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Parent attitudes, involvement, and satisfaction with two-way immersion programs

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PARENT ATTITUDES, INVOLVEMENT, AND SATISFACTION
WITH TWO-WAY IMMERSION PROGRAMS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Child Development

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Gary F. Cava

December 1998

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ABSTRACT

PARENT ATTITUDES, INVOLVEMENT, AND SATISFACTION WITH TWO-WAY IMMERSION PROGRAMS

by Gary F. Cava

This study investigated parents' attitudes, involvement, and satisfaction with their child's education in a two-way language immersion program. A total of 101 parents completed a questionnaire assessing the motivation for enrolling the child, involvement practices in and out of the classroom, and satisfaction with curricular and administrative aspects of the program. Findings showed some important differences between Euro-American English-only or bilingual speakers, Hispanic Spanish speakers, and Hispanic English-only or bilingual speakers in motivation for enrollment, involvement activities, and satisfaction with development of Spanish communication skills and English reading and writing skills. Differences in these factors also occurred based on parents' educational level. No differences were found based on the child's grade level. Suggestions for further study included investigation of Hispanic parents' concerns with development of Spanish communication skills, child's grade level differences in parent involvement activities, and longitudinal assessment of the children's development of bilingualism and biliteracy.

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This thesis is dedicated to the children who have endured my vigilant but caring observation of their childhood: A. J., Nic, & James; Alex & Olivia; Eleanor; Emily & Christopher; Jack, Thomas & Elisabeth; Kendra & Nils; Kristen & Tessa; Kyle & Jack; Peter, Jeffrey, & Jennifer; Timothy; Will, Catherine, & Brendan. Live long and prosper.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The last quarter of the 20th century has been marked by two interrelated phenomena: the “globalization” of the American economy and increased immigration to the United States from both Western and Eastern hemisphere countries. These events have challenged the public educational system to devise instructional methods which prepare all children for the cultural and linguistic diversity which has become increasingly characteristic of both urban and rural society within the United States. One aspect of this challenge has been the area of second language learning.

The particular challenge of second language education can be approached from two perspectives. First, immigrant children and their families from non-English speaking countries should acquire the linguistic tools of the majority language necessary to participate fully in the educational and economic advantages of their adopted country. Second, native English-speaking children should be given opportunities to develop linguistic skills in languages which are important to the economic and scientific interests of the United States’ economy. Each of these perspectives toward second language education have provided the bases for a variety of language programs within the public educational system.

The current study utilized three examples of a language program that has been designed to unify these two perspectives. Referred to as two-way or dual language

immersion programs within the literature, these programs are typified by the combination of native and non-native speakers of the target language (e. g., Spanish). Implementation of these programs has increased during the last two decades in an attempt to provide both majority and minority language speakers an opportunity to experience a linguistically and culturally diverse education.

A second aspect of the challenge facing public education (i. e., to prepare all students for the cultural and linguistic diversity of society) is the involvement of parents with their child's educational program. The literature investigating parental involvement shows that children's academic and language learning success is enhanced by the parents' positive attitudes and involvement with the learning processes (Comer & Haynes, 1991; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Hidalgo, Siu, Bright, Swap, & Epstein, 1995). Facilitating parent involvement can be particularly challenging when an educational district has a high population of culturally and linguistically diverse families. The educational and cultural background of immigrant parents may contrast with the expectations and methods of teachers and administrators. Linguistic barriers may preclude parents' efforts to assist their children with school work. How these two challenges of children's second language learning and parent involvement with their child's education are being addressed provided the basis for this study.

Purpose, Research Questions, and Hypotheses of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the attitudes, involvement, and satisfaction that parents expressed about their child's two-way (Spanish/English)

language immersion program. The investigation was conducted to increase the understanding of the dynamics between parents and school personnel within the context of a two-way immersion program. The following research questions and hypotheses guided the study.

1) What are the reasons expressed by parents for enrolling their children in two-way immersion programs? Do these reasons vary according to parent and child background variables (i.e., Euro-American English-only or bilingual speakers, Hispanic Spanish-only speakers, or Hispanic English-only or bilingual speakers; elementary-, high school-, or college-educated parents; and kindergarten/first-, second-/third-, or fourth-/fifth-grade level of their child)?

Based on findings of Lindholm and Cava (1997), it was hypothesized that Hispanic parents would show more integrative reasons (i. e., social integration or identification as a bicultural individual) for enrolling their child in the language immersion program while Euro-American parents would express equal amounts of integrative and instrumental reasons (i. e., educational or economic requirements).

2) In what ways are parents involved with the school program? Does parent involvement with the program vary with the child's grade level or the parents' ethno-linguistic and educational backgrounds? It was hypothesized that Hispanic parents would show high levels of involvement with their child's education (Moles, 1993) and that parents with higher levels of education would be more likely than those parents with

lower levels of schooling to become involved in a variety of activities (Hidalgo, et al., 1995).

3) Do parents believe they have the necessary academic and language skills to assist their child in the language immersion classroom? Do these beliefs differ according to the ethno-linguistic, educational, or child's grade level variables?

The foundational constructs (why and how parents become involved) of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) model of parent involvement theorized that parents with a greater sense of efficacy to assist their child with school work would be more likely to make the decision to become involved with their child's education. The parent's perception of the child's or school's invitations to become involved would also affect the participation decision.

The current study hypothesized that parents who showed high levels of involvement would perceive themselves as capable of assisting their child. They would also perceive a positive attitude on the part of the school program to foster parent involvement. The type of activities in which parents became involved would depend on the competing demands of employment and familial responsibilities.

4) Do parents differ in their satisfaction with the classroom or administrative aspects of the language immersion program according to the background variables?

5) Are parents involved in activities outside of the classroom which facilitate their child's second-language learning (i. e., obtaining and reading second language material, visits between Spanish- and English-speaking children)? How frequently do these

activities occur? Based on Gardner's (1985) model of second language learning motivations, it was hypothesized that parents with an integrative motivation (social communication, identification as a bicultural individual) would be more likely to foster language learning activities outside of the school program.

Background of the Study

Educational settings. Within the public education system second language learning programs in elementary and secondary grades are constructed as foreign language programs, English as a second language programs, or bilingual education programs (Campbell, Gray, Rhodes, & Snow, 1985; Gersten & Woodward, 1995; Johnson, 1992). Among the factors determining the type of program to be utilized is the target population. Students whose primary language is the dominant language of instruction (i. e., English speakers in the United States) generally acquire a second language through foreign language programs. These programs can be structured in a variety of ways depending on the goal of the program (Curtain & Pesola, 1988). Foreign languages in elementary schools (FLES) programs attempt to increase oral and listening skills with comprehension of the target language's structure. These programs are usually conducted in the dominant language (Campbell, et al., 1985) and offered in later elementary grades.

With the passage of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 (latest renewal, 1994; also known as Title VII), programs have been established to provide children from non-English-speaking backgrounds with instruction in their native language. Further

strengthened by the Supreme Court decision in *Lau vs. Nichols* in 1974 (non-English speakers were to be guaranteed equal educational access under the Civil Rights Act of 1964), these programs have become well-established throughout the United States (Grosjean, 1982). The variety and ubiquity of these programs have only heightened the controversy that surrounded their establishment (Cummins, 1991; Hakuta, 1990).

Bilingual education programs are directed toward students acquiring linguistic proficiency in the dominant language (English) with the use of the students' primary language (e. g., Spanish) as an educational content vehicle. Emphasis is traditionally placed on transitioning the student to content instruction in the dominant language. This transition may occur as early-exit (placement in a mainstream classroom within one to three years) or late-exit (placement after more than three years).

Where the target language is the dominant language and replaces the speaker's native language, researchers have referred to the language learning process as submersion (Baker, 1988; Lambert, 1992; Lindholm, 1991; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988). These types of programs are usually found where language shift and linguistic assimilation are the stated or underlying reasons for second language learning (Ramirez, 1985). The use of a submersion program is a subtractive process of language education distinct from an additive process where the student's linguistic capabilities in both languages are increased (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988; Thomas & Collier, 1997).

Theoretical bases of language learning. Hakuta (1990) has presented several conclusions which can be deduced from the research in the areas of second language

learning, bilingualism and cognitive development, and the cross-language transfer of skills. The native language and the second language are not mutually exclusive.

Proficiency in the first language is a major predictor in the rapidity with which the second language is developed; a strong foundation in the first language will facilitate acquisition of the second language.

There is minimal influence by the native language on the patterns of second language acquisition. Language proficiency consists of a variety of skills which are not necessarily correlated. Attainment of age appropriate levels of performance may take 4-7 years. Age of the learner may constrain the acquisition of phonological and syntactic aspects of a second language, but not its academic functions. Affective factors (motivation and attitude) may be greater predictors of native language maintenance rather than proficiency in learning the second language (Hakuta, 1990).

In the area of cognitive development, bilingualism has been associated with greater cognitive flexibility and metalinguistic awareness. In addition, skills have been shown to transfer across languages globally rather than piece by piece. The skill of translation in bilingual children has demonstrated that transfer occurs regardless of content (Hakuta, 1990).

In a study of the beliefs and practices of teachers of English as a second language, Johnson (1992) discussed the theoretical explanations of how languages are learned and how these explanations have provided the bases of second-language teaching methodologies and programs. Empiricist-based programs utilize the skills of

memorization, repetition, and mimicry. Through drill and practice the language components of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are developed. Learning a language becomes the development of proper phonological and pragmatic habits through behavioral and conditioned responses.

A second theoretical explanation considered language learning to be innate, with rule-governed structures providing a means for comprehensible communication. Emphasis on structure comprehension and the interrelatedness of language components provides the focus of rationalist-based language teaching methods.

Programs where emphasis is on the functional use of language within meaningful and relevant contexts draw upon the communicative explanation for language learning. Structural form holds less importance than understandable communication. The necessity for participation and interaction within the social context provides the rationale and motivation for individual language learning.

Second language learning programs. Language education programs for children learning English as their second language differ in their theoretical bases, methodologies, and practical implementations. The programs developed since enactment of the Bilingual Education Act have been distinguished by their varying approaches to language learning in general; to the role of the primary language; and to the process of introducing English for instructional purposes. The major programs which have been developed include ESL or English as a Second Language, where English is taught with minimal reliance on or integration of the primary language; bilingual programs, which utilize primary language

academic enrichment (sheltered English, bilingual immersion, one-way immersion) and diversification programs, i. e., immersion programs within magnet schools and two-way immersion programs (Escamilla & Medina, 1993; Genesee, 1985; Gersten & Woodward, 1995; Johnson, 1992).

Many of the bilingual education programs are guided by the premise that the student is in a transitional language situation. Instruction in the native language is provided while the student acquires the necessary English skills for academic work. The majority of programs are conducted in Spanish, although, depending on the demographics of an area, there may be any of a number of Asiatic or European languages used for instruction. The goal is to have the student enter a classroom where English is the sole language of instruction. The difference among these types of programs is usually that of early or late exit for the student. Some districts may stipulate that the student will enter an English-only classroom after three years; others may allow 5-6 years before transitioning out of a native-language program.

Evaluation of children in these programs must consider the problem of premature transfer. The presence of prematurely-transferred students in English-only classrooms may lead to a lowering of grade content material, commonly referred to as "dumbing down." Students may not be challenged to develop higher level cognitive skills. Lack of comprehensible input for the student will lead to dissonance in the teacher-instruction and student-understanding relationship. Premature transfer also reduces the use of the primary language in the home and community (Gersten & Woodward, 1995).

Research has shown that proficiency in a second language is facilitated by a strong foundation in the first language (Cummins, 1992; Hakuta, 1986, 1987, 1990; Snow, 1990; Thomas & Collier, 1997). Cummins (1992) reported that “[f]irst language support at preschool and elementary levels, even to the extent of predominately first language instruction throughout the grades, does not seem to impede the acquisition of conversational or academic skills in the majority language” (p. 65). Collier (1995) stated that “[a]cademic skills, literacy development, concept formation, subject knowledge, and learning strategies developed in the first language will all transfer to the second language” (p. 3). Students schooled in appropriate bilingual programs which develop academic skills in the first language will take 4-7 years to reach and sustain academic proficiency in the second language. Students lacking appropriate native language instruction may perform adequately in the primary grades but show reduced academic achievement as they enter middle and high school grade levels (Collier, 1995).

Gersten and Woodward (1995), in the introduction to a longitudinal study of transitional and bilingual immersion programs, presented two central questions used for investigating bilingual education: how and when to introduce English-language instruction. Bilingual programs’ responses relied on maintaining the child’s primary language through content instruction in the first language. English language was introduced gradually. Primary language instruction continued “. . . until students (a) demonstrate an adequate grasp of English, thus enabling them to succeed in classes with English-language academic instruction, and (b) exhibit competence in academic areas in

their native language" (p. 225-226). Mastery of content area in the first language was a goal of maintenance programs. As the authors mentioned, "[t]ransitional bilingual education is widely implemented in communities with large numbers of Latino students . . ." (p. 226).

The variability of the types of bilingual programs was exhibited in a study conducted by Escamilla and Medina (1993). This study of 187 kindergarten and second-grade limited English proficient children used data from 24 schools in a similar-sized district as the Gersten and Woodward (1995) study. Guidelines for language-allocation use were as follows: 80% Spanish, 20% English during kindergarten; 75% and 25% in first grade; 60% and 40% during second grade. All content areas were presented in Spanish. No mention was made of when children were transitioned to all-English instruction or whether dual language use continued in the upper grades. The similarity of the programs in the Gersten and Woodward (1995) study and the Escamilla and Medina (1993) study lay in their initial use of the primary language for instruction. However, the goal of all English instruction limited the possibilities for balanced bilingualism among the children.

As "... an innovative but controversial alternative to transitional bilingual education . . ." (Gersten & Woodward, 1995, p. 226), school districts with a variety of language groups began to implement a form of immersion or sheltered English program during the 1980's. These programs were designed to foster rapid English acquisition. Early models were established on the concept of systematic introduction of the English

language through academic instruction of math, reading, and language arts. Greater exposure to the language would result in increased academic interactions as well as increasing peer conversation.

Although initial programs did not foster primary language development, later modifications included a component of first language usage for “. . . conceptual development, clarification, and cultural identity” (Gersten & Woodward, 1995, p. 228). This approach increased the additive aspect of language use. The bilingual immersion program described in Gersten and Woodward’s (1995) study resulted from a need to “. . . capitalize on students’ burgeoning knowledge of the English language” (p. 228). Strategies for oral and literacy opportunities to use English were implemented. Guided and semi-structured discussions of common readings or activities allowed meaningful expression through English.

The immersion approach has also been used in programs designed for language enrichment where language majority students are taught academic content in a second language. These programs are described as one-way immersion in that native speakers of the target language are not generally participants in the programs. Genesee (1985), in a review of Canadian and United States immersion programs, stated

[i]t is not the mere use of the second language for academic instruction that characterizes immersion. . . . Immersion is a communicative approach that reflects the essential conditions of first language learning and at the same time responds to the special needs of second language learners. (p. 543)

The methodology of these programs is demonstrated through the teacher and student utilizing strategies for the negotiation of meaning. Both comprehensible verbal messages and non-verbal aspects of the language events lead the student to an understanding and awareness of the proper use of the language. Although long-term education in this type of language program does not seem to foster native-like mastery in certain phonological and syntactical structures, functional use of the second language has been achieved (Genesee, 1985; Lambert & Tucker, 1972).

An attempt to combine the student populations served by bilingual and immersion programs has resulted in the establishment of two-way immersion programs. As this type of program was the focus of the current study, an elaboration of the two-way immersion program's theoretical bases and methods is presented in the next section.

Two-way language immersion programs. During the last 30 years two-way immersion programs have been implemented in several public school districts throughout the United States. Although the first program was established in 1963 at the Coral Way Elementary School in Miami, Florida for the immigrant Cuban population, it was not until the 1980's that similar programs were implemented within other districts. As of 1995, the last year for which statistics are available, there were 169 schools in 92 districts implementing this type of program (Christian, 1996). California and New York, with 57 and 50 schools, respectively, have the majority of sites. The Spanish/English format is the predominant method with 155 schools basing their program on these two languages. Other languages used include Cantonese (4), Korean (3), Navajo (2), Japanese (2), and

Russian, Portuguese, and French (one school each). The number of Spanish/English programs underscores the large Spanish-speaking population within the public educational system.

These programs differ from transitional bilingual programs and English-as-a-second-language programs in that the native language is maintained throughout the program. As such, the programs are additive in that proficiency in both languages is the goal for all students. Native speakers of both languages are combined for academic instruction in the target language (Spanish). Although schools may differ in structural format all programs are guided by three basic assumptions:

- (a) High levels of proficiency in the two languages will facilitate cognitive processing;
- (b) there are two types of language proficiency, academic and communicative, and the extent to which one is proficient in these two types may vary; and
- (c) there is transfer of content across languages. (Lindholm, 1991, p. 3)

In a study of second- and third-grade children in a program with 83% native Spanish speakers and 17% native English speakers, Lindholm (1991) empirically validated these assumptions. The implications of her study suggested an allowance of sufficient time for development of academic and conversational skills, a finding confirmed by Collier (1995).

The structural format of these programs may differ by school. Dependent upon the availability of resources, successful programs can be established based on a set of criteria developed to facilitate bilingual proficiency among students. These programs

should be designed for a minimum of 4 to 6 years of instruction. They should contain the same academic content as non-immersion programs. Opportunities for appropriate language input and output (interesting, comprehensible, and of sufficient quantity) should be provided. The non-English language should be used for instruction a minimum of 50% of the class time (90% during the primary grades, K-2). Programs should be additive, developing proficiency in both languages. A balance in the percentage of native speakers of each language (50% from each language group, optimal) should be established. Positive interactions between students should be fostered. Qualified personnel should be employed and home-school interaction encouraged (Christian, 1996; Lindholm, 1990a).

The variety in the classroom populations and in the amount of content language instruction is exemplified by the following studies. In an evaluative study of immersion programs, Genesee (1985) referred to a K-3 program with 60% Spanish speakers and 40% English speakers. By second and third grades students received one hour a day instruction in English. Schauber (1995) reviewed a program which had English instruction 20% of the day during kindergarten, 35% of the day during first grade, and 50% of the day by second and third grades. Fourth and fifth grades were taught 60% of the time in English. In fourth grade (during the 1993-94 school year) 65% of the students were Spanish speakers, 35% were English speakers.

Lindholm (1990b) evaluated a kindergarten and first grade program wherein Spanish was utilized during 90% of classroom instruction time with English used for 10%

of classroom instruction. In the kindergarten classes the percentages for native Spanish-speaking, native English-speaking, and Spanish-English bilinguals were 62%, 31%, and 7%, respectively. The first grade was composed of 69% native Spanish speakers, 13% native English speakers, and 18% Spanish-English bilinguals. This diversity of language grouping and the amount of instructional time allocated to each language can be problematic for comparative studies between programs.

Among the criteria for successful programs listed above is the formation of positive attitudes among the students. Griego-Jones (1994), in a qualitative study originally designed to document kindergarten children's beginning writing skills, emphasized the need to consider children's attitudes and understanding about the functions of language. Her research during the beginning year of a two-way immersion program showed that Spanish dominant children preferred to use English in speech and writing. She interpreted this attitudinal bias on the part of the children as a result of their implicit understanding of the relative status of each language. Her study emphasized that a successful immersion program should recognize that "[s]tudents must be understood in terms of attitude as well as cognitive and linguistic processes in order to maximize biliteracy development . . ." (p. 80).

Lindholm (1994) discussed four concepts which can improve positive attitudes between majority and minority groups of students: 1) each group must have equal status within the classroom; 2) common objectives should be achieved through working interdependently; 3) opportunities for interaction on an individual basis should be made

available; 4) and positive contacts among students should be supported by teachers and parents. Successful two-way immersion programs provide situations in which these concepts are implemented.

To assess the inter-group attitudes and self-perceived social and academic competence of third- and fourth-grade children in a two-way program, Lindholm (1994) administered a series of rating instruments to 148 native Spanish speakers and 29 native English speakers. The results showed that “. . . the children, regardless of their language background (English or Spanish), scored moderately high to high in academic competence, social competence. . . and cross-cultural attitudes” (p. 204). Overall, the study found that positive perceptions of self-competence among both groups of students were displayed in an additive bilingual environment.

Summary

The background on current educational programs for second language learners demonstrated the variety of methods implemented in elementary school settings for both majority and minority language students. The review was designed to show how the challenge of providing second language experiences for both groups of students has been met. Special emphasis was placed on two-way language immersion programs. This type of program provides language majority students with increased opportunities to develop second-language proficiency. Language minority students are provided an opportunity to maintain their primary language while increasing their skills in the majority language.

The settings for the current study were three separate school sites implementing two-way immersion programs. The variables for the study focused on the second aspect of the challenge to public education, parental involvement with the child's educational program. The literature on parent involvement is reviewed in the following chapter.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Parent Involvement

The importance of parent involvement to their children's educational achievement has been affirmed in the research literature. Levine and Lezotte (1995) have reported that high levels of parental involvement are characteristic of effective schools and "... that effectiveness is positively associated with involvement" (p. 530). Comer and Haynes (1991) have shown that parent involvement with their child's education is an essential component to effective school programs. Within a multicultural perspective, Hidalgo, et al. (1995) have reported that parental support and encouragement of educational efforts result in children's increased academic achievement. Cummins (1989) has pointed out that when educators encourage minority parents to become partners in their child's education, the parents develop a sense of efficacy which influences the child and results in positive academic outcomes.

Researchers in the area of special education among ethnic groups have also pointed to the fact that parent support and involvement influence academic success (Young & Westernoff, 1996). "Educators generally view parent participation as a viable component in the educational planning for children with disabilities . . ." (De Leon, Ortiz, Sena, & Medina, 1996, p. 33).

Overall, children's learning, their attitudes toward schools, and their aspirations are enhanced by parent involvement. Regardless of parents' educational background or

socioeconomic status, parents' participation in school matters and encouragement of education at home lead to higher levels of academic success in their children (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Levine & Lezotte, 1995).

Factors of Involvement

Definition. Any study considering the role of parent involvement must confront the difficulty of defining and measuring the concept of parental involvement. In their discussion of characteristics of effective schools, Levine and Lezotte (1995) enumerated varieties of involvement: participation in decisions concerning school curriculum and personnel; monitoring teacher performance; assistance in the use of library facilities; exerting pressure on public officials in order to acquire more resources. In addition, methods of involvement include assistance to teachers; planning and helping with school-related activities; attendance at events and workshops; assisting children with homework and projects; and expressions of expectations to their children for high achievement (Lindholm, 1997).

The current study relies on a definition of parent involvement expressed by Minaya-Rowe (1996) in a discussion of a program to develop bilingual teachers' skills in fostering parent-school collaboration.

Parental involvement is any of a variety of activities that allow parents to participate in the educational process at home or in school, such as information exchange, decision sharing, volunteer services for school, home tutoring or teaching, and child advocacy (p. 59).

The specific aspects of involvement considered in the current study were divided into three categories. The first category included parent-initiated activities; i. e., volunteering in the classroom or on field trips, participation in school committees or parent clubs, and attendance at school events. The second category of involvement included school-initiated activities such as language classes, parent workshops and conferences, and teacher-parent meetings. The third category was comprised of home-based strategies for involvement, i. e., helping with homework, problem-solving, and encouragement to the child. In addition, the frequency of the specific activities of reading to their children and library visits was elicited from parents. All of these activities are included within the definition of parent involvement.

Socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Two important areas to be considered when discussing parent involvement are socioeconomic status and ethnicity of the family. Socioeconomic status is primarily established in the literature by determining the educational level of the parents. Hidalgo et al. (1995) stated that “. . . on average, more educated families are more involved in schools . . .” (p. 499). This concept has engendered a stereotypic view by school personnel of lower socioeconomic groups as less concerned about their children’s education (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Ritter, Mont-Reynaud, & Dornbusch, 1993). However, research has shown the importance of school involvement among lower socioeconomic parents. Moles (1993), in a discussion of interactions between schools and disadvantaged parents, cites several studies indicating parental desire for home-school collaboration, positive attitudes in

teacher-parent talks, the necessity of helping children with homework, strong willingness to cooperate with teachers, and a willingness to be involved with school decisions about their child's academic progress and classroom discipline.

Although socioeconomically disadvantaged families occur throughout all ethnic groups, a disproportionate number of these families are represented within the various minority groups of the United States. To adequately study diverse ethnic and socioeconomic groups, research must minimize inherent biases in empirical assumptions, operational methodologies, and interpretations of findings (Padilla & Lindholm, 1995). In making comparisons between ethnic and socioeconomic groups within the areas of education and parent involvement, such as the current study, it becomes necessary to consider the cultural contexts each group brings to the educational setting.

Young and Westernoff (1996) discussed the importance of recognizing that various ethnic groups may perceive the educational system and the roles of educators and parents differently. Some families may come from countries where formal education is not highly valued. Requests for parent involvement by school personnel may be interpreted by parents as a lack of ability within the teachers. In a study of Mexican-American socialization processes Delgado-Gaitan (1992) reported that children are taught to be *buen educado* (well-mannered, kind, respectful, and helpful to others) “. . . as well as to respect the values of the public school” (p. 506). Hidalgo et al. (1995), in a discussion of involvement in education by Puerto Rican families, pointed out that Puerto Rican high school students were more likely to leave school if they perceived a lack of

family support for education. When teachers were unfamiliar with the emphasis on respect and obedience within the Puerto Rican family, children were assumed to be passive and unresponsive.

These studies suggested that the concept and practices of parental involvement should be interpreted within the cultural expectations of the ethnic groups under consideration. Demographic information on ethnicity and socioeconomic status collected in the present study allowed for interpretation of the findings within the parameters of culturally responsible research.

Barriers and limitations. Research into parent involvement with their child's academic achievement must also consider impediments to participation. A discussion by Moles (1993) considered obstacles to parental involvement. The author listed three areas of concern. Both parents and teachers may have limited skills and knowledge preventing effective involvement in the education process. Parents' limited education or fluency in English may "... [impede] effective interaction with teachers, understanding of schoolwork, and ability to assist children academically at home" (p. 31). Teachers may receive minimal training in developing skills which aid collaboration with parents. There may be a lack of communication between administration and staff when parents speak with administrators. Davies (1993), in a study of school involvement by low socioeconomic parents in three different countries (Portugal, the United States, and England), found that school personnel considered parents "hard to reach" and that a lack of middle-class standards in families would lead to trouble in school for their children.

These attitudes pointed to the lack of knowledge by school personnel about effective teacher-parent interaction.

A second area of concern is the restricted opportunities for involvement. Work schedules, child care conflicts, and school policies in general may become barriers for parents who wish to take part in their child's education. Scheduling of parent-teacher conferences, school board meetings, and other school events may be determined without consideration of the parents' outside activities. Successful parent involvement programs attempt to minimize these particular barriers (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996; Careaga, 1988; Navarrette, 1996).

The third area of concern includes the psychological and cultural barriers to involvement. Parents are primarily concerned with their own child, whereas teachers must be concerned with all children in the classroom (Moles, 1993). Limited education and school experience, as well as administrative organization of the school, can lead to mistrust on the part of the parents (Garcia & Donato, 1991; Ramirez & Douglas, 1989). Stereotypic attitudes from teachers and use of educational jargon limit the communication between parent and teacher. "... [L]imited experience, cultural patterns of deference, and language difficulties combine with insensitivity and discrimination among educators to pose additional obstacles to participation..." (Moles, 1993, p. 36).

Zelazo (1995), in a qualitative study of parent involvement in a two-way immersion program, reported three aspects which affected parent participation. "Parents' comfort with the staff and the school was a critical first step that led to their involvement"

(p. 3). Parents reacted positively to consistent efforts by staff using a variety of strategies to encourage involvement. "Language played a major role in how parents were involved at the school" (p. 4). Greater parent involvement occurred when the home language was used for meetings and parent-staff interactions. Conversely, when English was used in structural organizations such as the volunteer committee, there was reduced participation by Spanish speakers. "Parents' view of their role in relationship to school, together with their schooling level and present economic situation were major influences on how they were involved at the school" (p. 5). English-speaking parents considered their involvement with classroom and administrative matters as part of their parental responsibility. Spanish-speaking parents felt administrative matters were the realm of school personnel and volunteered in response to direct requests by teachers. These findings showed the need to consider demographic and cultural aspects of families when establishing effective parent involvement programs.

In order to determine the types of barriers and limitations to parent involvement which may exist in the programs under consideration in this study, parents were asked to identify specific reasons for non-involvement with school and parent group activities. These included schedule conflicts, transportation or child care difficulties, lack of classroom or language skills, and lack of encouragement from the school or parent group. Parents were asked whether they perceived themselves having the academic and language skills necessary to assist their children with school work. These areas were considered to encompass the three categories Moles (1993) discussed as hindering parent involvement.

Parents in the current study were also asked to agree or disagree with statements about aspects of the programs which could further refine the perceived impediments to involvement. These statements considered the perceived importance within the school community of Hispanic students, parents, staff, and community members; the status of diversity within the school community; the administration's ability to balance the needs of the linguistic groups; and the district's support of the community. These topics evoked parental perceptions of the cultural barriers which may hinder individual involvement. Parents were also asked whether they perceived their involvement as important to the school community, whether there were many opportunities for involvement, and whether parent groups were responsive to their involvement. This information described the parent's perceptions of the existence or lack of barriers to their participation.

Model of Parent Involvement

Based on a review of the literature concerned with parental involvement and children's school outcomes, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) have proposed a psychologically-based model to explain the relationship of individual parent involvement decisions and actions with educational outcomes. The assumptions for the model were grounded in Bronfenbrenner's study of social context systems and their role in development (see Sroufe, Cooper, & DeHart, 1992). The definition of parent involvement was determined by the categorization of "... home-based activities related to children's learning in school ... [and] school-based involvement ... "(Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p. 6).

The model was based on variables which were “. . . salient to parent involvement from parents’ perspectives . . . [and] potentially subject to specific intervention and change . . .” (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, p. 312). The authors described five constructs through which parent-child-school interactions mediate involvement processes. The framework of these constructs allowed for the questions of why and how parents become involved in their child’s education, identification of the processes which mediate their involvement, and explanations for the outcomes of parent involvement on children’s educational success.

The current study of two-way immersion programs addressed the questions of why and how parents involved themselves in their child’s education within a second language learning context. In order to determine the validity of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s model when applied to research with a variety of ethnic groups, further discussion of the model’s constructs is necessary.

Model factors. The positive decisions made by the parent to become involved with their child’s education (the first factor of the model) are influenced by the parent’s perception and understanding of their parental role, the sense of efficacy parents feel in their ability to aid in their child’s school success, and the general opportunities and demands for involvement originating from the child, the school, or both. The second factor, the parent’s choice of involvement activities, can be affected by three components: specific areas of skill and knowledge which the parent possesses; the mix of demands on

the parent's time and energy from other family activities and employment requirements; and the specific invitations and demands presented by the child or the school.

The mechanisms through which parents operationalize their decisions about involvement and the choices of involvement activities are two components of the third factor in the model. Parents may approach their involvement activities from the perspectives of modeling, reinforcement, or instruction. This variable in turn interacts with the tempering and mediating variable, the components of which are developmentally appropriate uses of involvement strategies and the fit between the expectations of the school and the parent's actions.

These four variables represent the foundational basis, the operational processes, and moderating factors which interacted with the fifth construct of the model, the child's academic outcomes. This factor is composed of the child's skills and knowledge along with the child's sense of efficacy for school success. These variables were presented as five levels of the parent involvement process with their child's academic efforts (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

It is important to point out that the variables were described as “. . . *dynamic* [italics in original] in character; that is, they are realistically amenable to growth and change over the period of a parent's own adult development” (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p. 7). These process variables (parent's actions and cognitions) were distinct from status variables (e. g., education, income, marital status, ethnicity) and, as such, could be influenced by school endeavors to foster parental involvement.

The parent involvement section of the current study investigated the structure of two of the variables: the parental involvement decision and the parents' choice of involvement forms. Two components of the involvement-decision factor (the parent's sense of efficacy to aid the child's academic success and the general opportunities for involvement) and the three components of the choice-of-involvement factor (the parent's specific skills, the mix of demands on the parent's time, and the specific invitations from the child or school) were addressed. Further elaboration of these components follows.

Influences on involvement decisions. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) posited that the parent's sense of efficacy or ability to help their child in the area of academic success affected the involvement decision. A strong sense of efficacy allowed parents to believe that their involvement would result in positive academic outcomes for their child. In addition, the parent's efficacy provided a foundation for mastering difficulties in the involvement process. In that parents perceived a child's educational success as the result of controllable factors such as effort, they would be more inclined to express a positive attitude toward involvement.

Parents' sense of efficacy in the programs under study was addressed directly by eliciting agreement or disagreement with the statements, "I have the academic skills to help my child with homework" and "I have the language skills to help my child with homework." Indirectly the efficacy level of parents was tapped by offering a series of answers to the statement, "I am unable to help at school because" The choices

available in this area were “lack of classroom skills,” “lack of language skills,” and “can help child better at home.”

A second component of the model affecting the parental involvement decision, general opportunities and demands for involvement from the child or school, examined whether parents perceive their involvement to be desired by the child and the school. Three areas of investigation into child-initiated demands, invitations, or opportunities have been shown to be relevant in influencing parents’ decisions. The age and developmental level of the child, the child’s level of performance, and the child’s personality, style of learning, and preferences appear to influence the parental involvement level (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

These areas were addressed in the current study indirectly, by investigating the types of assistance with school work that parents provide children. Parents were asked to select two types of strategies used from a list of four possible choices: providing answers for difficult work; child rarely asks for help; suggest different ways to solve problems; encouragement of the child to complete work on his or her own. As this study considered three separate grade levels (kindergarten/first, second/third, and fourth/fifth), the types of requests by the child and subsequent involvement activities by the parent should vary. Parents’ responses of agreement or disagreement to statements concerning the importance of involvement, opportunities for participation, and responsiveness by parent group participants directly addressed parents’ perceptions of the programs’ willingness to utilize parent involvement.

Parents' perceptions of the school's encouragement of involvement have been investigated by Chavkin and Williams (1993), Comer and Haynes (1991), Dauber and Epstein (1993), and Epstein and Dauber (1991). In a study of minority parents' attitudes and practices in elementary schools, Chavkin and Williams (1993) determined the willingness of parents to be involved in a variety of educational activities. The study was based on 3,015 responses to a survey investigating attitudes, interests in school decisions and parent involvement roles, types of involvement activities, and suggestions for greater parental involvement.

Dauber and Epstein (1993) reported that "[t]he strongest and most consistent predictors of parent involvement at school and at home are the specific school programs and teacher practices that encourage and guide parent involvement" (p.61). In a companion study of self-reported teacher practices and school programs (Epstein & Dauber, 1991), the authors found that greater similarities between a teacher and others' (principal, colleagues, parents) beliefs about parent involvement were characteristic of stronger parent involvement programs.

The programs investigated in the study, two-way language immersion programs, are designed to combine students from two language groups, Spanish and English speakers. As participation in these programs is voluntary it would be expected that parents and teachers would express shared goals enhancing parent involvement as reported in Epstein and Dauber (1991). The findings of Chavkin and Williams (1993)

also suggest that minority parents in the present study would show high levels of involvement with the program.

Influences on choice of involvement activities. The parent's choice as to how to implement the decision to become involved is influenced by three factors: specific domains of skill and knowledge; employment and other family demands; and specific requests and invitations from the child and school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). The parent who has developed a strong sense of efficacy in a particular area (math, literacy, science) would be comfortable with assisting children in these fields. The parent's belief of success would influence the method used for involvement.

In the language programs under investigation in this study, the parents' ability to communicate in the languages (Spanish and English) was examined to determine the level of skill the parent could bring to their child's learning experience in the area of language acquisition.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) stated that the mix of demands on the parent's time and energy "... will serve as the primary influence on the types of involvement they choose ..." (p. 318). The responsibilities of employment and other family matters would present limitations to the types of activities in which the parent would be able to take part. Work schedules may preclude volunteering in the child's classroom. Issues of child or elder care may limit participation outside of school hours. These situations will influence the manner in which parents become involved. Their perceptions of the parental role and the sense of efficacy they hold about their abilities to

help with the child's education (the decision factor) would allow parents to develop a reasonable mix between the competing demands (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). In the present study, outside demands such as employment schedule conflicts, transportation difficulties, and lack of child care were presented as selections for parents to explain why they were unable to help at school or become involved with parent group activities.

According to the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) model, a third influential component, specific invitations and demands, would also affect the parent's choice of activities. Children who specifically requested homework help would encourage parents to monitor their child's progress in this area. The teacher who communicated specific plans for child-parent interaction such as reading or project assignments involving the parent would foster parental involvement. School administration requests for parent assistance in areas of governing input, facility maintenance, or school-community liaison activities would guide the parent's decision processes in how they will become involved. Limited investigation of specific demands by the child were addressed in the study. Questions concerning the strategies parents employed in helping their child with homework or reading indirectly displayed the types of requests by the child.

Parent Attitudes

In order to accurately assess parents' involvement behaviors in educational programs, the role of parental attitudes toward such programs should be investigated. In addition, attitudes are an intricate aspect of parents' motivations to become involved in their child's education, providing a basis for explanation of the parent behaviors.

Attitudes, generally defined as evaluations persisting over time of ideas, people, or objects, have three components to their structure (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 1994). The affective component consists of the emotional response toward the object of the attitude. The behavioral component comprises the actions and observable behaviors toward the object. The cognitive component includes the beliefs and thoughts concerning the attitude object. Although all these components define the structure of attitudes, any one or a combination of them may be the operational factor in the establishment or expression of a particular attitude. The cognitive and behavioral components of parental attitudes are the focus of the current study's investigation into parent involvement.

Attitudes and program involvement. The importance of parents' attitudes has been investigated in the literature of both parent involvement with their child's education and second language learning by their child. Chavkin and Williams (1993), in a large-scale study conducted in six southern states, found that minority parents (African-American and Hispanic) held strong, positive attitudes on the importance of participation in their child's education. These views of importance were similar to those of Anglo participants in the study, but differed in three particular aspects. Minority parents felt ". . . that teachers should be in charge of getting parents involved in the school . . . school districts should make rules for involving parents . . . [and] working parents do not have time to be involved in school activities . . ." (p. 76).

In the development of a project to increase Hispanic involvement in school matters, Costas (1991) distributed a parent survey to determine the reasons for non-

involvement. The author found that language was the major barrier. Parents expressed a desire for an interpreter at parent-teacher meetings, school newsletters distributed in Spanish, and parent education classes held in Spanish. The results of the project's implementation showed that Hispanic parents were interested in their child's education and that involvement increased when parent alienation was decreased through use of the home language.

The present study attempted to elicit parent attitudes about involvement by investigating the types of activities in which parents were involved (classroom, parent education, parent group) and the types of barriers to their involvement (logistical, i. e., schedule conflicts or child care; lack of classroom or language skills; lack of parent group encouragement). Participation in these activities would imply a positive attitude towards involvement with their child's education. Parents were also asked to report their perceptions of the importance of their involvement by the school community and parent groups.

Attitudes and language learning. Gribbons and Shin (1996) stated that "[p]arent attitudes toward language and the majority culture are one of the most important variables in their children's learning of a second language . . ." (p. 16). Torres (1988) also referred to the fact that the attitudes and values parents have about language ". . . are an important factor in the formulation of the child's perspective about language, language usage, and subsequently, the users of a language" (p. 172). Gardner (1985) presented research based on the assumption ". . . that attitudes and motivation are implicated in second language

acquisition, and that to the extent that parents play an important role in attitude development, they will also be influential in their child's attempts to learn a second language" (p. 108). This status of the parent's role in the child's second-language acquisition efforts warrants further study into the relationship between attitudes and language learning.

Gardner (1985) determined that the parent's role can be characterized as active or passive. An active role involves participation in language learning activities, such as reading to the child, helping with homework, etc. The passive role is represented by the general attitudes expressed over time about language learning and the language group's culture. Gardner concluded that the primary influence by the parent on the child's second-language learning is a passive role that provides "... a warm and supportive environment which encourages within the child the development of an integrative motive toward language study . . ." (pp. 122-123).

The role of attitudes in language learning. Gardner (1985) developed a language-learning model structured on the concepts of orientations, or goals, and motivations. Attitudes towards language learning are one of three characteristics comprising the motivation factor. The other characteristics are the desire to learn a language and the motivational intensity. A key element in this model is the type of motivation expressed by language learners. An integrative motivation displays a willingness to partake in the social functions of a language group, to communicate on a social basis with the other language group; in short, to integrate with the culture. An instrumental motivation

displays a desire to learn the language for pragmatic purposes, such as career enhancement or an educational requirement. Both types of motivation will lead to language learning. However, according to Gardner, an integrative approach plays a more important role in developing communicative proficiency.

Gardner's research has been conducted primarily with high-school students who were acquiring a second language in one-way immersion programs. The students were English speakers residing in Quebec where French was the majority language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Lambert & Tucker, 1972). The application of Gardner's model and hypotheses to American minority language learners and their parents has been investigated in a limited amount of empirical research (Lindholm & Cava, 1997, 1998; Torres, 1988).

Applications of the model. In an unpublished thesis, Bush (as cited in Baker, 1988) examined the motivations of English-speaking parents in Wales who sent their children to bilingual Welsh-dominant schools. Using a questionnaire format she was able to determine a rank order for the parental motivations. Although the popular conception in Wales was that motivations were instrumental in nature (higher paying jobs for bilinguals; bilingual schools were considered to produce higher examination scores), the motivational reasons given by the parents showed a high degree of integrative nature in expressions of positive attitudes toward the Welsh language and the Welsh ethnic group.

Gardner's model was also investigated in a study by Torres (1988). Her review of the literature on parents' attitudes towards their child's bilingual education showed that

most parents expressed integrative reasons for the acquisition of Spanish, i. e., maintaining the home language, and instrumental reasons for the acquisition of English, such as advancement in the economic field. Torres investigated Hispanic parent attitudes expressed about the acquisition of Spanish and English. Her study involved 149 parents whose children were enrolled in bilingual education classes in 14 elementary schools in San Jose, California. Parents were divided into two groups: those who participated in a Bilingual School Advisory Committee (BSAC) and those who did not participate. A structured personal interview was administered, designed to elicit integrative or instrumental motivations by ranking in order of importance six reasons for studying both Spanish and English. Both groups (BSAC members and non-members) expressed the most important reason for learning Spanish to be maintenance of the culture and heritage, an integrative reason. However both groups expressed integrative and instrumental reasons for Spanish language study with no statistical significance found between the participating and non-participating parents. Both groups felt learning Spanish was important for economic and social benefit. However, instrumental reasons for the study of English varied by groups. Those parents participating in the BSAC expressed the importance of learning English to get a better job, whereas parents not involved with the BSAC ranked getting a better education as the most important reason.

Torres' (1988) findings of the importance of integrative reasons for studying Spanish are similar to those of Lindholm and Cava (1997) wherein Hispanic parents were shown to express integrative motives as the most important reason for enrolling their

children in the two-way immersion programs. However, Torres' finding that Hispanic parents expressed both integrative and instrumental motivations in their assessment of the value of learning Spanish was similar to that of the Euro-American parents' response in the Lindholm and Cava study. Both integrative and instrumental reasons for enrollment were expressed by a nearly equal number of Euro-American parents.

In a study of 66 parents from three separate school sites, Lindholm and Cava (1997) investigated parents' reasons for enrolling their kindergarten-age child in two-way immersion programs. Findings showed that Hispanic parents expressed a strong integrative motivational factor (opportunities to converse with family and friends, a stronger bicultural identity). This differed significantly from Euro-American parents who expressed equal amounts of instrumental and integrative motivations in their enrollment reasons. Expectations for their child's success in the program also differed in the same fashion. Hispanic parents held predominately integrative expectations (e. g., comfort with diverse groups, social communication); Euro-American parents expressed mixed instrumental and integrative expectations (e. g., greater academic achievement, future employment advantages, as well as social communication).

The present study continued the investigation of Gardner's (1985) motivational model begun in Lindholm and Cava (1997). Investigation of the motivation type (integrative or instrumental) in the enrollment decision was expanded to include parents of kindergarten/first-, second-/third-, and fourth-/fifth-grade children.

Parent Satisfaction with Language Programs

Parents' satisfaction with their child's language learning programs has also been investigated in the literature (Aguirre, 1984; Gribbons & Shin, 1996; Lindholm & Cava, 1997, 1998; Muniz, 1992; Saucedo, 1997). In a survey of parents of kindergarten through third grade students in a bilingual program, Muniz (1992) found that the parents were supportive although they were unclear on the purpose of the program. They did not feel that their children's educational progress was impeded in the program and that bilingual education was "... equal in quality to non-bilingual education" (p. 63). Aguirre (1984) found discrepancies between parents and teachers in their opinions of bilingual education. Although parents were supportive of the bases for bilingual education (i. e., the best method for educating limited English speakers, promotion of positive self-image), they were less supportive of the actual implementations (i. e., expense of the program, greater time-consuming activity for the teacher). These studies pointed to the need for a strong communication between parents and school personnel to increase the effectiveness of the educational programs.

Gribbons and Shin (1996) investigated the perceptions and attitudes of Hispanic parents of middle school children in bilingual programs. They presented rationales for the advantages of bilingual education and had the parents express agreement, uncertainty, or disagreement with the statements. Slightly more than half of the respondents agreed that "... developing literacy in the primary language is necessary in order to facilitate the acquisition in English" (p. 21). Two-thirds of the respondents were not sure or disagreed

that learning content material in Spanish would facilitate learning the material when studied in English. Although some answers differed by educational level and primary language, “[o]verall, parents were very supportive of most of the principles and rationale for bilingual education” (p. 21).

In a teacher-developed survey designed to elicit parental attitudes toward their child’s two-way immersion program, Saucedo (1997) found that 93% of respondents were satisfied with the dual language model and that 97% of respondents would recommend the program to other parents. The findings were interpreted as a result of the high support parents showed for their child learning a second language (97%). Similar results were reported in Lindholm and Cava (1997). Parents reported they were satisfied that their child was receiving access to the subject matter, confident that their child would become bilingual, and that combining English and Spanish speakers was an effective language-learning model. Parents were also consistent in their willingness to recommend the program to other parents.

In the current study, parent satisfaction with the two-way immersion program and its implementation was considered in a similar manner as the Gribbons and Shin (1996) survey, with statements presented for agreement, disagreement, or uncertainty. These statements considered the success of program personnel in meeting the needs of both linguistic communities, promoting diversity and understanding within the school community, and willingness to recommend the program to other parents. Again, this is an expansion of the work by Lindholm and Cava (1997) in that parents of

kindergarten/first-, second-/third-, and fourth-/fifth-grade children are surveyed about their satisfaction with the two-way program.

Chapter 3

Method

Participants

A total of 117 parents from three school sites participated in the study. Of these participants one reported their ethnicity as Asian-American, one as American-Indian/Alaskan, two as “other” ethnicity, and one parent did not report ethnicity. These respondents were eliminated from further analyses. In addition, those participants who did not report their language as English, Spanish, or both, as well as those who did not report their child’s grade level, were eliminated. This resulted in a total number of 101 participants used for analyses in the study. Table 1 presents the background characteristics of these parents.

The table shows that 80 participants were mothers and 12 participants were fathers. On eight questionnaires, both parents completed the form. One participant did not report their relationship to the child.

Reported ethnicity of the participants showed a near balance within the population sample with 49% Hispanic/Latino parents and 51% Euro-American parents (see Table 1). Parents were categorized by language and ethnicity into three groups: Euro-American English-only or bilingual speakers (51%); Hispanic Spanish-only speakers (29%); and Hispanic English-only or bilingual speakers (20%). Bilingual categories were determined on the basis of the respondents’ reported levels of English and Spanish language proficiency.

Table 1

Demographic Data of Participants

Categories	Number of participants	Percentage
<u>Relation to child</u>		
Mother	80	79
Father	12	12
Both	8	8
Non-reported	1	1
<u>Ethnicity</u>		
Hispanic	50	49
Euro-American	51	51
<u>Ethno-linguistic group</u>		
Eu/Am, English-only & Bilinguals	51	51
Hisp., Spanish-Only	29	29
Hispanic, English-only & Bilinguals	21	21
<u>Education</u>		
Elementary	26	26
High school/some college	34	34
College/Professional degree	41	41

(table continues)

Table 1 (continued)

Demographic Data of Participants

Categories	No. of participants	Percentage
<u>Grade level of child</u>		
Kindergarten/First	28	28
Second/Third	31	31
Fourth/Fifth	42	42

Note. Eu/Am = Euro-American; Hisp. = Hispanic.

Distribution of the respondents by the grade level at which their child was enrolled showed 28% were parents of kindergarten/first-grade children, 31% were parents of second-/third-grade children, and 42% were parents of fourth-/fifth-grade children.

Educational levels of the parents, used as a determiner of socioeconomic status, were analyzed by ethno-linguistic group. As shown in Table 2, of the participants with only an elementary school education, 72% were Hispanic Spanish-only speakers, 14% were Hispanic English-only or bilingual speakers, and four percent were Euro-American English-only or bilingual speakers. Of those participants who had completed a high school education or some college, 29% were Euro-American English-only or bilingual speakers, 24% were Hispanic Spanish-only speakers and 57% were Hispanic English-only or bilingual speakers. Sixty-seven percent of parents with a college degree were

Euro-American English-only or bilingual speakers, four percent were Hispanic Spanish-only speakers, and 29% were Hispanic English-only or bilingual speakers.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed significant differences in educational levels between Euro-American English-only or bilingual speakers and both language groups of Hispanic parents ($F(2,98) = 48.06, p < .001$).

Table 2

Educational Level of Participants by Ethnicity/Language

	Euro-American English-only or bilingual ($n = 51$)	Hispanic Spanish-only ($n = 29$)	Hispanic English-only or bilingual ($n = 21$)
<u>Education</u> **			
Elementary	4%	72%	14%
HS/some college	29%	24%	57%
College deg.	67%	4%	29%

Note. HS = high school.

** $p < .001$.

Instrumentation

Parents completed a questionnaire in either English or Spanish, consisting of four sections (Appendix A, English version). Part I collected background information about parents' ethnicity, language background, educational background, ability to communicate in Spanish or English, experience in studying Spanish or English, and reasons for enrolling their child in the two-way immersion program (neighborhood school, quality academic program, academic or career advantage for the child, ability to communicate with Spanish speakers, identity of the child as a bilingual or bicultural individual). Part II investigated the types of school involvement in which parents participated (e. g., classroom volunteer, attendance at school activities, parent workshops); home involvement activities (e. g., help with homework); and possible barriers to involvement (e. g., employment or child care conflicts, lack of academic or language skills, lack of knowledge about school affairs).

Part III contained statements concerning parental attitudes and satisfaction with the two-way program, parent expectations of bilingualism and biliteracy for their child, and satisfaction with opportunities for parent-school involvement. Parents rated these items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). Part IV collected information about the frequency, "almost never" (1) to "usually daily" (5), of language learning activities with their child (reading, library visits, child's play group activities outside of school).

Procedures

The parent questionnaire, along with a cover letter (Appendix B) requesting participation, printed in both English and Spanish, and a stamped return envelope were distributed as a take-home packet to children at three school sites. A total of 386 questionnaires were distributed. Of these, a total of 117 questionnaires representing 135 children were returned by mail to the researcher for an overall response rate of 34.9%.

Chapter 4

Results

Motivation for Enrolling Child

Determination of parents' motivation for enrolling their child in the two-way immersion program was established by asking parents to rank the three most important reasons for their child's enrollment. Five choices were listed on the questionnaire (see Appendix A, Part 1, Question 1.9), three expressing an instrumental motivation (an academic, intellectual, or career advantage; convenience of school location) and two expressing an integrative motivation (social engagement with the cultural group, identity as a bicultural or multicultural individual).

As shown in Table 3, a higher percentage of the Hispanic parents of both language groups chose as their first reason integrative factors. In contrast, Euro-American parents chose a significantly greater percentage of instrumental factors as their primary enrollment reason ($\chi^2(8) = 20.8, p < .01$).

Motivational factors were also investigated by asking parents to express their agreement or disagreement with six statements tapping integrative and instrumental reasons for having their child learn Spanish (e. g., better understanding of Hispanic culture, ease of conversation with varied people, child will have a career advantage or become smarter; see Appendix A, Part 3, Questions 3.10-3.15).

Table 3

Parents' Reason for Enrolling Child by Ethnicity/Language

	Euro-American English-only or bilingual (<u>n</u> = 51)	Hispanic Spanish only (<u>n</u> = 25)	Hispanic English-only or bilingual (<u>n</u> = 20)
<u>First Enrollment Reason</u> *			
Communication with others	14%	28%	10%
Bilingual identity	12%	40%	50%
<i>Integrative motivation</i>	<i>Total 26%</i>	<i>Total 68%</i>	<i>Total 60%</i>
Quality program	45%	28%	20%
Academic, career advantage	29%	4%	20%
<i>Instrumental motivation</i>	<i>Total 74%</i>	<i>Total 32%</i>	<i>Total 40%</i>

* $p < .01$.

Frequency data showed that 90-95% of respondents agreed with the integrative reasons for learning Spanish (child will be more comfortable with Spanish speakers, 90%; will meet and converse with more and varied people, 95%; will understand and appreciate Hispanic culture, 92%; will participate in activities of other cultural groups, 92%).

The percentage of parents in agreement with instrumental reasons was somewhat less. Eighty-five percent of participants said studying Spanish was important for the child's future career, with 11% of respondents answering "not sure." Responses to the statement that their child would be smarter as a result of studying Spanish showed 80% of parents in agreement, 11% disagreeing with the statement, and six percent not sure.

Analyses of variance by ethno-linguistic group, parent educational level, and child's grade level groups showed no statistically significant differences.

Parent Participation

Parents were asked to choose from a list of school-based activities in which they participated (Appendix A, Part 2, Question 2.2). Options included two types: activities which were classroom-oriented (volunteer at least once, volunteer frequently, help with field trips); and activities outside of the classroom (serve on school or district committees, help with parent club, help with or attend school events). Parents were also asked if they attended Spanish or English classes, workshops or conferences, or teacher-parent meetings as well as the frequency of attendance at parent group meetings and school-related activities (Appendix A, Part 2, Questions 2.4 and 2.5).

Frequency counts showed that 12% of respondents ($n = 84$) volunteered in the classroom at least once; 23% volunteered frequently; 6% helped outside of class; and 52% volunteered in a combination of these activities. Seven percent of the respondents stated they did not take part in any of the listed activities.

Table 4 shows that there were significant ethno-linguistic group differences in the types of activities in which parents participated ($\chi^2(8) = 23.81, p < .01$). For example, Hispanic English-only or bilingual speakers were more likely to have not participated in any classroom activities. Euro-American English-only or bilingual parents and Hispanic English-only or bilingual parents were more likely than Hispanic Spanish-only parents to participate in a combination of classroom-oriented and non-classroom-oriented activities.

Table 4

Parent Classroom Participation by Language/Ethnicity

	Euro-American English-only or bilingual (<u>n</u> = 47)	Hispanic Spanish only (<u>n</u> = 19)	Hispanic English-only or bilingual (<u>n</u> = 18)
<u>Activities*</u>			
None	2%	5%	22%
Volunteer in class once	6%	32%	6%
Volunteer in class frequently	17%	37%	22%
Help outside of classroom	9%	0%	6%
Combination	66%	26%	44%

* $p < .01$.

Chi-square analysis for educational level of the participants (Table 5) showed significant differences in participation in classroom activities across the educational groups ($\chi^2(8) = 19.9, p < .05$). Although parents with higher educational levels participated in a combination of activities in greater numbers, parents with an elementary education were more likely to show a greater frequency of classroom volunteering. Analysis for parent participation by their child's grade level showed no statistically significant differences among groups.

Table 5

Parent Classroom Participation by Educational Levels

	Elementary (<u>n</u> = 16)	High school/ some college (<u>n</u> = 29)	College degree (<u>n</u> = 39)
<u>Activities*</u>			
None	13%	7%	5%
Volunteer in class once	31%	3%	10%
Volunteer in class frequently	44%	21%	16%
Help outside of classroom	0%	10%	5%
Combination	12%	59%	64%

* $p < .05$.

Participation in non-classroom activities was also high. Forty-nine percent of respondents helped with or attended school events; 4% were involved with a parent club; 4% chose the “other activities” option; and 42% took part in a combination of the activities. One person served on the district committee. Parent participation in non-classroom activities showed no significant variance by ethno-linguistic group, educational level, or child’s grade level.

Analysis of parent participation in staff- or administration-initiated programs (parent workshops, teacher-parent meetings, English or Spanish language classes) showed greater attendance by Euro-American English-only or bilingual speakers in language classes ($\chi^2(6) = 14.815$, $p = .022$). Of 34 respondents 14 Euro-Americans attended Spanish classes; five Hispanic Spanish-only speakers attended English classes; one Hispanic bilingual parent, and one Hispanic English-only parent attended English classes. Four Spanish-only speakers attended Spanish classes. Of these four, three had only an elementary school education and one had a high school education. No differences were found for educational levels or child’s grade level.

Ten percent of parents reported attending workshops, 24% reported attendance at parent-teacher meetings, and 50% of parents reported attendance at both workshops and parent-teacher meetings (Appendix A, Part 2, Question 2.4). Sixteen percent of parents did not respond to the question. No significant differences among ethno-linguistic, educational level, or child’s grade level groups were found.

Information concerning barriers to parent involvement was also collected. Parents were asked to choose from a list of possible deterrents to their participation. The choices included employment and school schedule conflicts, child care concerns, lack of school-related skills, and lack of encouragement from school or parent groups (Appendix A, Part 2, Questions 2.3 and 2.6).

Fifty-five percent of the participants responded to the questions concerned with barriers to parent involvement. Employment and school schedule conflict was the major reason given for non-involvement by respondents who reported barriers (52%). Lack of child care was listed by nine respondents (16%). Twenty percent of respondents stated they could help their child better at home, while five respondents (9%) said they did not have the language skills to help at school. Only one person chose lack of school encouragement as a deterrent to involvement. These responses also showed no significant differences between groups.

When asked why they did not become involved with parent group activities, 27 parents (66%) listed employment conflicts, 10 parents (24%) listed lack of child care, and four parents (10%) listed lack of knowledge about school affairs as barriers. However, when asked how frequently they attended school-related activities or parent group meetings, 60% of parents reported frequent attendance, 33% of parents reported occasional attendance, and three percent of parents stated they rarely attended meetings or events. No differences were found among groups.

Parents' perceptions of their role within the school structure were investigated by presenting three statements to be rated for agreement on a 5-point Likert scale: their involvement is important to the school community; there are many opportunities for school or classroom participation; parent meetings are responsive to their participation (Appendix A, Part 3, Questions 3.18, 3.19, and 3.20). Ninety-five percent of parents agreed that their involvement was important to the school community and 90% agreed that there were many opportunities for classroom involvement. Eighty percent of parents felt that parent group meetings were responsive to their participation while 13% were not sure of the school's responsiveness to their involvement.

One-way analyses of variance resulted in significant differences by participants' educational levels. College-educated parents were more likely than parents with an elementary school education to feel their involvement was important to the school community ($F(2, 98) = 3.59, p < .05$). No statistically significant differences were found for ethno-linguistic and child's grade level groups.

Parents' sense of efficacy about their ability to help with their child's school work was also investigated (Appendix A, Part 3, Questions 3.16, 3.17). Seventy-nine percent of respondents agreed they had the academic skills to assist their child with homework and 15% stated they were not sure. Seventy-one percent of respondents agreed they had the language skills to assist their child. Sixteen percent of the parents were not sure they possessed the language skills.

Differences in parents' reported sense of efficacy to help their child were found based on educational levels of the parents. College-educated parents were more likely than elementary educated parents to express having the academic skills to assist their child with homework ($F(2, 97) = 3.77, p < .05$). Analyses by ethno-linguistic and child's grade level groups showed no significant differences.

Parent involvement with their child's homework and language learning activities were also investigated. Parents were asked to choose two strategies from a list of four possible strategies used with their child in assisting with homework or reading (Appendix A, Part 2, Question 2.7). Investigation of parents' responses showed that 78 of the participants suggested different ways to solve problems or encouraged the child to complete the work on his or her own, strategies designed to aid in the child's development of self-reliance.

Three of the parents stated they gave answers when the work was difficult for their child or the child rarely asked for help. Fourteen of the parents suggested different ways for their child to solve problems and gave answers or stated their child rarely asked for help. Six parents reported that they encouraged the child to complete work on their own and that they gave answers when the work was difficult. No differences were found for educational level or child's grade level. However, Hispanic English-only or bilingual parents were more likely to give answers to their children when homework was difficult ($\chi^2(4) = 11.7, p < .05$).

Parents were asked to rate the frequency in which Spanish reading activities with their child occurred (Appendix A, Part 4, Questions 4.1- 4.3). Seventy-eight percent of parents stated that they read to their child in Spanish daily or once or twice a week, and 12% read once or twice a month. Three percent of parents read once or twice a year and six percent stated they almost never read to their child in Spanish. Table 6 shows that Hispanic Spanish-only speakers were more likely than Euro-American English-only speakers to read to their child in Spanish ($F(2,97) = 6.05, p < .01$).

Table 6

Parents' Spanish Reading with Child by Ethnicity/Language

	Euro-American English-only or bilingual ($n = 51$)	Hispanic Spanish-only ($n = 28$)	Hispanic English-only or bilingual ($n = 21$)
<u>I/my spouse read with my child in Spanish*</u>			
Almost never	10%	0%	5%
1-2 times/year	6%	0%	0%
1-2 times/month	14%	11%	9%
1-2 times/week	43%	21%	48%
Usually daily	27%	68%	38%

* $p < .01$.

Not surprisingly, parents' Spanish reading activities also varied significantly by the parent's educational level. Elementary school educated parents, predominately Hispanic Spanish-only speakers, read to their child in Spanish more frequently than college-educated parents, predominately English-speaking Euro-American parents ($F(2,97) = 4.51, p < .05$).

Frequency responses concerning visits to the library or purchases of Spanish materials for their child showed 46% of parents went once or twice a month, 26% went once or twice a week, and 13% of parents visited a library or store daily. This measure of parents' involvement with their child's language learning also contained significant differences within ethno-linguistic groups and educational levels. Table 7 shows Hispanic Spanish-only speakers and Hispanic bilingual speakers more likely than Euro-American English-only or bilingual speakers to avail themselves of Spanish reading materials in libraries or stores ($F(2,97) = 7.2, p < .001$).

In order to establish if parents encouraged linguistic activities among their children outside of the school, parents were asked to rate how frequently their children engaged with children from the other language group (i. e., English-speaking children visiting the homes of Spanish-speaking children or having Spanish speakers in their own homes; Spanish-speaking children visiting the homes of English speakers or having English speakers in their own homes). The 5-point Likert scale responses were collapsed to yield a scale of "almost never," "occasionally," and "frequently."

Table 7

Frequency of Parents' Library or Store Visits by Ethnicity/Language

	Euro-American English-only or bilingual (<u>n</u> = 51)	Hispanic Spanish-only (<u>n</u> = 28)	Hispanic English-only or bilingual (<u>n</u> = 21)
<u>I/my spouse check out library books or buy books in Spanish*</u>			
Almost never	6%	0%	5%
1-2 times/year	19%	4%	0%
1-2 times/month	51%	36%	48%
1-2 times/week	16%	39%	33%
Usually daily	8%	21%	14%

* $p < .01$.

This measure of the frequency of children's cross-cultural peer group interactions showed that 59% of Euro-American English-only or bilingual children did not visit with Hispanic Spanish-speaking or bilingual children in either of the children's homes (see Table 8). Occasional visits (once or twice a month) with Spanish-speaking children occurred among 33% of the Euro-American children. Only eight percent of participants reported frequent (once or twice a week, daily) visits with Spanish-speaking children. Among Hispanic Spanish-only speakers 48% of the participants reported their child visited with English-speaking children at least once or twice a week. Thirty-four percent

of Hispanic English-only or bilingual parents reported a similar frequency of visits by their child with English-speaking children.

Analysis of variance showed the frequency of visits differed significantly among the ethno-linguistic groups ($F(2,98) = 11.43, p < .001$). However, no statistically significant differences were found for parents' educational levels or child's grade levels.

Table 8

Children's Peer Group Visits

	Euro-American English-only or bilingual (<u>n</u> = 51)	Hispanic Spanish-only (<u>n</u> = 29)	Hispanic English-only or bilingual (<u>n</u> = 21)
<u>Child visits with Spanish/ English-speaking children**</u>			
almost never	59%	21%	33%
occasionally-1,2 times/month	33%	31%	33%
frequently -1,2 times/week	8%	48%	34%

** $p < .001$.

Program Satisfaction

Parents were asked to rate, on a 5-point Likert scale, their agreement or disagreement with nine statements pertaining to their satisfaction with the two-way

program (Appendix A, Part 3, Questions 3.1-3.9). The first four statements pertained to their child's classroom experiences. The next four statements were concerned with parents' satisfaction with faculty, staff, and administrative policies. Recommendation of the program to other parents was the subject of the last statement.

The majority of parents (92%) agreed that their child was receiving access to the needed subject matter. Consensus was less pronounced when children's specific abilities were examined. Agreement that the program was effective in developing their child's ability to communicate in Spanish varied significantly between groups.

Analysis by ethno-linguistic groups showed that 29% of Hispanic Spanish-only respondents rated agreement with the statement that the child's Spanish communication skills were not being developed and 12% of this group were not sure. Among Hispanic English-only or bilingual speakers, 11% of respondents reported that they were not satisfied with the development of their child's Spanish communication skills. Ninety-six percent of Euro-American English-only or bilingual parents rated the program effective in developing Spanish language communication skills.

Table 9 shows the means reported for each group. Analysis of variance showed a significant difference in agreement between Hispanic Spanish-only speakers and Euro-American English-only or bilingual speakers ($F(2,90) = 12.50, p < .001$).

Table 9

Significant Mean Scores for Satisfaction Items by Ethnicity/Language

	Euro-American EO/bilingual (<u>n</u> = 51)	Hispanic Span. only (<u>n</u> = 29)	Hispanic EO/Bilingual (<u>n</u> = 21)
<u>Child is not developing Spanish communication skills</u>	1.3**	2.5	1.8
<u>Child is developing English reading skills</u>	3.9	4.4*	3.6
<u>Child is not developing English writing skills</u>	2.0*	2.9	2.4

Note. Scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). EO = English-only.

* Significant between adjacent groups; $p < .05$.

** Significant between adjacent groups; $p < .001$.

Significant differences between educational level groups were also found for the parents' satisfaction with their child's development of Spanish communication skills. Elementary-educated parents were more likely than both high school- and college-educated parents to feel the program was not effective in developing the child's Spanish communication skills ($F(2, 90) = 10.46, p < .001$). No significant differences for the

child's grade level were found in parents' satisfaction with Spanish communication efforts.

In the area of English language skills, 70% of parents were satisfied with the program's effectiveness in developing their child's English reading skills. Twenty percent of parents were not sure the child was acquiring the necessary reading skills and eight percent were not satisfied with the program's development of English reading. Table 9 shows that Hispanic Spanish-only speakers were more likely than Euro-American and Hispanic English-only or bilingual speakers to be satisfied with the program's effectiveness in developing English reading skills ($F(2, 96) = 4.8, p < .01$).

In the area of English writing skills, 60% of respondents were satisfied with the program's efforts with their child. Twenty-four percent were not sure about the development of writing abilities; 16% were not satisfied with their child's progress. As shown in Table 9, Hispanic Spanish-only speakers were more likely than Euro-American English-only or bilingual speakers to not be satisfied with the development of English writing abilities ($F(2, 87) = 4.6, p < .05$). Significant differences for educational level and child's grade level groups in parents' satisfaction with their child's English language skills were not found.

In the area of program administration, faculty and staff were seen as successful in promoting diversity (87% of parents in agreement) and balancing the needs of both the English- and Spanish-speaking communities (83% of parents in agreement). Analyses revealed no differences by groups in this area.

Frequency counts showed that 91% of respondents would recommend the program to other parents, five percent were not sure, and three percent of parents would not recommend the program. Analyses of variance did not show significant differences in program recommendation among ethno-linguistic, educational, or child's grade level groups.

There was less consensus on whether the district office was supportive of the needs of the school community. Sixty-two percent of parents felt the district was supportive, 22% were not sure, and seven percent of parents stated the district office was not supportive. Nine percent of participants did not rate the statement.

One-way analysis of variance showed that elementary school-educated parents were more likely than parents with a high school or some college education to feel the district was not supportive of the school community ($F(2, 89) = 5.4, p < .01$). No Euro-American English-only speaker agreed that the district was not supportive while 17% of Hispanic Spanish-only parents and nine percent of Hispanic English-only or bilingual parents agreed with the negatively-worded statement. No significant differences between means were found for ethno-linguistic and child's grade level groups.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusions

The demographic data of the study have shown that the participants in the sample programs are consistent with one criterion of successful two-way immersion programs (Christian, 1996; Lindholm, 1990a): a balanced mix of ethnic and linguistic groups. Ethnically, the sample population is equally divided between Hispanic and Euro-American parents. Linguistically, the mix showed near equal numbers of language groups: 46 Spanish speakers and 55 English speakers (four Hispanic parents reported English as their only language).

The wide discrepancy in parents' educational levels among ethno-linguistic groups underscores the challenge many schools face. The limited amount of education beyond elementary school for many Spanish-only speakers limits the assistance these parents might offer to their child, particularly as the child enters the higher grades. Further discussion of this dilemma is presented in the review of parent involvement data.

Enrollment Reasons and Language Learning Attitudes

As discussed in the second language acquisition literature (Gardner, 1985), reasons for second language study can be assessed in terms of motivational types or attitudes. An integrative approach to language learning results from a desire to be a part of the linguistic group for social communication or identification purposes. An instrumental motivation is expressed through a more pragmatic approach to language learning, e. g., an occupational advantage. Torres (1988) alluded to the fact that parental

attitudes and values about language are important factors in forming the child's outlook on language, language usage, and users of the language. Few studies have investigated how these motivational attitudes may affect parents' encouragement of their child's acquisition of a second language.

The current study's hypothesis that Hispanic Spanish speakers would express more integrative reasons for enrolling their child in the program was confirmed. A sizable majority (74%) of Euro-American English-only speakers more consistently chose instrumental reasons for enrollment, a finding similar to Lindholm and Cava's (1997, 1998) earlier studies in which Euro-American parents were also found to express more instrumental motivations for the child's enrollment.

Investigation of parents' expectations for their child's study of Spanish showed that parents agreed slightly more with integrative reasons than with instrumental reasons, although differences among ethno-linguistic, educational level, and child's grade level groups were not significant. Lindholm and Cava's (1997) study of the parents of kindergarten-age children found that Hispanic bilinguals differed significantly from English-only speakers in their agreement that studying Spanish would be important for their child's career. The non-significant findings of the current study in this area seem to suggest that the motivational aspects of parents' attitudes toward their child's study of Spanish become similar among ethno-linguistic groups when a wider range of children's grade levels is considered.

The hypothesis that parents with an integrative motivation would be more likely to foster language learning activities outside of the school program was not found to be supported in this study. Analyses of the data on parents' Spanish reading activities and parents' reported frequencies of children's cross-linguistic visits showed no significant differences between participants expressing integrative or instrumental reasons for enrollment.

Parents' reports did show high levels of access to Spanish reading materials. A greater percentage of elementary-educated parents visited the library or store once or twice a week or daily for Spanish reading materials (64% of elementary-educated parents; 35% of high school-educated parents; and 27% of college-educated parents). That Hispanic Spanish-only speakers are the major members of the elementary-schooled group would account for the high percentage of parents reporting frequent access to these materials.

Findings on children's visits to each other's homes showed a disproportionate number of Euro-American English-only or bilingual parents reported that their children never visited with Spanish-speaking children (59%). Only 21% of Hispanic Spanish-only speakers and 33% of Hispanic English-only or bilingual speakers reported their children never visited with English-speaking children.

Forty-eight percent of Hispanic Spanish-only speakers and 34% of Hispanic bilinguals reported that their child visited with English-speaking children at least once or twice a week or daily. The comparable figure for Euro-American parents was eight

percent. That Euro-American parents would report less frequent visits between their child and Spanish-speaking children is consistent with the findings that Euro-American parents express more instrumental reasons for their child's Spanish language learning.

These findings on parents' reports of their child's cross-linguistic peer group interactions warrant further discussion. As Gardner (1985) has pointed out "... it is the parents with favourable attitudes toward the other community and language learning that promote cultural exchanges" (p. 122). It would appear from the findings that Hispanic parents are more willing than Euro-American parents to have their children enter into these cultural exchanges. However, a variety of factors may be the cause of the imbalance of cross-linguistic visits. For example, Euro-American children may show little interest in visiting homes where their primary language is not used, particularly in the younger grades. Spanish-speaking children may implicitly understand the higher social value placed on English language skills and are more willing to place themselves in situations where they will increase their own second-language (i. e., English) skills (Griego-Jones, 1994; Thomas & Collier, 1997). The reasons for the imbalance of cross-linguistic visits between ethnic groups should be investigated in future research.

Parent Involvement Activities

As explained in the literature review of the current study, parent involvement "... is any of a variety of activities that allow parents to participate in the educational process at home or in school ..." (Minaya-Rowe, 1996, p. 59). Three categories were delineated for investigation in the current study: parent-initiated activities (volunteering

in the classroom, participation in school committees, attendance at school events); school-initiated activities (language classes, workshops, parent-teacher meetings); and home-based activities (assistance with homework, reading activities). Data from these categories were used to determine whether Hispanic parents would show high levels of involvement and whether parents with higher educational levels would be more likely to become involved in a variety of activities.

Demographic data showed that 80% of parents with only an elementary school education were Hispanic Spanish-only speakers. Significant findings on classroom participation data showed that this group volunteered in the classroom in greater numbers than English-only or higher educational level groups. These data support the hypothesis that Hispanic parents show high levels of involvement. These findings are in agreement with Moles' (1993) discussion of the importance of school involvement to lower socioeconomic groups, as well as Chavkin and Williams (1993) findings on the willingness of minority parents to become involved in their child's educational activities.

The overall percentage rates of participation showed that parents with a high school or college education volunteered in larger numbers than parents with elementary schooling (87% - elementary; 93% - high school; 95% - college). These findings are consistent with Hidalgo, et al. (1995) that "... on average, more educated families are more involved in schools ..." (p. 499) and support the hypothesis of higher levels of involvement among more educated parents.

The greater number of Hispanic parents volunteering in the classroom may be a result of the nature of the language immersion program. As the structure of these programs is a 90% Spanish-10% English instructional format in kindergarten and first grades, Spanish speakers may be more likely than English speakers to feel comfortable assisting in the classroom.

Parent participation in workshops and parent-teacher meetings (school-initiated activities) was somewhat lower than participation in classroom activities. Since no differences were found among parent groups the findings suggest that all parents see these activities as important vehicles of school involvement.

Model of parent involvement. Data from the current study provided information about two factors of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) model of the parent involvement process: the parental involvement decision and the parents' choice of involvement forms. The parent involvement decision factor is comprised of two components, the parent's sense of efficacy to assist their child and the general opportunities for involvement. The factor of choice of involvement forms has three components, i. e., the parent's specific skills, the mix of demands on the parent's time, and specific invitations from the child or school.

The majority of parents reported agreement with statements tapping their sense of efficacy to help their child. Among parents who participated in classroom-oriented activities, 82% stated they had the academic skills to assist their child. Seventy-two percent of these parents said they had the language skills to help their child. College-

educated parents were more likely than elementary-schooled parents to feel they possessed the academic skills needed to help their child. Based on the model of parent involvement processes, these findings suggest the interrelationship between parents' understanding of their own skills and the levels of their classroom participation.

However, when the relationship between classroom participation rates and parents' reported levels of efficacy was investigated, the hypothesis that parents with higher levels of efficacy would show higher levels of involvement was not supported. Analyses of participation rates (high or low) showed no differences in the mean scores of parents' perceptions of their ability to help their child.

The previous discussion of data collected on parents' involvement activities and the strategies parents utilize to assist their child with homework and reading considered the components of general opportunities for involvement and invitations from the child or school. The study's findings suggest that these components are being operationalized in that parents perceive a variety of opportunities for involvement in conjunction with requests for involvement by the child and school personnel. This perception leads to a positive decision on the part of parents to become involved with their child's educational program.

Additional investigation into the component of specific school invitations was accomplished by having parents rate their agreement or disagreement with statements pertaining to the importance of their involvement to the school community, availability of opportunities for participation, and the responsiveness of parent meetings to the

individual parent's participation. Responses showed that 95% of parents felt their involvement was important, although college-educated parents were more likely than elementary-schooled parents to agree with the statement. Ninety percent of parents perceived opportunities for school involvement. Eighty percent of parents felt parent group meetings were responsive to their participation. These findings suggest that the opportunities-for-involvement component and the specific-invitations-from-school-groups component of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) model were positively affecting the parents' involvement decisions.

Investigation of the mix of demands on the parent's time, the third component of the model's choice of involvement factor, was conducted by requesting that parents select from a list of options, those barriers limiting their involvement. The literature concerned with barriers to parents' school involvement showed that lack of communication between parents and school personnel, restricted opportunities for involvement, and psychological and cultural differences between school personnel and parents would limit parent involvement (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996; Careaga, 1988; Davies, 1993; Garcia & Donato, 1991; Moles, 1993; Ramirez & Douglas, 1989; Zelazo, 1995). Within the particular type of educational program (two-way language immersion) considered in this study, it would be expected that these barriers would be minimized based on the programs' foundational criteria discussed in Christian (1996) and Lindholm (1990a).

In the current study, 58% of participants responded to questions about barriers to their involvement with the school program. The two major barriers to involvement were

employment and school schedule conflicts (52% of respondents) and lack of child care (16%) with 20% of respondents stating they could help their child better at home. Only one respondent reported a lack of school encouragement as a barrier while five respondents stated they did not have the language skills to help at school.

That 42% of participants did not report barriers to their involvement, and that the predominant barrier was the conflict between work and school schedules, suggests that the immersion programs have minimized the communicative and cultural barriers to parent involvement. This interpretation is strengthened by the finding that 93% of parents reported frequent or occasional attendance at parent group meetings or school-related activities. Zelazo (1995) reported three aspects affecting parent involvement: comfort with school personnel, efforts by staff to encourage parent involvement, and use of the home language for parent-staff interactions. Although these aspects are more fully investigated in the discussion of parents' satisfaction with the program, findings in the investigation of barriers to involvement imply that these aspects are being addressed in a positive manner.

Within the context of the two-way immersion program, the two initial factors comprising Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) model of the involvement process (the parent involvement decision and the forms of parental involvement) appear to be legitimate constructs, applicable to the ethno-linguistic and educational groupings considered in this study. However, the parent's sense-of-efficacy component was not shown to affect the level of parent involvement in the study.

As reported by Dauber and Epstein (1993) “. . . [the] most consistent predictors of parent involvement at school and at home are the specific school programs and teacher practices . . .” (p. 61). These predictors are congruent with Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (1995, 1997) components of general and specific opportunities for involvement as well as general and specific invitations for the parent’s involvement. The nature of the immersion program, successful efforts by school personnel, and the individual characteristics of the parents in this study appear to support the foundational constructs of the model of parent involvement processes.

Program Satisfaction

Parent satisfaction with the language immersion program was explored by eliciting parents’ agreement or disagreement with statements about their child’s development in both communicative and academic skills as well as administrative aspects of the program. Parent satisfaction in these areas would imply successful efforts by program personnel in meeting the challenges of multi-linguistic development and involvement of parents with the child’s educational program.

Although a majority of parents generally agreed that their child had access to the needed subject matter in the immersion program, significant differences occurred between groups when specific areas of the child’s curriculum were investigated. Among Hispanic Spanish-only speakers, 42% of parents did not agree or were not sure the program was effective in developing the child’s Spanish communication skills. Fifty-eight percent of parents from this group agreed that the program was effective. Seventy-

one percent of Hispanic English-only or bilingual parents felt the program was effective in developing Spanish communication skills; 96% of Euro-American English-only or bilingual speakers were in agreement that the program was developing the child's communication skills. Similar findings for educational level groups showed a lower percentage (42%) of elementary-educated parents satisfied with Spanish communication skills development.

Given the previous findings that Hispanic Spanish speakers and elementary-educated parents (essentially the same group) were more likely to spend time in their child's classroom, some concern should be noted of the 42% of parents in this group who reported dissatisfaction with the development of their child's Spanish communication skills. Perhaps their observations of classroom practices have allowed them to see discrepancies in the methods used to develop communication abilities.

Hispanic Spanish-only speakers were more likely than Hispanic English-only or bilingual speakers to be satisfied with the development of their child's English reading skills. However, Spanish-only speakers were more likely to not be satisfied with the child's development of English writing skills in comparison to Euro-American English-only or bilingual speakers. Again, the Spanish-only speakers' dissatisfaction in the area of English writing skills may be based on their higher levels of classroom participation and subsequent familiarity with classroom practices.

Over 80% of participants were satisfied that faculty and staff were balancing the needs of both linguistic groups and successful in promoting diversity throughout the

school community. Ninety-one percent of the parents would recommend the program to other parents. These findings were consistent with previous studies of parent satisfaction with two-way immersion programs (Lindholm & Cava, 1997, 1998; Saucedo, 1997).

Parents differed by educational groups in their perception of the district's support for the immersion programs. Twenty-nine percent of the participants were not sure or agreed that the district administration was not supportive of the school community. Nine percent of the participants did not answer this question. Elementary-educated parents were more likely to be dissatisfied with the district's support. Given the overall support for the immediate school personnel, this dissatisfaction may be a result of minimal contact between district personnel and the parents. However, the dissatisfaction may also be a result of a lack of support for the two-way immersion program by the school district administration.

Grade Level Differences

The findings in this study revealed no statistically significant differences among variables when the child's grade level was considered. Parents' enrollment reasons, parents' involvement levels, parent satisfaction with the administration of the program or satisfaction with the child's curriculum areas did not vary by the grade level of the child.

Examination of the percentages of parent involvement in the three grade levels does show interesting patterns. When classroom participation is considered, 79% of parents of kindergarten/first-grade children volunteer, 71% of parents with second-/

third-grade children participate, and 81% of parents with fourth-/fifth-grade children spend time in the classroom or on field trips. A similar pattern is found for parent club or school event attendance and for workshop and parent-teacher meeting participation. Parent-teacher meeting attendance showed the highest percentages (93%, 81%, and 86% for the respective grade levels). Although the percentage of involved parents drops somewhat during second/third grade, the overall rate of parent involvement is high.

These high levels of participation imply successful school personnel endeavors to involve parents. They support findings of Dauber and Epstein (1993) that “. . . *schools' practices* [italics in original] to inform and involve parents are more important than parent education, family size, marital status, and even grade level in determining whether . . . parents stay involved with their children's education . . .” (p. 68). Although research has shown declining levels of parent involvement with increasing grade levels of the child, this effect does not become a major factor until middle and high school grade levels (Chavkin & Williams, 1993; “School-Family Partnership,” 1996).

Summary

The purpose of the study was to explore the dynamics of parent involvement with their child's education within the context of two-way (Spanish/English) language immersion programs. The study investigated parent motivations for enrolling their child in the program, the types of involvement parents exhibited, and the parents' satisfaction with curricular and administrative aspects of the programs. These variables were

examined to determine whether differences occurred among ethno-linguistic, educational, and child's grade level groups.

Two current challenges to the public education system warranted the undertaking of this study. In both urban and rural areas of the United States, school districts have experienced an increase in the linguistic diversity of their student populations. The need to provide a successful academic experience for this population has been coupled with the need to foster greater linguistic and cultural understanding for majority language students. Two-way language immersion programs are one alternative to meeting this educational challenge.

A second challenge to all schools is to foster greater parent involvement with their child's educational program. Involvement among both majority and minority parents should be encouraged by school personnel. The literature on parent involvement with their child's education consistently shows that greater levels of involvement lead to higher levels of academic achievement by the child (Comer & Haynes, 1991; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Hidalgo, et al., 1995; Levine & Lesotte, 1995). Criteria for successful two-way immersion programs includes a strong parent involvement component leading to positive academic achievement for students (Christian, 1996; Lindholm, 1990a).

The study utilized a parent questionnaire to determine the attitudinal, involvement, and program satisfaction differences expressed by Euro-American English-only or bilingual parents, Hispanic Spanish-only parents, and Hispanic English-only or bilingual parents. Differences in educational level of the parents (elementary school-

educated, high school-educated, and college-educated) as well as grade levels of their child (kindergarten/first, second/third, fourth/fifth) were used in assessing the variables of motivation (integrative or instrumental), involvement, and program satisfaction.

Limitations of the study included the return rate of questionnaires, 34% of the distributed amount. Although this is an adequate rate of return for analyses, a greater response rate would have strengthened the validity of the studies findings. Self-selection of the participants implied that only those parents who were actively involved with the program would complete the questionnaire. Conversely, parents who were more displeased with the program may have been more likely to return the questionnaire. The closed-end format of questions concerning the parents' reasons for enrollment of their child and the study of Spanish by their child may preclude actual reasons for these actions. These limitations notwithstanding, the current study provides some insight to the role parents play in the two-way immersion programs.

Implications and Future Study

The study showed that although significant differences exist in certain areas, parents are generally satisfied with their child's educational program and participate frequently in a variety of involvement activities. School district administration support for the program appeared to be a concern of parents from lower educational groups. Greater communication between district staff and parents may alleviate these concerns.

The differences in motivational attitudes among ethno-linguistic groups may call into question the outcomes of Euro-American children's Spanish language study.

Gardner (1985) reported that an integrative motivation for learning languages is more conducive to the acquisition of communicative skills, a motivation lacking in Euro-American parents' reasons for enrolling their child in the program. The reported low levels of English-speaking children's interactions with Spanish-speaking children outside of the classroom may preclude higher levels of Spanish communication abilities among English-speaking children. Further study into the reasons for Euro-American children's lack of interactions with Spanish-speaking children outside of the program may suggest ways to increase the cultural exchanges necessary for Spanish language communication proficiency.

Hispanic parents' concerns for their own child's development of Spanish language skills should also be assessed. With the caveat that empirical research has yet to validate the hypothesis, consideration of Valdés' (1997) discussion on the quality of language instruction in two-way programs may suggest an explanation for Hispanic parents' concerns in the area of Spanish communication development. The demographics of the student population may become a factor in the presentation of the language curriculum. A language instruction program which must see to the needs of English language speakers, who have limited experience with the target language, may present an inadequate model of language use to native speakers of the target language. Whether the lack of an adequate language model is the cause of Hispanic parents' concerns would be a subject for future study.

Further thought and study must also be given to how these children will continue their studies as they enter middle schools, high schools, and colleges. Will the language skills being developed in the early years of schooling be allowed to progress to more advanced stages of bilingualism and biliteracy? Or will the hierarchical status of the languages be maintained, with English taking precedence as the children learn more of the role that languages play in the allocation of wealth, power, and resources?¹ The extensive research by Thomas and Collier (1997) has shown that, longitudinally, students in successful two-way immersion programs have achieved high academic outcomes even when the program was not carried through into the high school years. However, they stress the need for further longitudinal research to validate their findings.

The challenges to the public education system in the years to come can only be met by honest assessment of the programs designed to meet those challenges. This study has attempted to assess a sample of one such program, two-way language immersion, and the efforts of the program's personnel to involve parents with their child's educational and linguistic development. The study has illuminated some of the dynamics of parents' involvement in their child's education and raised questions concerning the effectiveness of the educational program.

¹ It is important to note that one year after data was collected for the study a California state law was enacted by initiative process to require all children whose primary language was not English to be placed in sheltered English immersion classes for one year, after which they would be placed in all-English mainstream classes. As of this writing (one month into the first school year of the English requirement), the status of two-way immersion programs had yet to be definitively decided by the State Board of Education.

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Appendix A

Parent Questionnaire

Important: YOU DO NOT NEED TO WRITE YOUR NAME OR CHILD'S NAME ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

Part 1. Background

1.1 Your relationship to child(ren) enrolled in the program: Mother _____ Father _____ Other _____
 Child(ren)'s grade level: K ____ 2nd ____ 4th ____

1.2 What is your and your spouse's ethnic background?

You	Your spouse
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Hispanic/Latino
 Caucasian/Anglo
 African-American
 Asian-American
 American Indian/Alaskan Native

1.3 What is the highest level of education that you and your spouse have completed?

You	Your spouse	You	Your spouse
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Elementary
 Junior High/Middle School
 High School or equivalent
 Community College/Vocational School
 4-year College/University Degree
 Professional Degree/Graduate School

1.4 What language(s) do you and your spouse speak? You: _____ Your Spouse: _____

1.5 What language did you first learn as a child before entering school? You: _____
 Your Spouse: _____

1.6 Please list the language(s) most often used in the home by the:

Mother to child _____
 Father to child _____
 Parents to each other _____

1.7 Please check below your own and your spouse's ability to communicate in Spanish.

You	Your spouse
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

No ability; cannot understand or speak the language at all.
 Can understand somewhat but cannot speak the language.
 Can understand and speak the language somewhat.
 Can understand and speak the language very well.
 Native speaker, or native-like ability in the language.

1.8 Have you ever studied Spanish? _____ Yes _____ No --- If yes, for how long? _____

1.9 What are the *three most important reasons* for enrolling your child in the immersion program? (Put a 1 next to the MOST IMPORTANT, a 2 next to the SECOND MOST IMPORTANT, a 3 next to the THIRD MOST IMPORTANT)

- ☐ it is our neighborhood school
- ☐ it is a high quality academic program
- ☐ my child will be able to communicate with family, friends, or other Spanish speaking people
- ☐ my child will have an academic or career advantage
- ☐ my child will have a stronger identity as a bilingual-bicultural/multicultural individual

Part 2. Participation

2.1 How did you learn about the program? (Please mark all that apply)

- ☐ Parent handbook from district
- ☐ Recruited by school staff
- ☐ Friend/family member who has a child enrolled in the program
- ☐ Newspaper articles or advertisements about school
- ☐ Other _____

2.2 Please mark any of the following activities in which you participate:

- ☐ None
- ☐ Volunteer in classroom at least once
- ☐ Volunteer in classroom frequently
- ☐ Help outside of class (e.g., field trips)
- ☐ Serve on school and/or district committees
- ☐ Help with parent club
- ☐ Help with or attend school activities or events
- ☐ Other _____

2.3 I am unable to help at school because: (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Employment and school schedules conflict
- ☐ Transportation difficulties
- ☐ Lack of child care
- ☐ Lack of classroom skills
- ☐ Lack of language skills
- ☐ Lack of school encouragement
- ☐ Can help child better at home

2.4 Please mark the following types of school activities you have attended:

- ☐ None
- ☐ Spanish language classes
- ☐ English language classes
- ☐ Parent Workshops/Conferences
- ☐ Teacher/parent communication meetings
- ☐ Other _____

2.5 How often do you attend parent group meetings and school-related activities?

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Frequently

2.6 I do not become involved with parent group activities because:

- ☐ Employment schedule conflicts with meeting times
- ☐ Lack of child care
- ☐ Lack of encouragement from group
- ☐ Lack of knowledge about school affairs

2.7 Check two (2) strategies frequently used to help with your child's homework or reading.

- ☐ I give answers when work is difficult for my child.
- ☐ I encourage my child to complete work on his/her own.
- ☐ I suggest different ways to solve problems.
- ☐ My child rarely asks for help with homework.

Part 3. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Bilingual Immersion Program. (CIRCLE ONE ANSWER FOR EACH STATEMENT.) If more than one child is enrolled, answer questions using the oldest child as the example.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4	5
3.1	I am satisfied that the Two-Way Immersion Program is giving my child access to the subject matter that s/he needs					
3.2	I am <u>not</u> satisfied that the program is effective in developing my child's ability to communicate in <i>Spanish</i> .	1	2	3	4	5
3.3	I am satisfied that the program is effective in developing my child's ability to read in <i>English</i> .	1	2	3	4	5
3.4	I am <u>not</u> satisfied that the program is effective in developing my child's ability to write in <i>English</i> .	1	2	3	4	5
3.5	Hispanic students, parents, staff and community members are made to feel like a valuable part of our school culture.	1	2	3	4	5
3.6	The faculty and staff have been successful in promoting diversity and understanding among the school community.	1	2	3	4	5
3.7	The faculty and staff are successful in balancing the needs and concerns of both English and Spanish speaking communities.	1	2	3	4	5
3.8	The administration in our school district office is <u>not</u> supportive of the needs and concerns of the school community.	1	2	3	4	5
3.9	I would recommend this program to other parents.	1	2	3	4	5
3.10	Studying Spanish is important for my child (oldest child) because it will allow him/her to be more comfortable with other Spanish speakers.	1	2	3	4	5
3.11	Studying Spanish is important for my child because it will allow him/her to meet and converse with more and varied people.	1	2	3	4	5
3.12	Studying Spanish is important for my child because it will enable him/her to better understand and appreciate Hispanic culture.	1	2	3	4	5
3.13	Studying Spanish is important for my child because s/he will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups.	1	2	3	4	5
3.14	Studying Spanish is important for my child because s/he will need it for his/her future career.	1	2	3	4	5
3.15	Studying Spanish is important because it will make my child smarter.	1	2	3	4	5
3.16	I have the academic skills to help my child (oldest child) with homework.	1	2	3	4	5

3.17	I have the language skills to help my child with homework.	1	2	3	4	5
3.18	My involvement as a parent is important to the school community.	1	2	3	4	5
3.19	There are many opportunities for school/classroom participation.	1	2	3	4	5
3.20	Parent group meetings are responsive to my participation.	1	2	3	4	5

Part 4. Please indicate how often you participate in the following activities.

		Almost Never	1-2 times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	Usually Daily
4.1	I/My spouse read with my child in Spanish.	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	I/My spouse read with my child in English.	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	I/My spouse check out library books or buy books in Spanish	1	2	3	4	5
4.4	Spanish speaking children come to our house to play with my child	1	2	3	4	5
4.5	My child goes to the homes of other Spanish speaking children	1	2	3	4	5

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY!
COPIES OF THE RESULTS WILL BE SENT TO YOUR SCHOOL

Appendix B

Parent Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As a parent/guardian who has enrolled your child in a Bilingual Immersion Program, you are invited to participate in a research study on why parents enroll their children in a bilingual immersion program. This study is being conducted under the guidance of Dr. Kathryn Lindholm, who has directed evaluation research on Bilingual Immersion Programs for the past twelve years. The study will address your views about your own language and cultural experience, your role in your child's language learning, and your views about the Bilingual Immersion Program. We are interested in gathering information about why parents enroll their child in a bilingual immersion program, the amount of parent involvement with the program, and parents' participation in their child's second-language learning.

We would greatly appreciate it if you would take the time to complete the enclosed questionnaire, which will take approximately fifteen to twenty minutes.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. The responses that you give on the questionnaire will not affect your child's grades or future participation in the Bilingual Immersion Program. Your responses on the questionnaire will be available only to the researchers; your responses will not be seen by teachers, staff, or administration. You have the right to refuse to respond to any item or section on the questionnaire. Your individual privacy and that of your child will be maintained as there will be no way to identify you or your child on the questionnaire.

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact--anonymously, if you wish--the Human Subjects Protection Committee, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA 95192, or by phone at (408) 924-2480.

Thank you very much for your cooperation. If you would like to participate, please complete the enclosed parent questionnaire and return it in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope as soon as possible. Please do not write your name, your child's name, or address anywhere on the outside of the envelope. This procedure is important to guarantee the confidentiality of your responses on the questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Gary Cava
Graduate Student
San Jose State University

Kathryn J. Lindholm, Ph.D.
Professor and Bilingual Immersion Program
Evaluator
San Jose State University

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

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