drives decision making.

It is evident that all of the principals are extremely committed to the programs and that they personally believe in immersion model. Lou at Orange described this belief in the program saying that “authenticity shows in everything you do. If you’re passionate...it shines through.” These three principals are authentic in their belief in the program. Additionally, immersion is the identity for all three schools and is the basis for decision making so that students will show success in both languages. The program is not seen as an extra or secondary focus, rather, immersion is the purpose of the school.

Teachers’ Comparisons to Previous Administrators

In contrast to the positive environments described at the three participating schools, some of the teachers also spoke to prior experiences that were not as positive as their current situations. They had negative experiences working with other principals who did not support the language immersion programs and created environments with low morale. The teachers’ perceived these principals to be micro-managers of staff and the they did not feel valued as professionals. Those prior principals did not exhibit trust in the staff and did not work to build relationships and community.

In describing one negative experience working with a former principal at another school, Lea, at Apple, said that he “was not involved in the process” and he was “one of

the main reasons I left the school.” Interestingly, after reading the transcript, I noted that the kind of relationship she had with prior principals manifested itself in the way Lea referred to them. For a prior principal with whom she had a more positive relationship, she referred to him by his first name. In referring to the principal who she said caused “low morale” in the school and “didn’t support the program,” she used only his last name, without a first name or title. This shows that she did not have a trusting relationship with this principal in the way that she does with Sarah, who is committed to the program and has established positive relationships. Anna, also a teacher at Apple, said that a prior principal “really didn’t understand the kids and didn’t understand teachers either.” These principals did not embody the characteristics of successful principals as described by Hunt (2011) and McKinney, et al. (2015), as the teachers did not feel that they established environments of trust, respect, and collaboration.

Lea further described the prior principal’s lack of commitment to the program. She said that not only was he not a supporter, but he “didn’t really care about what it did for the students,” even though the immersion program test scores were higher than the rest of the school. He was apathetic towards the program “and didn’t care enough to find out” what he didn’t know in order understand and support the program or the teachers. It was clear that she felt the principal’s lack of interest in and commitment to the program were detrimental to the culture and morale.

Connections to Literature

The interview data aligns with the prior research regarding the need to create a positive culture and encourage high morale in successful schools. Marzano et al., (2005) and Spiro (2013) report the need for effective school leaders to establish a positive climate and culture in the school. The participants from these successful immersion programs reported that the principals work intentionally to develop a positive school culture in four ways. The principals exhibit trust in the staff and build relationships with all stakeholders, including parents and among staff. Also, the leaders work intentionally to create a sense of community which can be felt in the interactions with parents and teachers. Lastly, as a part of establishing a positive culture, the principals in these three schools all exhibit the program commitment described by Alanís and Rodríguez (2008) that is necessary for a successful immersion program. However, while establishing clear vision and goals was one component of positive culture that was evident in instructional leadership theory and other prior research, this component was not evident in the interview data. Also, as a part of building community and relationships, principals showed personal care for teachers and students, a factor that did not arise a great deal in prior research on building positive culture.

Components of instructional leadership theory are visible in these findings regarding positive culture. Blase and Blase (2000) and Neumerski (2012) discuss the need to provide a positive climate and culture in successful schools. Blase and Blase (2000) also specifically address the need to build trust and ensure teachers are able to collaborate in effective schools. In successful, supportive environments, leaders develop

relationships built on trust and respect, and teachers feel valued for their knowledge and abilities (McKinney, et al., 2015; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015).

It is evident that Betsy, Sarah, and Ashley all apply these important components of instructional leadership theory in their schools. They trust and respect their teachers as experts and professionals. These findings support the research by Garza et al. (2013) and The Wallace Foundation (2013) which indicates the need for teachers to feel respected by their administrators. Conversely, when the teachers reported working with principals who did not show this commitment to the program, the perceived apathy and lack of desire to understand or learn on the part of the principals contributed to the teachers not feeling supported or respected, as is needed to develop trust in a successful program (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; Hunt, 2011). Though it may seem like common sense to say that workers will perform better in a positive environment than a negative one, this theory is not always applied intentionally in schools. As the prior research shows and is evident in these research findings, it is the responsibility of the leader to establish a positive culture with intentionality in order to achieve positive results. This does not just happen by itself without conscious efforts of the principal, just as the stakeholders in these immersion programs reported.

As already noted, the research regarding the need to establish a positive climate and culture is clear. It is apparent that building trust and relationships with stakeholders is an important part of high morale and a climate that promotes success. Thomas and Collier (2014) report that developing relationships with parents is vital, as they are “crucial partners in the whole process of designing, implementing, and sustaining the

dual language program (p. 138). As exhibited in the study, Garza et al., (2014) emphasize the need for effective principals to collaborate with and involve parents. In addition, building relationships with teachers contributes to high morale and positive culture (McKinney et al., 2015). Marzano et al., (2005) also addressed the need for relationship building among the staff in effective schools. The interview data supported these previous findings, as relationship building with parents and teachers was a key component of the positive culture in these schools. This intentional outreach to and relationship building with parents is a part of the practice Ishimaru (2013) describes in creating a positive culture. A few of the participants brought up unclear communication as an issue with relationship building. Marzano et al., (2005) name communication with parents as one of the 11 factors important for school improvement.

The importance of the principal's commitment to the immersion program as a part of positive culture was evident in the current literature as well as in the interview data. In studying successful immersion programs, Alanís and Rodríguez (2008) found that the principal's commitment to the quality of the program was extremely important. They also reported the need for leaders and staff to believe in the program and promote bilingualism as a valuable skill. In addition, successful immersion principals are committed to the concepts of bilingualism and biliteracy and believe that the program meets students' academic needs (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; Hunt, 2011). As evidenced in the interviews, the principals at the schools personally believe strongly in the immersion program and hold bilingualism for students as a top priority for the school. The leaders believe that the language and cultural experiences an immersion program provides are

vital for students. Howard and Christian (2002) attribute growth of bilingual programs in the United States to a similar sentiment, that language and cultural skills are necessary in the global economy. Not only do the principals believe in the program, but immersion is the focus and identity of the schools. The program is not treated as a “mere appendage”, rather it is “an integral part of the school” (Kennedy & Medina, 2013, p. 7). It is evident that the teachers and the principals interviewed embody Hunt’s (2011) observation that in successful programs, all have a commitment to the bilingual model and believe that the programs prepare students appropriately.

Not all components of the previous literature regarding positive culture were evident in the interviews. While Hallinger (2011) and Neumerski (2012) state that part of effective instructional leadership is establishing common goals and vision, that does not seem to be as evident in these findings. When asked about the principals’ top priorities for the schools, while some answers were the same at the individual schools, others were not. Some participants were quick to answer, while others had to think about it before responding. Participants at each school gave distinct answers regarding priorities. At Cherry, almost all of the participants said that building a positive culture was a top priority, but not all stated this. At Apple, most of the participants reported that high academic achievement was a priority, but not all stated this. A common thread at Cherry was the importance of students using academic language in both Spanish and English, but again, not all of the participants stated this as a priority. In a school where the vision and goals are extremely clear to all stakeholders and discussed at all times, it should be an easy and common response for the parents and teachers at that school. It was not clear at

all three schools that there was a specific shared vision, or specific goals in which everyone knew their role or responsibility for working to accomplish those goals. Though these are all successful schools and immersion programs, it does not appear from the interview data that this component of instructional leadership theory has been directly or intentionally applied.

The findings from these interviews also show that the principals genuinely care about students and the people with whom they work. While this is certainly a part of relationship building, true caring for others is not specifically addressed in most of the literature reviewed regarding effective leadership practices. Marzano et al., (2005) do name relationships as one of the top 21 responsibilities of a leader. They define this responsibility as “the extent to which the school leader demonstrates an awareness of the personal lives of teachers and staff” (p. 58). Though other research reviewed regarding climate and culture did not address this aspect, Marzano et al., (2005) found it to be important. This seems to be common sense in developing relationships, though it is something that would be difficult to quantify. However, through the conversations with the various stakeholders, it is apparent that showing a sense of caring for teachers and students, beyond meeting professional and academic needs, is one component of a positive climate and a successful program. The principals in these schools exhibited the responsibility of relationships that Marzano et al., (2005) describe.

The interview data has many connections to prior research. The literature is clear that effective leaders establish positive school culture through building trust and establishing relationships with parents and staff. As Rocque et al., (2016) state, “building

a school culture that promotes trust and establishes a welcoming ethos for parents is critical in dual immersion schools” (p. 816). This was evident in the literature regarding schools in general as well as that specific to immersion programs. The need for the principal to show commitment to the immersion program was also present in prior research regarding these programs. These components were evident in the interview data. One apparent disconnect with the previous research was in the area of common vision and goal setting. According to prior research and instructional leadership theory, having a specific vision and common goals for the program or school is an important part of positive culture and success, but it was not apparent that common goals have been made clear to all stakeholders in the participating schools. However, one component of positive culture arose in the interviews that was not as apparent in the prior literature reviewed, which was the principal exhibiting genuine care for teachers and students, apart from professional and academic needs.

CHAPTER V

PROGRAM AND TEACHER SUPPORT

According to the interview data from all participants (see chart on p. 53 for a list of all participants), leaders of these effective immersion programs provided support for teachers and the program in four ways. These were (a) the principals provided professional development opportunities for all staff, including differentiated PD for international teachers; (b) the principal provided several types of resources to support the program, including classroom resources in both languages, hiring bilingual staff, and providing student and family support programs; (c) the principals supported the program and teachers by organizing the schedule intentionally to provide time for PLCs and collaboration among the English and Spanish teachers, and (d) many of the teachers reported that they felt empowered by the principals in these programs to make instructional decisions, take risks, and learn more in order to improve their practice. It is evident that support comes in many forms and is a key component of the success of a program.

Professional Development

Professional development (PD) can be provided for teachers in many ways. This can include workshops at the school or in the district, as well as in and out of state conferences. School and district workshops might be led by administrators, district

personnel, curriculum facilitators, or teachers themselves. In my experience I have found that teachers appreciate PD opportunities when they find them to be practical and applicable to their planning and instruction. In many cases, teachers in immersion programs have to attend PD that is intended for a general audience, but is not specific to immersion, and they then have to figure out how the PD applies to their program. Many teachers in immersion programs come from other countries and are not familiar with the U.S. education system or specific North Carolina requirements. They often have different needs for PD than a teacher who is already familiar with schools in NC. As planning and instruction in the immersion classroom are different from that of a traditional classroom, PD that is specific to this setting is important for teachers.

At all of the schools, teachers noted the support they feel from principals by having the opportunity to attend quality professional development, whether provided in the school or outside of the district. At Orange Elementary, Alex discussed the focus on professional growth for teachers, and did so in a positive light. She said that the administrators are “passionate about helping teachers grow” and that she has “learn[ed] to accept and appreciate feedback” in order to improve her practice. Without using the term continuous improvement, Alex referred to this concept, saying “there’s always more to be done...we just keep digging in...and helping [teachers] strengthen their weaknesses.” It was apparent that she values professional development and feedback from administrators that helps her improve.

Lea described a similar environment at Apple, stating that “[our principal, Sarah] gives us lots and lots of opportunities for growth and to pursue passions even

individually.” She went on to say that “[Sarah] is constantly with that growth mindset...growing herself and helping others grow.” Sarah also talked about the need for professional development, and recognized it from the beginning of her time with the program. She described taking a team of teachers to a Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) training in her first year as principal to do what she called “Dual Language 101” and learn about the *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education* (Howard et al., 2018). She said this opportunity was important for her and the teachers because it helped them “figure out what [they] needed to do” and afterwards “the program just got better and better” because they were able to apply what they learned.

Lynn, a parent at Cherry, described Betsy’s use of professional development opportunities, stating that one of the ways she supports the immersion program is by “expanding her knowledge and looking for best practices... [to make] the program better.” From the teacher perspective at Cherry, Gina said that “[the administrators] push us to be better” but added that they have guidance and support in doing so, as Betsy has “[provided] a lot of resources for us so that we can grow as teachers and as dual language educators.” She also noted that the staff had done a great deal of work with a nationally respected author and researcher of bilingual programs, including bringing her in to provide professional development for the staff regarding biliteracy. Vicki at Apple also referred to PD with this author and the use of this training to write units targeting biliteracy. In addition, Lynn recognized that Betsy sends teachers to training elsewhere and is intentional about this by “choosing or approving what kinds of PD opportunities” they are able to attend. These types of professional development opportunities are

especially important in a bilingual program where teachers have to understand how instruction differs from a traditional classroom and such specific training may not be available locally.

The teachers at Apple referred to specific conferences, both in-state and out of state, that Sarah supported them in attending, including La Cosecha, a well known national bilingual education conference, and Dual U, a training to help teachers understand the basic concepts of dual immersion. Anna noted that different teams of teachers have been able to go to La Cosecha in different years, allowing many the opportunity to experience the conference firsthand. Lea said that Sarah has a “growth mindset...as far as growing herself and helping others grow.” She talked about experts that have come to the school, as well as going away to conferences.

Lou, the assistant principal at Orange, talked about targeted PD for immersion teachers, saying that Ashley has fostered a relationship with the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), bringing presenters from CAL to provide PD and “extend the learning of our teachers [to] keep the program growing.” He felt that this was one of the specific things Ashley has done to support the immersion program, using CAL to provide PD about the *Guiding Principles of Dual Language* (Howard et al., 2018) so that teachers can “[assess] what we are doing well, what we can improve” and to focus on “students being active participants using the language” in the classroom. It is apparent that using this type of PD to reflect on current practice and applying what is learned is important for program success.

The principal at the same school, Ashley, also discussed training with CAL and attending La Cosecha as important PD opportunities. She noted that there were staff members at Orange who worked only with English instruction who had not received any training regarding the dual language model prior to her coming to the school as principal. She felt it was important that they understand the biliteracy model, so she sent them to La Cosecha and CAL training so that these instructional facilitators could then “facilitate instruction across Spanish and English,” which helped to improve guided reading instruction in both languages. This need to train all teachers and staff in the program, both those on the English side and the Spanish side, in the dual language model was not specifically addressed in the interviews at other schools, thus, it is unclear if such training occurs at Apple and Cherry.

However, Betsy, the principal at Cherry, did discuss the need to train both dual immersion and traditional teachers in the same ways because “good teaching in dual language is also just good teaching.” She was the only principal to discuss common pedagogical training for immersion and traditional program teachers. She described a situation in the past when dual immersion teachers attended a district PD session regarding unit writing for immersion classes, but the traditional, English only teachers did not. She said this “led to hurt feelings” and “half of [the] school [was] left out of the process.” This was a problem at the school because all of the teachers, both immersion and traditional, work from the same units. Though not specifically addressed in the literature, it is logical that PD regarding dual language instruction for all teachers would

help with collaboration among the teachers and with connecting the English and Spanish classrooms.

All of the teachers spoke highly of their current principals, yet some shared stories of principals who they did not feel were supportive; in those instances, these types of learning opportunities were not available. Anna talked about a previous school in which she worked and said that the principal “just kind of hired a teacher that [she] knew spoke both Spanish and English and [she] let them go.” Ashley noted that when the program began at Orange, there wasn’t PD available and teachers were on their own, “pretty much working in isolation.” Alex, a teacher at Orange, did not feel that she had opportunities for growth under a previous principal because “the same people went to the conferences.” She was frustrated by that and felt that it was up to her to learn things on her own. In such an environment without opportunities for teachers to learn and grow with regard to immersion instruction, it would be difficult for a program to flourish.

It is apparent that the teachers and principals in this study felt that professional development, provided in a myriad of ways, is important in a successful immersion program. All teachers in the program need opportunities for growth and to increase their skill and knowledge base. This can mean sending teachers to bilingual education conferences, or bringing experts to the school or district to work with all staff. Teachers and principals felt that both internal and external PD opportunities were important.

Differentiated Professional Development for International Teachers

All of the principals as well as some of the other participants addressed the need for differentiated professional development in bilingual programs. All of the programs have teachers from other countries who are teaching in the U.S. on cultural exchange visas. These teachers come to the U.S. with experience in teaching, often in bilingual programs in their home country, but they are not familiar with the norms and expectations of North Carolina schools. There are cultural differences as well as curriculum and assessment differences that are important for these international teachers to understand. In addition, depending upon their level of English proficiency, it may be difficult for them to understand and process everything when PD and meetings are always in English.

Ashley referred to the need for training for international teachers at Orange, saying that “staff [comes] from all over the world” some “who have taught...without standards” and without standardized tests. As such, they do training for these teachers to help them understand the state standards, assessments, and how to “use data to drive instruction.” These are important concepts that are ubiquitous in American schools, but may not be present in schools in other countries. Lisa, a parent at Orange, said that one of the ways the principal supports the program is by doing “a really good job training up new teachers as they come into the program.”

Betsy also discussed the need for differentiated PD at Cherry. She said that there are specific trainings held within the school that new and international teachers have to attend, such as “dual language 101” to ensure that all have the same understanding of

what a dual language program model is. This is an important component in ensuring consistency of knowledge and understanding because even if an international teacher taught in a bilingual program in their home country, the model may not be the same and the teachers need to understand the differences in order to be effective. Additionally, while not directly related to PD, Betsy stated that she supports international teachers by providing a mentor, which is not funded by the district because they aren't first year teachers. This is a level of support for international teachers that was not discussed at the other two schools.

Sarah, principal at Apple, described differentiated PD in a different way than the other schools. She reported having worked to provide PD opportunities to native Spanish speaking teachers in "their language of preference" and described a situation in which a behavior support system training was delivered in Spanish and translation was provided for monolingual, English speaking teachers. In addition, at Apple, there have been sessions where the presentation is in English, but the native Spanish speaking teachers have a bilingual buddy who can help them with anything they don't understand. This has also been done in the reverse, with sessions in Spanish, and English speakers have a buddy to help them as needed. Sarah recognized that depending upon the teachers' preferred language, they may need time to think about what is being said, and so she has "learned to build in that time for processing" for the teachers. Providing professional development in Spanish for native Spanish speaking teachers was a type of differentiated PD for teachers that was not referenced at the other schools.

From the interview data it is evident that differentiated professional development for international teachers is an important component of PD opportunities for teachers. As Lea at Apple stated, “there is a so much a teacher has to learn, and they’re overwhelmed.” If they have never worked in the United States, then they may not understand all that is expected with regards to instruction, and according to Anna, they might “treat a child differently than someone who’s been working here for many years”, which might not be culturally acceptable. These teachers coming from other countries need something like “American Teacher Camp,” as Lea suggested, to help them adjust and be “a little more comfortable” with the school environment and expectations. Additionally, it is apparent that leaders should consider the language used to present professional development in working with international teachers who might be more comfortable learning in their native language. Nothing was discussed at any of the schools regarding cultural competence PD or training in working with students from multiple Spanish speaking countries, which might be different from the home countries of the teachers. This raises questions regarding what other types of differentiated PD might be needed in DLI programs.

Providing Resources Through Materials, Staffing, and Programs

Another way in which the principals showed support for the immersion programs is through the provision of resources. There were three main ways that school leaders provided resources. First, classroom materials, such as books for the classroom, textbooks, guided readers, and other resources, especially those in Spanish were

provided. Second, there was intentional bilingual staffing in order to meet students' needs in both languages, and third, resources included after school and summer programs, along with programs that support children and families outside of academics. Teachers and parents addressed these resources as an important component of the support administrators provide.

Participants at all three schools referenced classroom materials as a type of support that the principal provides. Lynn, one of the parents at Cherry, said that there are intentional efforts to identify gaps in library and classroom book collections to see what else is needed. Virginia noted that there is intentionality not only in the language of materials, but also that they represent the school's population, saying "there is a lot of diversity in the materials for the kids, it has to be representative" of the students. Gina, a teacher, said that Betsy has "put a lot into the budget for buying books and resources that are in Spanish" so that they have "really rich Spanish books" in the classrooms. Judy, a parent at Apple who has volunteered in the school book room said there are "just as many English books as Spanish books in fiction, there's just as many English books as Spanish books in non-fiction." These types of materials give teachers the resources they need to provide content and literacy instruction in Spanish. Ashley at Orange also addressed the need to recognize when resources in Spanish are lacking and allocate funding to provide this, such as when she found there weren't adequate math resources in Spanish for some grade levels at the school, so she worked to fill this need.

A lack of resources in Spanish can be frustrating and time consuming for teachers. Charlotte at Cherry described how she had to create a great deal from scratch when she

first began as an immersion teacher because resources had not yet been provided for teaching math in Spanish. She questioned the quality of what she was doing since she “was making it up” and it took her a great deal of time. Providing resources for teachers in Spanish helps to improve consistency of instruction and allows teachers to spend their time more effectively. In describing a prior principal for whom she worked at another school, Lea said that resources were lacking and “there just wasn’t any money” to purchase what was needed for the program. She contrasted this with Sarah’s leadership at Apple, saying that “she finds money everywhere...[and] she’s very creative with finding the funds to get us exactly what we need.” She recognized Sarah’s resourcefulness in her support for the immersion program.

Another type of support for the program was the intentional use of bilingual staff, other than the immersion teachers themselves. While it is of course necessary to have bilingual classroom teachers, the language skills of support staff are also important. This includes instructional staff as well as other support staff. All three schools have bilingual personnel in the office, which is extremely important for communicating with parents. As Sarah at Apple noted, “you need people in your front office who” are bilingual. Spanish speaking parents know that they can be understood when they call or visit the school and do not have to wait for a translator. Gina, a teacher at Cherry, discussed the support students receive and said that for students who are below grade level, interventions are provided in either English or Spanish, depending upon the needs of the student. At Orange Elementary they were able to hire specials area teachers who are bilingual, so that classes such as physical education can also be delivered in Spanish.

Anna noted that Apple is similar, with “exceptional children’s staff... gifted education staff... librarian, PE teacher”, all of whom are bilingual and can deliver services in either language. She contrasted this with experience at a prior school, saying that she “never saw any specialists that were hired to speak Spanish” and said that Apple is much better in this way. Having bilingual staff throughout the school not only helps to make the immersion program more pervasive in the school, but also helps to meet students’ needs by being able to provide services in either language and not just in English.

After school and summer programs were another type of resource that supported the immersion program. This was especially evident at Apple Elementary where the principal used available funds to meet the needs of students in multiple ways. Sarah said that she has “had to think of creative ways to meet the needs of the population by reallocating our resources and using them in a more creative way.” Title I funds are used for an after school program, as well as a summer program designed to meet the needs of underperforming students. According to Vicki, the objective of the summer program is not just strictly academics, but it is also to provide students with “experiences, vocabulary, ...background knowledge” that can be gained from “travel...going to museums,” things that are not accessible for many students at the school. With such a diverse population in the school, and many students in need of extra instructional support in either language, these programs help to support the success of the students. The summer program has shown success, with beginning of the year data indicating that the traditional “summer slide” is greatly reduced, and some students “actually progressed over the summer,” according to Vicki. In addition to the after school and summer

programs, Judy, a parent involved in the PTA, shared that funds are allocated to support a “program for boys who are at high risk” as well as a girls’ program.

Additionally at Apple Elementary, it is apparent that one of the ways in which the principal supports the program is by supporting the needs of students and families. Judy, a parent, referenced various ways in which the school social worker and counselor have worked with parents, providing language classes in English and Spanish, and a program that helped “families learn how to get on the internet” and use their devices. Parents are welcome in the school; for example, they can be “in the library working on computers” there. It is evident that Sarah recognizes the need to support students through supports for the whole family, especially for those without such resources at home. Vicki, the assistant principal at Apple, described a program in which mental health services for students are provided in the school, making it much more accessible for families who would have difficulty with schedule or transportation if they had to go to an office in a separate location. This service is evidence of support for the whole child, which in turn can help promote academic success. Apple was unique among the three schools in this type of programmatic support.

Support for the immersion program through the provision of resources is evident at all of the schools, though the types of resources vary somewhat. At all of the schools it is apparent that materials for the classroom in both languages, such as books and textbooks, are important and that efforts have been made to provide resources in Spanish that are equitable to those in English. As Anna at Apple stated, “you need to have more Spanish books, sometimes they’re hard to find,” but these principals have worked to meet

this need. In addition to materials, resources that provide support for the program include bilingual staff, programs for students, and support systems for families. Some of these may not be traditionally thought of as resources, but it is evident that all of these resources are a part of the programs' success.

Managerial Support Through PLCs

All of the schools involved in the project use professional learning communities (PLCs) as a formal structure for teachers to collaborate and analyze data. In order for PLCs to be effective, the principal has to provide support by developing a schedule that provides time for teachers to meet together. In addition, protocols or structures for the PLCs need to be provided so that the time spent is effective and focuses on planning for learning. The principals at all the project schools provided support for the program and the teachers through the use of an effective PLC model.

At Apple Elementary the structure for PLC's was very specific. The grade level teachers met daily while the classes are in specials and they have specific topics for each day. The teachers used the time to plan instruction and analyze data. The principal described it in this way:

PLCs are structured by grade level and they meet for one hour 4-5 days/week during the specials block. Day 1 they work on math, day 2 they work on project 1, day 3 they work on project 2 and day 4 they [talk] about data. They may meet a 5th day to plan logistical things like field trips. Twice each month, they have 2 hours of release time to have professional development with the coach and then to unpack the next arc of the unit of study.

This type of PLC arrangement is supportive of teachers because Sarah intentionally created a schedule to provide structured collaboration time for the teachers. They aren't simply told to plan together, rather, they are given specific topics and outcomes, and the time to accomplish them. Additionally, Sarah arranged for protected time with an instructional coach to further support their planning. This kind of deliberate schedule, especially including extra release time, was not discussed at the other two schools. Anna, a teacher at Apple, noted that this kind of planning time was beneficial because they are able to bring multiple perspectives to the process and "work together ...as a team."

The PLC structure at Cherry was similar to that of Apple, in that teachers meet with specific groups for identified topics on various days. Gina reported that teachers meet as a grade level to analyze data on Mondays, and then on other days meet with partner content area teachers to collaborate regarding instruction and assessment. She said they "plan lessons and reflect on previous lessons to see what needs to be changed or improved." Gina found this to be a helpful process for her instructional practice.

Ashley at Orange also described using PLCs, including them as one of her top priorities for the school. Like at Apple, the teachers meet in grade level PLCs with a focus on "planning for instruction...planning with the end in mind, [and] using the assessment data to drive" their discussion and planning. One of the teachers, Alex, also noted Ashley's focus on PLCs as a way in which she supports the program and teachers. She said that the teachers have support from the administrators in their PLCs, helping them to "unpack the standards" and relate that to "what the kids need to know, understand, and do," which helps them to become "better practitioners." As principal,

Ashley provided the time and support for teachers to have effective PLCs with the goal of improving instruction for students.

The use of PLCs is not at all unique to immersion schools. However, it is apparent from the interviews at each school that the way in which the principals provide time and structure for PLCs is a type of programmatic and teacher support. The principals have created schedules that allow for protected time for the teachers to collaborate, and they have specific topics to address during that time. This is the kind of managerial support necessary for an effective PLC process. Without these structures in place, teachers would have difficulty finding time to meet and would not have a focus for the time, which would hinder the accomplishment of specific goals for the PLC time.

Support Through Leadership Opportunities

“Empowerment” was a word that came up in multiple interviews as participants discussed the principals’ leadership styles and ways of supporting the immersion program. The teachers reported feeling that they were supported through a sense of empowerment that the principal gave them. Teachers reported that they were given leadership opportunities in multiple ways, and principals said they intentionally work to build these skills.

The teachers at Apple reported feeling empowered by their principal because they had been asked or encouraged to present at state and national conferences. Anna said that she “was really honored that [Sarah] asked me to present” at a state conference for dual immersion administrators, as well as at La Cosecha. She said that Sarah “has been a very

strong supporter” of her as a professional and it was apparent that this gave Anna confidence in her abilities as a teacher. Lea expressed a similar sentiment, stating that “[Sarah] empowers, she is an empowering principal.” She described how Sarah encourages teachers to “pursue passions” and allows them to do what is needed to meet their professional development plan goals through research and professional development. Sarah also referred to her leadership style in this way, describing ways in which teachers are given leadership opportunities. Teachers have leadership roles in professional learning communities (PLCs) as well as book study groups. At times teachers lead professional development for their colleagues. In addition, teachers represent the school by presenting “at the district level as well as the state and national level.” It was apparent that teachers are supported through an intentional focus on building teachers’ leadership skills at Apple.

There was a similar environment at Orange with regard to empowerment and teacher leadership. When asked about her leadership style, Ashley, the principal, said, “I see myself as an empowerer.” She believes in teacher leaders and that “if you give people an idea and a general charge, that good people are going to rise to the occasion and do good things.” The teachers at Orange agreed with their principal regarding her leadership style. Alex stated that “she passes the leadership on to other people and really tries to build leaders here.” She went on to say that Ashley “is willing to trust people like me to lead.” She felt this was an “important element” of the principal’s support of the program. Alex expressed how she did not feel empowered by a previous principal and was not given opportunities for leadership or professional growth. This was in contrast to how

she felt empowered by Ashley, saying she “was a beacon of light” and she “let me shine.” A parent also recognized Ashley’s intentionality in giving teachers leadership opportunities. Lisa said that Ashley “tends to identify people of talent and grow them.” Just as it was at Apple, it was evident at Orange that the principal works to support teacher leaders.

Charlotte at Cherry Elementary described Betsy’s support and leadership in similar terms to that of Apple and Orange. She said that “the current administration really develops leaders” and that they “push them to lead professional development they might not have thought of.” She described how teachers are encouraged to grow as professionals by attending conferences and through delegation of responsibilities. When asked about Betsy’s leadership style, Bill’s description was similar to Charlotte’s, saying that “she’s distributive, she doesn’t believe she has to know the answer to everything nor...do everything.” Betsy agreed, saying “there are teacher leaders who probably know more about different subject areas than I do” and because of this, she works “to empower others to lead different aspects of the school.” It is apparent that Betsy is intentional in the way she supports the program through building teacher leaders. Similar to Apple Elementary, teachers often lead professional development sessions for their colleagues, based upon their strengths and expertise.

It was evident that teacher empowerment and building teacher leaders is a component of success at these schools. When asked about leadership styles and things principals do to support the program, teachers talked about the sense of empowerment they feel and how their own leadership skills are developed in various ways. Somewhat

related to the concept of trust in teachers discussed in Chapter 4, teachers feel respected as professionals and that their principal has confidence in their knowledge and skills.

Connections to Literature

Though some of these findings are connected to prior research, not all of the components were evident. The interview data regarding the use of PLCs is related to previous research regarding managerial and organizational skills. The data involving teacher empowerment and building teacher leaders is very much related to shared leadership, which was evident in the literature review and the theoretical framework. This was a significant correlation. There is some, though limited, literature that addresses the need for professional development in immersion programs, however, it does not specifically reference the need to differentiate professional development for international teachers. The need for resources in the target language is minimally addressed in the literature. The literature does not include the need to support the programs with bilingual staff other than classroom teachers. Neither does previous literature include the benefits of providing interventions and other support programs in both languages. Yet, in the data, this arose as important.

Professional development is a key component of successful schools, as there is always more to learn regarding effective instruction. Marzano et al., (2005) do not use the term “professional development”, rather they refer to “intellectual stimulation” as one of the top leadership responsibilities that affects student success. This is the idea that teachers have the opportunity to learn about “current theories and practices regarding

effective schooling” (p. 52). Such knowledge can be gained through the types of PD experiences participants at the schools described, including workshops led by colleagues, experts brought into schools for training, and attending conferences outside of the district. Teachers and principals need quality, targeted professional development in order to be successful (Cuban, 2013; Davidovich, et al., 2010; Goldstein, 2014). The teachers and principals in this project reported significant professional development opportunities that helped them to grow professionally.

Some of the literature regarding immersion programs addresses the need for PD in these programs specifically. Thomas and Collier (2014) discuss the need for PD regarding the basic tenets of the program and immersion instructional practices in order to have “consistency and fidelity of program implementation” (p. 54). Sarah and Betsy talked about this kind of training they provide to new immersion teachers to help ensure the consistency that Thomas and Collier (2014) recommend. Howard et al., (2018) concur, stating that immersion teachers “need professional development related to the definition of the dual language education model” as well as “second language and biliteracy development” (p. 93). All of the principals discussed providing this kind of PD for teachers, whether through in-house workshops, bringing in experts, or sending staff to conferences.

However, with regard to differentiation of professional development opportunities, there is little in the immersion program literature that addresses this concept. Thomas and Collier (2014) do discuss the importance of conducting a “professional development needs assessment” in order to determine the needs of the staff,

but this seems to be more in regard to levels of experience in bilingual programs than what became evident in this study with regard to international teachers (p. 56). Likewise, Howard et al., (2018) note that new teachers may need “targeted professional development,” but again, this is more about the teacher simply being inexperienced, rather than new to the country and the system of schools (p. 92). The interview data is clear that teachers who are new to the country have professional development needs that are different from those of teachers with experience in American schools, regardless of their experience with bilingual programs in their home countries. This particular concept was not addressed in previous literature.

Thomas and Collier (2014) address the need for resources in the immersion program, stating that it is important to have “a broad variety of instructional resources in both languages that support literacy and content area learning across all subject areas” (p. 87). This means that principals have to use funding wisely, and sometimes look for other sources of funding, in order to provide “bilingual resources that include a variety of genres and an assortment of materials” (Thomas & Collier, 2014, p. 85). Howard et al., (2018) also refer to the need to support programs by providing resources “that support the bilingualism and biliteracy...goals of the program” (p. 123). Many of the participants said that the principals support the programs in this way, using funds to provide a variety of resources and to ensure that teachers have the needed resources in Spanish.

With regard to the need for bilingual staff outside of the immersion classroom, as well as providing interventions and support programs in both languages, there is little in the existing literature. Thomas and Collier (2014) and Howard et al., (2018) address the

necessary qualifications of the immersion classroom teachers. However, they do not fully address the need for other support personnel in the school to be bilingual or be able to provide services in both languages. The only reference to the benefits this provides in Thomas and Collier's 2014 text for dual immersion administrators comes directly from one of the principals who was a participant in this study. In fact, a teacher who participated in Hunt's 2011 research said that specials class teachers, "such as art and music are not bilingual" so those cannot be taught in Spanish, which "disturbs the 50/50 balance" (p. 201). This teacher recognized that having other bilingual staff would be beneficial for the program, as is the practice at these three schools. Howard et al., (2018) do mention that it is important in a dual language setting, "if a significant number of parents do not speak English" it is important that office staff be bilingual in order to be able to communicate with parents. This is consistent with the practice at all of the schools in this study, where they have intentionally hired bilingual staff for the front office.

Prior research regarding effective leadership skills in general includes the need for the principal to have managerial and organizational skills. The 2013 Wallace Foundation report included the need to arrange logistics for effective instruction. They note key responsibilities of the school leader, including "managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement" (p.6). This type of management includes developing a schedule and process for effective PLCs, just as was evidenced at the three schools. Corcoran et al., (2013) state that principals focused on the "procedures of the school" to identify structures that needed to improve (p. 12). Corcoran et al., (2013) also

specifically addressed the need for effective principals to create schedules that allow teachers to collaborate through the use of PLCs. Scanlan (2015) discussed the need for Communities of Practice (COPs), which are extremely similar to PLCs in two-way immersion programs, stating that “school leaders can effectively scaffold rich and vibrant COPS” by providing appropriate organization and structure (p.35). It is evident that the principals at these three immersion schools have these managerial skills to support the teachers and programs in this way.

The most explicit connection of interview data to the existing literature regarding support for immersion programs is with the use of shared, or distributed, leadership. As Hunt (2011) described the immersion schools she studied, “both principals and teachers see the role of leadership as being a shared responsibility” (p. 195). Charlotte, a teacher at Cherry described Betsy’s example of shared leadership, though she did not call it that. She said that Betsy “looks for ways to involve the staff in being leaders instead of just demanding from the top what it is that she expects.” This is exactly what Bush and Glover (2014) describe as a definition of shared leadership. The leader is not authoritative and is not the sole decision maker. Betsy described herself in this way, using the terminology of the literature, stating “my leadership style is collaborative and really a shared leadership model.” She is intentional in implementing this part of the theoretical framework, as Spillane (2005) describes, with formal and informal leadership roles, helping teachers to build and share their expertise with colleagues. Hallinger and Heck (2010) note the importance of teacher empowerment in a shared leadership model. This is just what Betsy intends as she reports that “[my] leadership style has been to empower

others to lead us...and trying to select the best people I have on staff for those different leadership roles.” This is also similar to what Lambert (2002) proposes in that leadership cannot be found just at the top, but that there must be intentionality in building the leadership skills of the school staff as a whole. Several participants in this project felt the way a teacher in Hunt’s 2011 reported when she said the principal “empowers teachers...to be a part of the leadership process” (p. 197). It is evident that the principals’ application of shared leadership theory and empowering teacher leaders is an important component of the support they provide for the immersion programs.

While some aspects of principals’ support for immersion programs that arose in the interviews are evident in the literature, others are not. The strongest connection is to the use of shared leadership and the need to empower teachers in immersion programs. This was a constant at all three schools, as well as in multiple other studies. The need for materials and resources in the target language was evidenced both in the participants’ responses as well as prior research. Professional development is also an important component of support, although the differentiated PD needs described in the interviews were not apparent in the literature. Interestingly, while there is much in the literature to describe the need for highly trained, bilingual teachers for the immersion classrooms, there is a dearth of information about bilingual staff in other areas, such as specials classes or exceptional children’s programming. Participants reported having other bilingual staff to be a key part of program success, so that interventions, tutoring, and other programs could be provided in either language and not exclusively in English. Participants found this to be helpful for students and parents. This lack of information

may indicate a need for further research on the effects of support personnel and programs in immersion schools.

CHAPTER VI

PRINCIPALS' KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

While many necessary leadership skills would be common for principals of any school, the interviews suggested four types of specific knowledge and skills that are important for effective immersion programs (see chart on p. 53 for a list of all participants). First, with regard to knowledge, administrators and teachers were emphatic in expressing the need for immersion principals to fully understand the immersion model and for them to continue to research best practices in immersion. Second, all stakeholders also referred to the principal as an advocate for the program within the district and community. The principal must have the skills to advocate for the needs of the program with regard to staffing, curriculum, and resources, as well as promote the program and educate the community. Related to advocacy is the need to interpret and use multiple data sources. Third, being highly proficient in the target language was deemed an asset, but not necessarily vital. Lastly, with regard to leadership style, the interview data supported other research that indicates the need for principals to use shared leadership in immersion programs.

Principals' Program Knowledge

The principals' basic knowledge of the immersion model and related research was an important factor in the success of these schools. This may seem like common sense,

but it is not always the case that principals have training or experience in immersion programs when they become principal of an immersion school. In all of the project schools, the principals did their own research about immersion, and/or had professional development experiences to help them learn about the program. Ashley at Orange noted that being an immersion principal requires a similar “skill set” as that of a traditional monolingual program, but a different knowledge base. She said that “you really need to truly understand language acquisition because you need to be able to make decisions with that lens.” This was important so that the principals could understand how the immersion program works and how it should impact their decision making, as well as so that they can educate parents about the program.

Betsy, the principal at Cherry, did not have training specific to immersion before becoming a leader there, but she did serve as the assistant principal in the school prior to becoming principal. While the district did not provide specific immersion training for principals or assistant principals, she said that “at a school level we would seek out our own professional development.” She recognized the need to learn more about the program and did so herself. As she discussed the benefits of the program, she exhibited her knowledge of current research, referring to work by Thomas and Collier and Lindholm-Leary, all preeminent researchers in the immersion field. Betsy talked about how she considers the dual language program in all decision making, with regard to scheduling, PD, student assignment, and school events. She cannot take the tenets of immersion into account in decision making if she is not extremely knowledgeable about the program.

Betsy noted that not only does the principal need to have specific program knowledge in order to lead well, but also to be able to inform parents. She said that some parents “who want to enroll in the program don’t know anything about dual language, so you have to be able to take educational research and ...break it down for parents.” If a principal is not knowledgeable regarding the research and program design, then s/he won’t be able to explain it well to parents or answer their questions accurately. She described a recent parent meeting in which she presented the research, but in a practical rather than theoretical way, and showed the parents “a day in the life” of their children in immersion, which the parents found to be beneficial. Betsy also talked about the need to help parents understand the biliteracy model, what to expect regarding reading skills in the two languages at the lower grade levels, and how students may not perform at what the state considers to be grade level expectations in K-2. Again, she cannot explain this well and help parents understand and be comfortable with the program model if she does not understand it well herself.

At Apple Elementary, Sarah also said that she did not have immersion training or knowledge before becoming an immersion leader as an assistant principal. She said that she “was basically thrown in” and she didn’t know what to tell teachers about planning for immersion when they asked questions. She was aware of her lack of knowledge, saying that in her first year she “figured out all the problems but [she] didn’t have any solutions.” She knew that she needed to learn more, and she reported taking a team of teachers to “Dual U training” and described how much it helped her and the teachers to understand the program model and what they should be doing. Sarah said that initial

training gave her an “entry point in to what [immersion] is and what [she] is supposed to do as a leader to support” the program and the teachers. She went on to describe other learning experiences that have helped her to grow as an immersion leader, including attending La Cosecha and working with CAL, noting the need to constantly learn more in order to improve. When asked about what skills or knowledge an immersion principal needs, Sarah said that the first thing is knowledge about the program. She said “they need to understand dual language...the program model...the pedagogies that are necessary...[and] a content knowledge base for dual language learning.” Sarah talked a great deal about advocacy for the program, which will be discussed in the next section, and the need for knowledge in order to advocate effectively.

Lea, a teacher at Apple, talked about Sarah’s knowledge of the program and willingness to learn, and how that helps teachers trust her. She said “[Sarah] knows what she’s talking about” and “if she doesn’t know she’s going to find out.” She said that Sarah models a “growth mindset,” constantly expanding her own knowledge and sharing that with others. Lea went on to say that Sarah “100% understands the needs” of the program. She explained this by describing how Sarah saw the need for more “interventionists and ESL teachers” and so she “made sure to staff those positions.”

Lea contrasted the example Sarah set with a lack of knowledge of a former principal at another school. She said the he “didn’t know a lot about it” so even though he was “excited about the program,” he couldn’t lead it well because he didn’t understand it fully. She also described a subsequent principal at that school saying that he wasn’t knowledgeable about the program either, that “as far as knowing anything about what we

did he was not involved in the process [and] didn't pursue anything." She said that his lack of knowledge and ability to lead the program was one of the reasons she pursued a job at another school. Anna described a similar situation at a previous school, saying that the principal didn't understand "the needs of the children that were in [the] program." The teachers were clear that in these prior experiences the lack of knowledge of the principal was detrimental to the program.

At Orange Elementary the need for the principal to have extensive knowledge of the program was evident as well. Alex, a teacher, said that one of the most important practices for an immersion administrator was to "[educate] the public and [educate] the staff on why we do what we do, why our program is the way it is." She went on to say that an effective immersion leader has to "communicate effectively with the parents about expectations" so that parents understand how immersion works and what it means for their child. A principal cannot educate others about the program if s/he does not fully understand it.

Lou, the assistant principal at Orange, talked about how Ashley focuses on dual immersion in her decision making. He said that the program model "was the basis and driving point of every decision" in the school. While this makes sense for a whole school program, it speaks to the importance of immersion as the driving force for the school, and the knowledge base the principal must have in order to lead effectively. He talked about the need for leaders to show authenticity and being models for teachers. The principal cannot be an effective model for immersion education without the appropriate knowledge to do so.

Similarly to the principals at Cherry and Apple, Ashley did not have specific immersion training before becoming the principal at Orange. She said that she “knew theoretically what should happen in a program, [but she] had never really thought about it with the principal lens” and didn’t know how to manage it. She had awareness of the program and its benefits, but not detailed knowledge. Like the other principals, she learned more by seeking the knowledge herself, going to training for administrators at CAL, as well as attending La Cosecha. The other two principals did not clearly state whether the district funded their professional growth activities, but Ashley noted specific district support and funding for such learning for principals. Ashley described how “the district is very supportive through the use of magnet funds to send their magnet leaders to training.” She knew that the district recognized the need for leaders to understand their special programs and provided funding for them to be able to get what they need. She also said she “[took] the initiative to go visit other schools” in order to learn more about immersion programs. Like Sarah, Ashley said that as a principal “you have to ...understand the program model” so that the principal can educate other stakeholders as well. She said that “fidelity to the program model” and “implementing the Guiding Principles” were two of her top priorities for the school. It isn’t possible to do this if the leader doesn’t fully understand the immersion model.

While many might assume that principals of immersion programs would have deep knowledge and understanding of the program, that is not always the case. The interviews with principals of these three schools made it evident that program knowledge is extremely important for its success. Ashley put it simply, saying that “it is...an

expectation that you would understand the program that you lead.” This knowledge is important not only to inform decision making, but also to be able to inform parents and other stakeholders about how the program works and its benefits. The principals reported that there is a great deal to learn. As Ashley said, immersion principals have to “understand the Guiding Principles...and how to coach teachers to make sure that the language learning is happening” in addition to understanding language acquisition and the program model. The leaders cannot be effective without significant knowledge of the immersion program.

Principal as Advocate

While many of the leadership skills necessary to be an immersion principal are the same as that of a traditional program or school, the interview data showed that advocacy is a distinct skill that is important for an immersion leader. The principal has to be able to advocate for the program in multiple ways, including within the school district as well as in the community. The role of advocate is related to the need for program knowledge and understanding, in that a leader cannot advocate well if s/he does not fully understand the details of the program. In addition to advocating for the program itself, at one school the concept of advocating for students was also apparent. Many of the participants talked about the principal as program advocate, including the principals themselves.

Lynn, a parent at Cherry, specifically referred to Betsy’s advocacy for the program. She said that Betsy “advocates for [the immersion program] both at the district

level...and with parents.” She does this by educating stakeholders about the program, ensuring they understand the model, expectations, and benefits. Charlotte, a teacher, agreed, saying that Betsy advocates within the district for the needs of the immersion program. She described feeling that in the past the program was somewhat “like the ugly stepchild of the district” and that people at the district level didn’t “believe in dual language” because staff would say that district PD didn’t apply to them because of the program, or they needed materials in Spanish that the district was providing in English, or they felt a district initiative wouldn’t work well for dual immersion. Charlotte described how Betsy advocates for the program by finding compromise and solutions, telling the “district office we can’t do it just like that but here’s how we could do it...in a way that works for us” because the immersion program is different. The way in which this teacher described Betsy’s advocacy in the district was distinct from descriptions of the other principals, noting that she finds ways to work with the district to best meet the needs of the immersion program as well as comply with new initiatives, rather than being oppositional or seeming to refuse to cooperate. Bill, the assistant principal, seemed to agree, saying that Betsy “is not scared to address [issues] with the district office” but that “she does it in really such a wonderful way that it’s completely non-threatening.”

When asked about whether there are distinct leadership skills necessary in an immersion program, Betsy said there were some that “may arise if you have any other kind of program in your school that’s different from your typical elementary program.” One of the first things she mentioned was the need for “[public relations] skills to share the program with the community.” She noted that because the immersion program is

very different from a traditional school, it is important to explain it to people in the community, especially potential parents. As Bill and Charlotte described, she also discussed the need to advocate within the district, working with “district official officials who don’t understand dual language practices,” helping them to see how district expectations affect immersion, or why they might need to do things differently in the immersion program.

The topic of advocacy also came up in the interviews at Apple. Jean, a parent, said that Sarah “is a really strong advocate for the school” and “is a strong proponent for the school as a place for cultural enrichment for everyone...and for meeting the needs of those students who have fewer resources.” Jean’s description of Sarah’s advocacy was slightly different than that at the other schools in that it wasn’t just about immersion, but about being a school that meets students’ needs, especially English learners and students of low socio-economic status. This is largely done through the support services described in Chapter 5 in the section about providing resources through distinct programs. Anna, a teacher, referred to Sarah’s kind of advocacy similarly, reporting that not only does she advocate for the program by spreading information about it in the community, but she also is “constantly looking for ways to get the community involved and to meet the needs of the kids.” Anna went on to say that Sarah also advocates for the program at the district level, getting “people at central office to recognize the need for this program and for supporting” its needs. It was apparent that Sarah advocates for the immersion program itself, but also for the students in order to meet their needs.

Vicki, the assistant principal at Apple, also discussed Sarah's role as an advocate. She said that if someone at the central office level questions Sarah's decision that "she will stand behind it; she will show the research that demonstrates why she made the decision." Again, this speaks to the level of knowledge needed in order to advocate effectively for the program and for students' needs. Vicki related Sarah's advocacy for the program to the way in which Betsy was described, saying that in order to advocate within the district, this might mean "modifying what the district initiatives [are] to make sense for the programs" but went further, saying that at times Sarah will "say we're not going to do that" if she feels the district initiative is not aligned with the immersion model, and she will show the "evidence and research [explaining] why that wouldn't make sense for this school." In talking with Sarah, she described a situation in which she refused to implement units of study the district had purchased because they didn't have the needed Spanish materials and the units didn't align with the curriculum needs of the program. It is evident that Sarah is willing to stand up for the needs of the program, even if that puts her in opposition with district office leaders.

Sarah described her role as advocate in a similar manner as the other participants at Apple did. She agreed that advocacy is a vital skill for an immersion principal, saying "you have to be [an] advocate all the time...and you're the advocate for kids who aren't successful in traditional settings," referring to the diverse population at Apple with regard to ethnicity and socio-economic status. She discussed advocating for the immersion program in the community and district, but also about advocating for students' needs. She said that she works to "make program decisions based on the kids who are going to

be least successful.” While she makes programmatic decisions through the lens of the immersion needs and the Guiding Principles, she also considers those students who typically underachieve and how to best meet their needs. With regard to program advocacy, Sarah said that “because [dual immersion] is not commonly known about...you have to know how to garner support and use data in ways that get your school what it needs.” In talking about advocating for program needs, Sarah reflected that she has “learned to talk in a way that people can hear [her].” She does this by using data and research to prove her point. She described constantly needing to educate central office staff as new personnel are hired and feeling that she “[does] more selling for the people from central office” and also “selling for new families.” She also advocates for the program by making the schools’ successes visible in the community, highlighting special events and experiences for students, and talking to others “about the success across both languages.”

Just as at Cherry and Apple, advocacy emerged as an important skill for an immersion leader in the interviews at Orange. Alex, an Orange parent, talked about Ashley’s advocacy for the program in the community saying she “brings in people to visit” and “[makes] everyone aware of why we do what we do.” She felt this was an important factor of Ashley’s support for the immersion program. Lisa, a parent, said that Ashley has “been very good at advocating for our needs with the district” and felt that she has been effective because the district is now providing resources for the program that they previously did not. Lisa also talked about a principal prior to Ashley, saying that she also advocated well within the district with regard to staffing, as “she was amazing at

getting an extra [teacher] allocation,” which can be very helpful in an immersion program in which you must have partner teachers in English and Spanish. April, a teacher at Orange, said the principal of an immersion program advocates by “[standing] up for what they believe in” with regard to practices that are best for students. She was referring to the kind of in district advocacy that Betsy and Sarah do, pushing back against district initiatives or requirements when they don’t align with the immersion model.

When asked about supporting the immersion program, Ashley talked about her advocacy for the program. She said that one way she does this is by proactively seeking funding for the program, as well as resources in Spanish. She reminds those at the district level to “be thinking about [immersion]” when decisions are made regarding assessment, curriculum, or materials. For example, she described working with the district math curriculum director to find resources for math in Spanish. As another example, Ashley discussed district assessments that were to be written and how she asked for some immersion teachers to be involved in that work so that the assessment in Spanish could be written along with the English and the teachers could get paid for their time, rather than translating an English assessment at a later date. In talking with Ashley, it did not seem that she had dealt with some of the in-district issues that Betsy and Sarah have with regard to having to constantly educate central office personnel regarding immersion. This may be because the program at Orange is older than the other two programs, and the district that it is in has multiple immersion sites.

Related to advocacy is the need for the principal to use multiple data points to explain the immersion program. Only two participants discussed this specifically, the

principals at Cherry and Apple, but they both felt it was an important skill for an immersion principal. When asked about skills that an immersion principal needs to have that might be different from the leader of a traditional school, Sarah talked about data analysis. This is more than using data to drive instruction, as would be important anywhere. She said “you have to know how to garner support and use data in ways that get your school what it needs.” This means collecting and using data from English and Spanish assessments in order to give a complete picture. Sarah said that as principal “you have to be really ready to present the holistic view of data because nobody else really knows to ask you that.” She explained how stakeholders in the community might misinterpret EOG scores if they weren’t able to also see that some students are performing well in Spanish, showing they have the academic skills, but simply weren’t able to show that well in English yet. She said that she “constantly [feeds] data to [stakeholders] that highlight the academic performance of students in both English and Spanish” so that they can understand how students are learning and what they’re able to do, in either language. Only looking at scores from standardized assessments in English does not give a clear picture of the school. According to Sarah, immersion principals have to “talk about...success across both languages.” Betsy agreed, saying that being an immersion principal requires more data analysis because “you are analyzing two...sets of data” constantly. She explained how you have to be able to report successes in both languages and identify whether weak data is due to language or content issues. Understanding this level of analysis helps principals do as Sarah recommended, using data to advocate for the needs of the school or program.

It was apparent at all three sites that advocacy for the immersion program is an important skill for the principal to have or develop. At all of the schools, advocacy meant advertising the program in the community, educating potential parents, and generally marketing the program. In addition, advocacy was referred to as work within the district, educating central office personnel about the program model and unique aspects of curriculum, planning, and instruction. At Cherry and Apple this sometimes meant going against district initiatives, or finding ways to make adjustments in order to meet the needs of immersion and the district requirements. At Orange that did not seem to be as much of a factor with regard to advocacy as at the other schools. For the principal at Apple, advocacy also included ensuring typically underserved students' needs were met, in addition to the needs of the program. For the principals at Cherry and Apple, advocacy also included the use of a complete data picture to make successes and needs clear to stakeholders.

Bilingual Leaders

A skill that might be considered unique to leading an immersion program would be being bilingual, able to speak English as well as the language of the program. This would be so that the principal can understand the principles of language acquisition, as well as instruction in the classroom, materials and resources, and assessments in the language. Also, in a dual immersion setting where many families would be non-native English speakers, it would be beneficial to be able to communicate with parents and students in their first language. When asked whether it was necessary for principals of

immersion programs to be bilingual, the general consensus among the participants was that it is a helpful skill, but not absolutely necessary in the immersion setting. Of the three schools, two principals are bilingual, and one has some knowledge of Spanish, but does not consider herself to be proficient.

The principal at Cherry is a native English speaker but is bilingual in Spanish. Virginia, a parent, said that “it helps a lot that [Betsy] is totally bilingual of course” because she can communicate with native Spanish speaking students and parents. She said that it makes parents “[feel] very comfortable with the administration” of the school because she can speak with everyone. This benefit of being bilingual is connected to the needs for building relationships with parents and reaching out specifically to Spanish speaking parents, as discussed in Chapter 4. Betsy agreed that being bilingual was “a valuable asset” for her as an immersion principal. She said that while a principal doesn’t have to be bilingual to lead an immersion program, it gives her “a huge advantage.” She described not only being able to communicate with parents, but also with international teachers who are more comfortable speaking or writing in Spanish. She said that especially when some international teachers have an issue they need to address, they prefer to speak with her in Spanish “because they’re able to explain themselves.” Her ability to use both languages helps to facilitate clear communication with teachers and parents.

At Apple Elementary Sarah is not highly proficient in Spanish. She understands some of what she hears and reads, but is not comfortable communicating in the language. When asked if there is anything the principal does that might not be supportive of the

immersion program, regardless of intentionality, both parents talked about Sarah's lack of language skills. Jean, a parent, said that "[Sarah's] not comfortable with it, so I suppose that works against the immersion thing," but she noted that there has always been an assistant principal who is bilingual, so there is an administrator who can help if language is an issue in a situation. Jean said that Sarah's lack of language skills might "make it harder to approach her" for some parents, but that "she tries to be as open as she can." Judy was quick to respond that "she doesn't speak Spanish." However, like Jean, she noted that the assistant principal is bilingual and so they are able to "tag team" which compensates for the language deficit. She went on to say that "the leadership aspect" of being a principal "is more important than her ability to speak Spanish. Lea, a teacher at Apple, actually noted that Sarah's insecurity in Spanish "might even help her because she realizes the importance of [bilingualism] and continues to push others" to gain those skills. While the parents recognize that it would be an asset for Sarah to be bilingual, they don't feel that her leadership abilities are hindered and consider her a strong principal for the immersion program.

When asked about specific skills that immersion principals need, Sarah said that "you have to have some basic level of language skills in the target language." She elaborated, saying that you need to be able to greet families in their language and understand what is happening in classrooms. She said that if you don't have some skills, "you're probably not going to be as successful as you need to be in moving the program forward." She went on to describe the need for language skills in order to "monitor instruction" and be able to provide meaningful feedback to teachers. She said that when

she became an immersion leader she became proactive, asking the district to provide funding for language classes so that she could gain basic skills in order to better understand what “teachers [were] doing in the classroom with the children.” Sarah recommended that if a principal doesn’t have enough skill to understand instruction, then s/he “will need to rely on other people to support [him/her],” such as an instructional coach or assistant principal. It is apparent that she has done this at Apple, ensuring that the assistant principal as well as many other staff members are bilingual in order to provide the necessary support to the program.

In addition to the language skills needed, Sarah also said that the immersion leader has to understand “cultural differences among the student and family population [as well as] cultural differences among the staff.” She reflected on her role as a “white monolingual woman” and how that has affected her interactions with her international staff. She described needing to allow time for them to talk, when she is “all about the business” and the compromises she has made with her working style and theirs. She said that the leader has to have skills to “get to know the faculty...and understand them culturally as well as understanding families.” This point of view was unique to Sarah in the interviews. Other principals did not raise this type of reflection regarding cultural skills and understanding.

Just as Betsy at Cherry is bilingual, so is Ashley at Orange. April, a teacher, felt that this was one of the main ways in which Ashley supports the immersion program there. She noted that Ashley is “able to communicate with pretty much everybody in the school,” including students, teachers, and parents of both languages, “which is a huge

bonus.” Again, this skill helps the principal build relationships with others, including being able to personally reach out to Spanish speaking parents. Alex agreed that Ashley being bilingual was an important skill as the program leader, but also added that “the fact that she is a learner of Spanish is a really important part.” Ashley is a role model for students as someone who is a native English speaker, but began learning Spanish at age 18 and has a high level of proficiency.

When describing the knowledge and skills needed for leading an immersion program, Ashley was in agreement with the other principals that the leader doesn’t specifically have to be bilingual. However, she did say that the principal has to understand the process of language acquisition, and be able to identify “whether or not that teacher is using best practice for teaching a language.” She agreed with Sarah in that if the principal doesn’t speak the target language, s/he would need “a staff member like a facilitator...who can help you understand what might be happening or not happening.” With regard to her own bilingualism, she said that it was definitely an asset, and helps her build relationships with Latino parents. Ashley said that the parents are “so amazed ...that I’m this gringa that speaks Spanish...so [it’s] a cool factor.” She felt that her language skills help her build relationships with parents and students. Ashley said being bilingual helps her “build credibility and connect.” She added that it was also helpful because she doesn’t have to have someone to interpret in conferences with parents.

One might assume that the principal of an immersion program would have to be bilingual. However, the interview data shows that stakeholders involved in these programs, including the principals themselves, do not feel that it is a requirement. As

Ashley said, a principal who believes in the program can learn about language acquisition and the program model so “[she] would hate for someone [with] talent to be overlooked because they weren’t [bilingual].” It was apparent from the interviews that being bilingual is an advantage as it allows the principal to communicate with the school community in their preferred language, which contributes to building relationships. However, the principals agreed there are ways to work around a lack of language skills if necessary. As Sarah said, “I don’t think you have to be bilingual to be a dual language administrator...I think you have to have the willingness to do things differently” and the principal needs to learn “some survival language skills.”

Utilizing Shared Leadership

I addressed the concept of shared leadership somewhat in the previous chapter as it was related to the sense of empowerment the teachers felt. However, the use of shared leadership also arose as an important skill for immersion principals to employ. At each school the importance of a shared, rather than authoritative, leadership model was apparent in the interview data. Teachers and administrators addressed the use of this leadership theory.

At Cherry it was apparent that Betsy implements a shared leadership model. Parents, teachers, and administrators referred to this, even if they didn’t always use that term. Lynn, a parent, described Betsy’s leadership as “collaborative”, stating that she “[sees] that [Betsy] listens to parents and to staff members” and that Betsy “[involves] a lot of people” in the work of the school. Charlotte, a teacher, agreed with this description,

describing how staff is involved in decision making, and said that “the current administration . . . really [delegates] well.” Bill, the assistant principal described Betsy similarly. When asked about her leadership style, Bill said that she is “distributive” and that she “allows us as her staff to . . . have our hands in things.” He went on to say that “she’s definitely not top down.” All of these participants recognized Betsy’s intentionality in using a shared leadership model, involving many in decision making, which, as already discussed, also contributes to the positive culture in the school as well as its success. Betsy’s said this about herself as well. When asked about her leadership style, she was quick to say that she is “collaborative” and identified specifically using “a shared leadership model.” She gave an example with in-school PD, saying that she is “rarely in front of the staff for the entire meeting.” Instead, she works with teacher leaders to plan the PD and lets them facilitate the session. It was evident that Betsy understands the need to involve staff in decision making and the leadership of the school rather than operating from an authoritative model in which others do not have a voice.

Sarah’s leadership style at Apple was described similarly to that of Betsy’s. Though the teachers did not specifically state that her leadership was collaborative in this way, they gave examples of this type of leadership. Lea and Anna both discussed how Sarah builds leadership skills in the staff and that staff are involved in leading PD sessions as well as facilitating Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and various professional book studies. When asked about her leadership style, Sarah described herself as “collaborative” and “certainly not top down.” She described various ways staff is involved in decision making and leadership roles in the school. For example, just as at

Cherry and as the Apple teachers said, teacher leaders facilitate PD sessions and PLCs, with the team “[designating] who they’d like their leaders to be” and that person is also a part of “the school leadership team.” Also, if district personnel come for a learning walk, staff from the leadership team will participate in order to share what “[they] have been learning about in [their] professional development...and what kind of feedback that [they’re] looking for.” While not referred to as explicitly as in the interviews at Cherry by all Apple participants, it was evident that Sarah also employs a shared leadership model and that this skill is important for the success of the school.

As at the other two schools, it was also apparent that Ashley uses shared leadership at Orange Elementary. Lisa, a parent, specifically said that Ashley “is very collaborative” when asked about her leadership style. She gave the example of how various staff members are responsible for presentations at school leadership team meetings, rather than Ashley giving all reports to the group. Lisa noted that Ashley “likes to hear what everybody has to say,” but almost to a fault in that sometimes a principal needs “to establish the hard line” and it can create challenges to have constant input from others. This was a unique perspective that was not shared at the other schools. Alex, a teacher, agreed that Ashley’s leadership is collaborative, saying that “she passes the leadership on to other people.” Similarly to the concept of trust discussed in Chapter 4, Alex described how Ashley trusts teachers to lead and does not feel that she has to make all decisions as principal. April agreed with Alex, saying that Ashley “likes to distribute leadership roles amongst the staff.” Like Lisa, she also referenced that this can sometimes create issues because if there isn’t follow up, “sometimes things aren’t

completed.” Again, this was not an issue mentioned with shared leadership that arose at Cherry or Apple.

Lou, the assistant principal, said that Ashley implements “a democratic style” of leadership” and that “she believes in group decision making and getting feedback from stakeholders.” He said that she tries to make “the most informed decisions possible, getting...feedback from key people.” It was apparent that he saw this as an important skill for the principal to utilize. Ashley seemed to agree with the other participants’ descriptions of her leadership style. She said that she is “not a micromanager at all.” She went on to say that she “would love to see the day when [she works herself] out of a job” because there would be “good teacher leaders running the school.” This was an extreme definition of shared leadership that was not described at other schools, but exemplifies her belief in a distributive model. As alluded to by Lisa and April, she admitted that there are times when she needs “to be a little more linear and directive and provide oversight.” It seemed that she has reflected on her strengths and weaknesses with regard to using shared leadership and recognized a need to refine her skills in some way.

At all three schools it was apparent that the use of shared leadership is an important skill for the immersion principal to have. This type of leadership contributes to the culture of the school, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, by showing trust in and respect for staff, and empowering them as teacher leaders. In addition, as evidenced in the interviews, the teachers feel they have a voice in decision making in the school, all of which contributes to the success of the program. There was a small bit of evidence at one

school, however, that this collaborative style of leadership can possibly be carried too far in some ways, and at times the leader needs to make decisions directly.

Connections to Literature

The principals' knowledge and skills that emerged as needed in an immersion program were related to previous literature in some ways, but not largely present in others. There are definite connections to prior research with regard to the principals' knowledge and understanding of the program. Many participants discussed the need for advocacy in successful immersion programs. This component is addressed in some literature, but is not extensive. The question of whether the principal needs to be bilingual in English and the program's target language is only slightly addressed in prior research.

It is quite apparent through prior research and the interviews for this project that the principals' knowledge and understanding of the immersion program is important for success. The program does not run itself and has unique aspects that are different from a traditional, monolingual program. The principals talked about their need to learn and become knowledgeable in order to effectively lead in an immersion program. They all referred to seeking out training and professional development in order to learn about the programs. Just as teachers need training to grow in their knowledge and skills, so do principals (Davidovich et al., 2010; Goldstein, 2014). Alanís and Rodríguez (2008) found that knowledgeable leadership was one of four key components to the success of the immersion program they studied. As they reported, "the principal's support and

knowledge regarding dual language instruction had been crucial in program sustainability (p. 315). Thomas and Collier (2014) are emphatic that the immersion administrator must learn about various aspects of immersion in order to lead effectively, including “second language acquisition, second language literacy, [and] making instruction comprehensible” in both languages (p. 42). All of the principals referred to the need for this type of knowledge in order to lead the program. Rocque et al., (2016) found similar results in their study of immersion programs in Utah. They found that one of the most important roles the immersion principal has is that of “immersion guru,” which is someone who is “a scholar on all things related to dual immersion” (p. 810). They went on to say that this knowledge is not assumed or automatic, rather the principals “needed to have specialized training in dual immersion” in order to lead and implement the programs with fidelity. All three principals in this project had such training through sources such as CAL and La Cosecha, although they all worked to learn what they needed after they became immersion principals. Betsy, Sarah, and Ashley all talked about the knowledge they needed to gain and how they worked to learn more in order to lead effectively. These principals understood what Lindholm-Leary (2012) reported regarding successful dual language programs, in that “how well the programs are designed and implemented” greatly “[impacts] the quality of these programs” (p. 258). They all wanted to implement the programs with fidelity to the immersion model and needed extensive knowledge to do so.

The need for the principal to be an advocate for the program was not addressed extensively, but was evident in some prior research. In addition to the need for extensive

program knowledge, Rocque et al., (2016) found that another critical role for the immersion principal was that of “immersion proponent” (p. 811). The principals in their study reported “that they must be, or become, advocates, supporters, champions, and promoters of dual immersion programs” (p. 811). Several participants in this project, including the principals themselves, addressed this concept, saying that the principals’ advocacy was one of the ways in which they support the programs’ success. Thomas and Collier (2014) include the need for advocacy for the effectiveness and sustainability of the program. This includes advocacy in the district and the community, similar to what the project participants discussed, with regard to educating parents, the community, and district personnel about the program model.

Though it might seem an initial requirement, it is not always the case that principals of immersion programs are bilingual or have skills in a language other than English. Several of the participants addressed this issue, although there is very little in prior research about the topic. Rocque et al., (2016) briefly mention this topic in their findings. The conclusion of their participants was similar to that of the interviewees in this research. They report that “as a group the respondents did not feel that immersion principals needed to speak, or even have studied, a language other than English” (p. 815). They went on to say that “it was not critical” for the principal to speak the target language of the program. The interview data showed similar results in this research, with all who addressed the topic saying that it was not necessary to be bilingual to be the principal, including the bilingual principals in the study. Nevertheless, part of the results regarding this issue were slightly different from that of Rocque et al., (2016). They

surmise that the principal's knowledge of the target language would be more important in dual programs "because principals need to communicate with students, parents, and others from the native or heritage community" (p. 815). In a one-way immersion program, all students are native speakers of English, so communication would be in English with parents and other stakeholders. However, Rocque et al.'s (2016) assumption does not recognize what participants in this study discussed, in that being bilingual is not only important for communicating with parents in a dual program, but also for communicating with teachers in their preferred language, as well as understanding classroom instruction in order to provide effective feedback. Participants in this study agreed that bilingualism is an asset for the leader, although not absolutely necessary.

Connections to the literature regarding shared, or distributive, leadership were previously discussed in Chapter 5. This connection was also evident as a necessary skill for the immersion leader to utilize. Thomas and Collier (2014) highlight the inclusion of "shared and collaborative leadership" examples throughout their text for administrators of dual immersion programs (p. 91). They state that immersion teachers "must be highly engaged in the implementation and leadership" of the program (p. 91). It is evident that at Cherry, Apple, and Orange, the principals have done what Thomas and Collier (2014) describe with regard to their style of leadership. Though Alanís and Rodríguez (2008) did not name the use of shared leadership as one of their four key components of a successful program, they did refer to it as a part of "knowledgeable leadership and continuity" (p. 315). The authors described the implementation model at one of the schools they studied, explaining how the principal involved "parents and teachers...in a democratic process in

which all involved had a say in the matter” (p. 315). They noted that in not using “a top-down decision” making model, the principal allowed stakeholders “to have ownership of the program,” which was important for the program’s success (p. 315). Alanís and Rodríguez (2008) described a leadership model very similar to that of the three schools in this study and said that the principal had “a democratic view of leadership” (p. 316). Similarly, Hunt (2011) names “collaborative and shared leadership” as one of “four leadership structures that are essential in supporting bilingual learning communities” (p. 188). The interviews in this study showed similar results as that of Hunt (2011), in that “teachers [saw] themselves as part of the practice of leadership” (p. 195). The one small issue that arose in the interviews regarding the potential over use of shared leadership can be related to Hallinger’s (2011) work in which he reports that context should determine what type of leadership to use and that one model is not appropriate in all situations. However, throughout the prior research and this study, it is evident that immersion principals must develop and utilize shared leadership skills as a part of a successful program. As admitted by the principals, they can’t know everything about dual language immersion so they need to create opportunities for teachers to share their knowledge and participate in leadership roles.

While there were some connections to previous literature regarding necessary skills and knowledge for the immersion principal, not all of the interview data was represented. One of the most evident components was the need for the principal to have deep knowledge of the immersion model in order to implement it effectively. This was apparent in prior research as well as the project interviews. As Lea at Apple reported,

something “Thomas and Collier said over and over when they came to [previous school] is ‘well implemented’.” She went on to say that “a recommendation would be don’t start it unless you have all the kinks worked out. You know, it’s not something you want to jump into and figure it out as you go.” Other necessary elements of principals’ knowledge and skill were mentioned in some prior research, but were not as prominent. The interview data was very clear that the principal has to have advocacy skills and there was some information in prior research about this need. With the importance that several participants placed on this skill, it is surprising that it was not more prevalent in other research. It was also surprising that whether the principal needs to be bilingual was not specifically addressed in most of the prior research. In the interviews each principal discussed this, as did other participants, and while they agreed it wasn’t vital, they did see bilingualism for the leader as a definite asset. It may be that many assume that immersion leaders would be bilingual and therefore have not addressed this in the literature. Lastly, there was a strong connection in the interview data to the research regarding using shared leadership in immersion programs. It is evident that this is especially effective in these unique programs.

CHAPTER VII

IMPLICATIONS

As one might expect, it is apparent that principals' leadership styles, actions, and attitudes affect immersion program success in multiple ways. Thomas and Collier (2014) are clear about the important role the principal plays in immersion, stating that "leadership is vital in establishing and ensuring the sustainability of dual language programs" (p.90). Principals can be supportive of, or detrimental to, bilingual program success depending upon their decisions, actions, and leadership style. According to this study, in order to promote success, a school leader must establish positive school culture through a variety of ways. The leader also has to exhibit program and teacher support, as well as have in-depth program knowledge and specific skills in order to guide the program effectively. Actions that work in contrast to these supportive ones, regardless of intentionality, are detrimental to the program. Various stakeholders' opinions and reported experiences contributed to these results.

Prior research is clear regarding the impact leadership has on teachers and student academic success in schools. However, there is limited research regarding leadership in language immersion programs and what principals need to do in order to help make programs successful so that students attain the high achievement that is reported in effective immersion programs. With immersion programs rapidly growing in number in North Carolina as well as other states, it is important that principals are aware of best

leadership practices with regard to these unique programs. Since this project began, a graduate level program at East Carolina University has been implemented to provide immersion leaders with the foundational knowledge they need to lead effective bilingual programs. However, this is very new, having just begun with an initial cohort in 2017 and principals do not always have prior knowledge of immersion before becoming the leader of a program. As Betsy at Cherry stated, “I think that’s concerning in that it’s hard to find people who know dual language already.” Since many school leaders do not already have experience with immersion programs, the aim of this study was to identify what school leaders need to know and do in order to lead immersion programs effectively and garner maximum results.

Research Questions and Applications to Practice

Through this project I attempted to answer the following main question:

- In schools with successful immersion programs, what are the principals’ leadership styles, actions, and attitudes, as described by themselves, teachers, and parents?

As part of answering this question, I explored the following sub-questions:

- What actions do principals take that are supportive to immersion programs?
- What actions do principals take that are detrimental to immersion programs?

As discussed in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, participants reported that principals in these successful immersion programs did three main things. The principals established positive

school culture, they provided program and teacher support, and they had specific knowledge and skills that helped contribute to the success of the program.

School districts and administrators can use the results of this study to affect leadership practices in immersion programs. Principals need opportunities to learn about the immersion model in order to implement it with fidelity, ideally before starting the position as leaders of a program. They need to understand how to advocate for the program and provide the needed personnel and material support. A school district can require that principals attend training at workshops or conferences, or principals might need to seek out such opportunities for themselves. Additionally, it is evident that immersion principals must provide the kinds of program and teacher support reported in this project. As would be true in any school, the principal needs to foster a positive culture and build relationships with teachers and parents. However, it seems that especially in dual immersion programs there are factors for the leader to consider with regard to the use of two languages. This includes working to have equal status for both languages so that English is not dominant over the target language, communicating with parents in both languages, and intentionally reaching out to target language parents. Lastly, it is apparent that the use of shared leadership theory is applicable to immersion programs, more so than other leadership theories.

Based on the results of the study, it is apparent that the principal's program knowledge and understanding is foundational to the success of the program. This would be the place to start for new or anticipated leaders in an immersion program. If a leader does not have prior experience or extensive knowledge of immersion programs, s/he

needs to gain it. This can be done as the principals in this study did; through their own research, enrolling in university courses that address immersion leadership, if available, attending a foundational leadership training such as the leadership institute provided by CAL, attending conferences such as La Cosecha, and visiting model programs. The principal cannot be a fully informed advocate for the program, also a necessary skill according to the study results, without this thorough knowledge of the program. As parents must choose to enroll their child in immersion programs, advocacy is extremely important. The community needs to understand what the program is and its benefits. As the participants reported, advocacy within the school district is also important in order to meet the needs of the program. This includes understanding how to use multiple data points, in English and the target language, in order to advocate for the program.

As a part of program model understanding, the principal needs to learn about the resource and professional development needs of the teachers in order to advocate for and provide those. According to the interview results, one of the components of successful programs is the support the principal provides to the program and the teachers. This includes differentiated support for international teachers who are new to the U.S. education system and norms. The principal has to understand the unique needs of the program in order to provide such support. Similarly to gaining program model knowledge, new principals should talk with leaders with experience to learn more about the kinds of materials that are needed, as well as the types of learning opportunities that are beneficial to teachers. In addition, networking with those who are more experienced

with successful programs can give newer principals information about hiring other bilingual staff in order to help support the program.

Other themes that emerged in this study regarding the need to establish a positive culture and the use of shared leadership are not necessarily unique to immersion programs. Prior research shows that these are important in successful schools in general. However, it was also apparent in prior research that these were components of successful immersion programs. If a leader of an immersion program has not considered these elements or does not intentionally work to establish a positive culture and apply shared leadership theory, s/he needs to consider doing so to create an effective immersion program. If a principal is not sure about how pervasive these elements are, s/he might use teacher working conditions survey results, if available, or some other type of anonymous survey in order to garner teacher feedback.

Likewise, establishing relationships with teachers and parents is shown to be an element of successful schools in general. However, there is nuance to this aspect in immersion schools, as evidenced by the interview data. Immersion principals need to consider how they are communicating with parents and whether there is a need to always communicate in English and the target language. In a dual immersion program, the project data shows that it is important for all communication within and from the school to be in both languages, with one language not being secondary to another. Also, in a Spanish dual immersion program, principals need to intentionally reach out to Hispanic parents to ensure they feel involved and welcome in the school. This can be done with various programs that involve parents, with the use of bilingual support staff, and through

the language skills of the principal, if possible. Again, if an immersion principal has not considered intentional relationship building with parents, especially with target language parents in a dual immersion program, the project data suggest that s/he needs to do so. The school leader could work with teacher leaders and parent representatives to help formulate a plan for improved communication and outreach, if necessary. Current principals of immersion programs who feel they already do this might want to conduct an analysis of how this is done in their school, in order to find gaps and work to address those, which would affect program improvement.

Lastly, it is apparent both from prior research and this project that the use of a shared leadership model, along with components of instructional leadership, is an important component of a successful immersion program. I included three leadership theories in the theoretical framework, as they could all be applicable in various types of schools, and thinking that I might find evidence of any or all of them in the project schools. However, both in the prior literature regarding leadership in immersion schools, limited though it was, and in the project interviews, shared leadership was the most evident model, with a few participants even calling it by name. Transformational leadership was not referred to either in descriptions of leadership style or by name, although this may be because this type of leadership would typically be useful in a low performing school that needs to undergo significant changes in order to improve. None of the three project schools fit that description. A few components of instructional leadership theory were apparent in the interviews, such as the need to build trust and provide time for teachers to collaborate. However, evidence of shared leadership was

more prevalent at all of the schools, as teachers felt a part of the decision-making process and there was intentional effort on the part of the principals to build teacher leaders and rely on teachers as professional experts at each school. Based on the interviews and prior research, it seems the best recommendation is to apply shared leadership theory, as well as facets of instructional leadership theory, in order to lead an immersion program effectively.

A topic that was evident in prior research and is a part of instructional leadership theory is vision and goal setting. However, it was not evident that priorities and goals had been made clear to stakeholders at the three project schools. As discussed in Chapter 4, all of the participants at a site did not report the same priorities the leader had for the school. This issue is not just about instructional leadership and the need for a common vision and goals in successful schools, but it also relates to the literature regarding critical pedagogy and social justice in dual immersion programs. If there are not specific, shared goals regarding equity, the status of the Spanish language, and Hispanic/Latino students, then it will be easy for dominant structures of White middle-class culture to have priority. Without a focus on sociocultural competence, as described by Howard et al., (2018), and the type of learning opportunities described by Alfaro and Hernández (2016), teachers may not have the knowledge and skills necessary to address issues of equity in dual immersion programs. Specific vision and goal setting is needed to set the ground work for operating from a strengths-based approach in working with English learners, students of color, and students with low socioeconomic status, rather than a deficit model, as is often the norm when cultural competence work has not been done. At two of the schools

principals stated that the program focus was for the benefit of the native Spanish speaking students, but there are many unanswered questions regarding how this focus is emphasized and how teachers are prepared to fully address issues of equity and social justice. This is in part because I did not ask the appropriate questions around this topic, but also evident in that these topics did not arise in most of the interviews. This may also be, in part, because there were few Latino/Hispanic participants interviewed.

The participants were all complimentary of their current principals in large part. When asked what principals do that might be detrimental to the immersion program, regardless of intentionality, the stakeholders had little to say that directly related to the principals' actions and attitudes. The only need for improvement that was expressed at two of the schools was a desire for clear communication from the principals at times. Their answers were more about typical challenges in immersion programs that are not really under the principals' control, such as the difficulty in finding qualified immersion teachers and the automatic turnover that occurs when using international teachers because their visas only allow them to stay for three to five years. However, some participants made comparisons to previous experiences with other leaders that spoke more to this question.

As discussed largely in Chapter 4, some of the teachers had worked with prior principals who they felt did not support or believe in the immersion program. They expressed frustration that the principals did not understand the program or how it was different from the traditional classroom. Resources in Spanish were not appropriately provided in some teachers' past experiences. One teacher did not feel respected by a

prior principal because she was not provided with opportunities for professional growth or leadership. The lack of understanding, belief, and support contributed to a negative culture and low teacher morale.

Additionally, one teacher reported that under a previous administration there was a feeling of segregation between the immersion and traditional strands in the school. At a prior school, the only bilingual staff were the immersion teachers. There were no support staff or other teachers who spoke Spanish. A parent said that a prior principal did not seem to welcome the diversity of the immersion program. These conditions created an atmosphere of separation, rather than positive community building as the current situation was described.

Much of this information seems like common sense and might be obvious to many readers. However, these findings are not always put into practice. Principals can be hired at schools with immersion programs without consideration of whether they understand or support the program. Principals who do not have prior experience with or knowledge of immersion programs often do not understand the unique needs of the program with regard to curriculum and pedagogy. They think that the immersion classroom is identical to a traditional classroom, except that part of the day the teacher is speaking in another language, but the reality is not so simplistic. A program cannot be sustained successfully with this kind of attitude from the leadership. The principal has to understand the differences in immersion and traditional programs, and what that means for decisions regarding staffing, professional development, resource allocation, instruction, and assessment. Once a leader gains this knowledge and understanding, then

s/he can become the kind of advocate for the program that is necessary, as evidenced in the interviews.

Other lessons learned from this project, that again may seem obvious to some, but are not always found in practice, are the need to build a positive culture, and provide specific program and teacher support in order to have a successful program. Additionally, the principal needs to intentionally establish relationships with parents, especially with target language speaking parents in a dual immersion program. If a principal is not bilingual, s/he may feel uncomfortable in this role and will need to have other staff that can help in this area, as discussed by Sarah at Apple. Lastly, it is apparent that the leadership style the principal employs affects the success of an immersion program. Shared leadership, along with instructional leadership, appears to be an effective combination based on the project interviews.

Limitations

This study was not exhaustive and has limitations. The number of schools included was small, they all had the same program design, and all were Spanish programs. The number and variety of people interviewed was also limited, few participants identified as Latino/a or Hispanic. Also, I did not investigate issues of cultural competence and social justice as they relate to dual immersion programs. Lastly, all of the participating programs were in the same state.

This project was a case study involving three schools with immersion programs. The schools were similar in program design and all were Spanish/English dual

immersion. Though one school was slightly different from the other two in that its program was a strand within a school, rather than a whole school program, in other ways the schools were similar. It would be interesting to see if nuances would arise in studying different program models and programs of different languages, such as Chinese. I attempted to include more than three schools with different program designs in the project, but was not able to due to a district's and a principal's lack of willingness to participate.

Simply due to feasibility and time commitments, I interviewed two teachers and two parents at each school, in addition to the administrators. While several participants were bilingual, most of them were native English speakers. All of the principals were native English speaking women. Only one parent and one teacher were native Spanish speakers. It is possible that other viewpoints could have been gained by interviewing a broader range of parents and teachers at each school, including more native Spanish speakers since these were all dual immersion programs.

Though I discuss issues of critical pedagogy as they relate to immersion programs in the literature review, I added that after conducting the initial data analysis and discussions with my advisor. Regretfully, this was not a consideration originally and therefore I did not ask questions to explore these issues in the project schools. With the increase in dual immersion programs, especially Spanish/English programs, the focus and intent of the programs is an important facet to investigate. Upon reflection, I would like to have used a more critical lens and addressed this specifically. As it is, I can only make

inferences based upon what participants said and didn't say, and acknowledge that there is a lack of information to provide the basis for strong inferences.

Again due to feasibility for face-to-face interviews, all of the participating schools were in North Carolina. With programs growing rapidly in other states as well, a broader project including schools in multiple states could produce results that did not arise in studying these three schools. As previously stated, programs in NC are not directed by the Department of Public Instruction, while in other states such as Utah and Delaware, the state defines and guides the program model, resources, and professional development for teachers and leaders. Including schools from states with a such a model could produce slightly different results or nuances in the data that did not arise in this study.

A broader project could address the limitations in this study. That would include having more schools in the study, as well as schools with different program models and from different states. To further address the limitations in this study, seeking to identify program components of social justice, interviewing more stakeholders, and striving for a balance of native English and target language speakers, would also be beneficial.

Future Research

Given the limitations of this study, the limited prior research, and the rapid growth of immersion programs across the country, there is much more to be explored. It would be important to further explore the social justice implications of the programs' goals and foci, including the potential benefits of cultural competence training for staff. Additionally, it would be beneficial to do a more extensive study, incorporating programs

with different models and languages. More specific recommendations might be made from studying programs with alphabetic languages, such as Spanish and French, which have obvious connections to English, and comparing those with logographic program languages, such as Chinese or Japanese, which do not have the same literacy connections to English. Also, a broader study that includes more participants, including a balanced representation of native English and Spanish speakers, from individual schools could also be more informative.

Cultural Competence and Social Justice

Professional development was an important component for the success of the project schools, as previously discussed. It is noteworthy that while participants discussed the need for differentiated PD for international teachers with regard to orienting them to the culture of U.S. schools, none of the participants talked about any PD regarding the students' culture for any teachers. In dual immersion programs, the student population is diverse, with half native English speakers and half native speakers of the target language (in this case, Spanish). The Spanish speaking students may come from a variety of countries, some being first generation, having been born in the target country, and others are second and third generation, having been born in the U.S. to families from target language countries. This creates great cultural diversity in the dual immersion classroom and raises the question whether there should be professional development for all teachers regarding the various cultures their students represent. Just because a teacher is a native Spanish speaker does not mean s/he shares the same cultural norms as a

Spanish speaking student, as cultural practices among the Spanish speaking countries can differ widely. Likewise, do native English speaking teachers need to learn more about the cultures of their students, regardless of whether the teacher is bilingual? Future research regarding this topic could be extremely informative for PD practices in dual immersion programs in particular.

As previously stated, I did not appropriately consider social justice implications as a part of the project until after the initial data analysis, although there is research that relates to these issues in dual or two-way immersion programs. Sarah, at Apple, spoke the most about issues of cultural competence and showed a great deal of reflection regarding her positionality as a White, monolingual woman within the context of the dual immersion program and a large population of Hispanic families, with cultures different from her own. The other principals did not specifically discuss this, but again, I did not ask such questions. In conducting further analysis, I found that there were some references to the focus of the programs and issues of language equity, but I did not explore these during data collection and future research could add greatly to this field.

At Apple and Cherry, the principals noted that their programs were for ESL students. Sarah stated that “Our program is for all kids to become bilingual, biliterate and develop cross cultural competence. The program is primarily for English Learners and students for whom we are trying to close the achievement gap. Since our enrollment is 50-50 Spanish-English speakers, there are secondary benefits for English speakers.” She also said that the Apple program is “meeting the needs of both English speakers and Spanish speakers, but they’re two very different needs.” Rather than being the

“boutique” program for White English speakers that Flores and García (2017) describe, by the principal’s statement the Apple program intends to benefit students who typically do not succeed in English-only environments, as described by Scanlan and Palmer (2009). This message seems to be understood by the teachers, as Anna said that “the program is designed around [children learning English]...it’s not designed around children who are native English speakers.” She said this design is so that the English Learners “can achieve at higher levels than they would otherwise if they were not in a dual language program.” She referred only to increased achievement, not to a concept of elevating the Spanish language status. However, Vicki, the assistant principal at Apple, did refer to this concept. She said that one of her main roles was to “[elevate] Spanish,” which she noted might seem ironic since she is a native English speaker. She felt that she was a model for being “bicultural, bilingual, White, [and] biliterate” and that she always tries to approach issues “from a non-dominant culture perspective.” She felt able to do this because of her own personal experiences in her bilingual and bicultural family, as her husband is a native Spanish speaker.

Betsy, at Cherry, actually referred a bit to this issue of not allowing the benefits for English speakers to dominate the program focus, saying “our program is really designed for our ESL students and sometimes I think people can forget that because it becomes so much about the English students...learning Spanish.” She went on to say that they have to focus “and remember the purpose of our program is really about our ESL students.” Like at Apple, it seemed that teachers understood this focus. Charlotte said that practices in the school “send a message” with the intent to “elevate...the status of

Spanish.” She gave examples of having signs in the school that have Spanish on top and English on the bottom, rather than English always being first and establishing parent groups “specifically about Latino issues” with Spanish speaking social workers. It is apparent that there is awareness of the need for intentionality in ensuring that English is not seen as the dominant or preferred language, nor is the focus on the idea of preparing native English speakers for the global economy, as Valdez et al., (2016) found with the Utah program policies. However, in talking about the PD offerings at the school, nothing was mentioned regarding training for staff on the students’ culture or the kind of cultural competence training that Alfaro and Hernández (2016) recommend. Again, I did not specifically ask about such learning opportunities, but the absence of such a topic in the discussion may be significant.

This topic of program focus as it relates to social justice did not come up at Orange in any way. The program model is the same there as the other two schools, with half native Spanish Speakers and half native English speakers. While there was much discussion from several participants about the communication always being in both languages, events such as parent nights being presented in both languages, and intentional outreach to Spanish speaking parents at Orange, there was no mention of a focus for the program on one population or the other as occurred at Cherry and Apple. As previously stated, I did not ask specific questions about this in the initial interviews, so I cannot draw well informed conclusions. However, like at the other two schools, the absence of any participants discussing PD regarding cultural competence or related topics may send an important message.

The issues of program focus, critical pedagogy, and cultural competence are all relevant for current dual immersion programs. Future research in this area would be beneficial for stakeholders in these programs specifically, especially since the student populations in two-way programs are typically very diverse by design. Much could be learned from future research in this area regarding vision and goal setting, needs for PD and resources, and many practices and policies in dual immersion programs.

Other Topics for Future Research

In this study there were some differences that arose for Betsy, as the leader of an immersion program within a school with traditional classes, in comparison to Sarah and Ashley as leaders of whole school immersion models. Future research should examine these differences further in order to differentiate for principals the kinds of considerations needed in both kinds of programs. Many immersion programs are small strands within a traditional school, which can be very different from having a whole school that is immersion. These differences were alluded to somewhat in the principal interviews, but could be expanded upon greatly.

In addition, the interview results regarding whether principals of immersion programs need to be bilingual are somewhat surprising, even though they are similar to what Rocque et al., (2016) found in their study. This outcome could be related to having mostly native English speaking participants, even though many were bilingual. It would be beneficial to see if a broader study, including a more balanced participant population with more native Spanish speakers, would garner different results regarding whether the

principal needs to be bilingual. It could be beneficial to further study this aspect of immersion leadership. This type of future study could help to determine significant benefits of the leader being bilingual, as well as ways in which a lack of language skills could be unintentionally detrimental to the programs' success. Some of this was included in the interview data of this study, but with such a skill that would be unique to this type of program, it would be valuable to learn more about this aspect of leadership.

Conclusion

I began this project in large part because of my own professional and personal experiences with immersion programs, as I discussed in the first chapter. Based on those experiences, I went into the project feeling that I knew some components of effective immersion leadership, as well actions and attitudes that were detrimental to the program. I wanted to find out if there was evidence for my assumptions by studying programs in other areas, as well as learn from successful immersion leaders in order to share those experiences with others. I was validated in some of my thinking, but also learned a great deal about other leadership components that I had not previously considered. Throughout the research process, I became more aware of strengths and weaknesses of my own district's programs and the data began to influence my work with these programs.

For example, I knew that the principal's belief in and commitment to the immersion program model were key to a program's success, based on my own experiences. I have experienced work with both kinds of principals; ones who believe in the immersion program and ones who do not. Through my work, I have seen immersion

programs thrive under the leadership of a principal who believes in the program. I also know of a program that was extremely adversely affected by a prior principal did not believe and was not committed to the model; that program has not yet fully recovered from that leadership. The interview data and prior research substantiated my understanding of the need for a school leader who is fully committed to the program.

There were other components of effective immersion leadership that I had not thoroughly considered prior to this research. Though one might say that parent involvement is important in any school, I had not thought about how important it can be to have intentional outreach to parents as a part of a successful immersion program, especially with regard to the relationship building with target language parents in a dual, or two-way, immersion program. This intentionality of relationship building with parents that was apparent in the interview data was not something I would have named as one of the most important components of immersion leadership prior to this research, but it seems there are lessons to be learned in that area from the project participants.

Additionally, providing program support through the hiring of other bilingual staff was a component of these successful programs that I had not fully considered in the past. All of the programs with which I work directly are programs within a larger school, so generally school staff other than the immersion teachers are monolingual, with a few exceptions for bilingual personnel in the school's front office. That has been somewhat of an accepted norm for the schools, with the thinking that all services other than the direct classroom instruction have to be provided in English because that is the only thing available. While I have wished for other bilingual staff in the past, at times it seems hard

enough to find qualified, bilingual teachers for the immersion classrooms, so it seems it would be almost impossible to find bilingual staff for other certified positions. However, the schools in this study have shown that it is possible to hire bilingual staff in many other roles so that services can be provided to students and parents in whichever language is needed, rather than being limited to English. This was true for the whole school program models as well as at Cherry where they have the immersion program along with a traditional program. Again, this is a component from which others can learn and can help to contribute to the success of the immersion program.

In conducting this research, I found that I was learning a great deal from the interviews to help the programs in my own district with which I work. Conducting the interviews helped me to examine practices in my own district with regard to professional development for bilingual program principals and helping to build their knowledge base in the way described as necessary by the project participants. While a colleague and I work with principals of bilingual programs, both two-way and one-way immersion, there has never been specific training for the leaders and most have not attended national conferences or CAL institutes on their own. As a result, while we have district program models and guidelines in place, there is also a great deal of site-based decision making that occurs, and school leaders don't always have the background knowledge needed in order to make decisions through the lens of the bilingual program. While reflecting on the interview data, I was persuaded that my district had to do a better job of support for these school leaders and as a result, there will be a CAL Leadership Institute in the district at the end of the school year for principals, assistant principals, and instructional

facilitators in the schools with immersion programs. We have provided various professional development opportunities for the immersion teachers in the past, both with expert consultants coming to the district and teachers going to conferences, but we have not previously focused on training for principals. This research convinced me that we have to provide better support to school leaders in order to help them manage the immersion programs successfully, and the district is now taking specific steps to do so.

Additionally, I am also considering what more we need to do in the areas of defining focus, determining specific goals, and addressing issues of cultural competence and social justice in my district's immersion programs. The stated goal for both our one-way and two-way programs is that all students become bilingual and biliterate. However, I'm not sure that principals or teachers in the dual programs would say that the focus is on elevating the status of Spanish to be equitable with that of English, or the status of Spanish speaking students. Regrettably, I've simply never asked the question. Likewise, while the district does have a multicultural education department (of one person) which offers cultural competence training, I have never talked with immersion principals about this kind of PD for teachers, nor worked with the director of that office to facilitate such work for the immersion school staff. After asking about this, I found out that one of the immersion schools in the district has participated in cultural competence training, but the others have not. These are conversations that, to my knowledge, have not previously taken place specifically regarding the dual immersion programs. I am now reflecting on this and considering what the next steps need to be for the immersion schools and administrators in the district.

It is evident that leadership is a vital component to the success of an immersion program. Anna described Sarah at Apple, saying “we need more of this type of leadership that will actually make a difference.” The principal can be the driver for success in many ways. Vicki, the assistant principal at Apple summed this up well, saying of Betsy that “I feel like leadership...is truly a big key to all of it. None of this would be here without her.” While I have worked with immersion programs for over twelve years and have learned a great deal in that time, there is always more to learn and ways to grow. My hope is that the results of this research will be used to inform immersion leadership practices for school and district leaders in a variety of program models. In addition, because this research is limited by scope and lack of strong representation of native Spanish speakers among the participants, I hope that more research is conducted to continue to uncover ways principals can best support immersion programs.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDES

Teacher Interviews

1. How long have you taught in elementary language immersion programs?
2. What grade levels have you taught?
3. Other than your current school, where else have you taught in immersion programs?
4. How would you describe your current principal's leadership style?
5. What would you say are his/her top 5 priorities for the school?
6. What do your school administrators do to support the immersion program? Do you perceive these behaviors to be intentional and why?
7. What do your school administrators do that is not supportive of the immersion program? Do you perceive these behaviors to be intentional and why?
8. What do you think are the most important practices and behaviors of school administrators when it comes to supporting immersion programs?
9. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding how the principal or other administrators work with parents, students, and teachers?

Principal Interviews

1. How long have you been an administrator of an elementary language immersion program?

2. Other than your current school, in what other immersion programs have you had a leadership role?
3. Did you receive any specific training or professional development when you began as an immersion administrator? If so, please describe it.
4. What would you say are your top 5 priorities for the school?
5. How would you describe your leadership style?
6. Does the immersion program require different leadership skills than a traditional monolingual program? Why or why not?
7. What do you do that specifically supports the immersion program?
8. Are there decisions you feel you have to make that may not be in the best interest of the immersion program? Please explain.

Assistant Principal Interviews

1. How long have you been an administrator of an elementary language immersion program?
2. Other than your current school, in what other immersion programs have you had a leadership role?
3. Did you receive any specific training or professional development when you began as an immersion administrator? If so, please describe it.
4. How would you describe the principal's leadership style?
5. What would you say are his/her top 5 priorities for the school?
6. What do you do to support the immersion program?

7. Are there decisions you have to make as administrators that may not be in the best interest of the immersion program? Please explain.
8. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding how you and the principal work with parents, students, and teachers?

Parent Interviews

1. How long have you had children in the immersion program?
2. How many children do you have in the program?
3. Why did you choose the immersion program for your child(ren)?
4. How would you describe the principal's leadership style?
5. What would you say are his/her top 5 priorities for the school?
6. What does s/he do to support the immersion program?
7. What does s/he do that is not supportive of the program?
8. What else do you think administrators could do to support the program, if anything?
9. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding how the administrators work with parents, students, and teachers?