Running Head: AUTHENTIC LANGUAGE OPPORTUNTIES:

An Alternative Dual Language Model (ADLM)

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2006 AERA Meeting

Moscone Center, San Francisco

Authentic Language Opportunities: An Alternative Dual Language Model

Schools need to take steps in order to change their social climates of isolation, as well as linguistic and cultural division. Newcomers and other English Learners have few opportunities to be included and interact with their mainstream peers, dual immersion programs are limited largely to the primary grades, and there is a lack of response by administrators to see the potential language resource new immigrants could provide.

Newcomers often find themselves isolated linguistically and culturally from mainstream students. Some of this isolation can come from the school environment as well. When newcomers are placed in a mainstream classroom. They have an inability to respond to others who do not speak their language. So, they continue to be an outsider until they achieve the basic ability to communicate and feel like they belong. As a result, they may lose their desire to learn.

As noted in a review of *School Connections: U.S. Mexican Youth, Peers, and School Achievement*, the author identifies "the role of the peer social capital in school engagement and achievement; students' willful attitude of not learning as a process of peer group solidarity; and the importance of a sense of belonging and group membership in the absence of which students will create negative peer subcultures," (Teaver, 2005, p. 21) as overarching themes in schools.

A number of dual immersion programs exist in the United States promote linguistic and cultural sharing as students study in the academic domains. These types of programs are generally limited to the elementary grades. According to the Directory of Two-Way Bilingual Immersion Programs in the United States, as of February 22, 2005, there were 312 programs nationwide that utilized English and the minority language 50% of the time and were content-driven.

While dual immersion programs may be an option, the overall implementation is time-consuming and costly. In an environment where anti-bilingual initiatives pass such as California Proposition 227, there may be a reluctance to implement such programs. However, an alternative dual language program could be less costly to implement and may provide some of the benefits of a dual immersion program in terms of linguistic and cultural sharing.

A barrier to implementing an alternative dual language program can be a lack of awareness and utilization of "human resources" by district and/or school administrators. Because school systems generally work from the top down, it becomes the responsibility of school leaders to change school climate and provide interventions as well as advocate for student inclusion. Administrators should determine whether youth should be included as "either resources or liabilities who promote or impede academic engagement and achievement" (Teaver, 2005, p. 22).

How can administrators and lead teachers include these children in the school agenda so as to change the present school climate—a climate in which non-native speakers have few opportunities to participate in authentic conversation with their mainstream counterparts? How can we make schools more inclusive and not only foster linguistic but cross-cultural communication? "The proactive school demonstrates the importance of school leadership and policies; it encourages cross-ethnic relationships and provides students with opportunities for interracial and interethnic border crossing" (Teaver, 2005, p. 22).

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is twofold: First, to reveal the modes of inquiry and findings of a case study about three dyads of Spanish Learners and English Learners who

participate in an alternative dual language program at a middle school based on the

following research questions: "How do English Learners and Spanish Learners negotiate

meaning in a peer-interactive dual language environment?" and "How do English

Learners and Spanish Learners perceive the dual language program and working together

with peers?" Second, to provide an alternative dual language model of what other

schools might do to promote English Learner empowerment, inclusion, and linguistic and

cultural sharing.

　　While the alternative dual language program under study does not meet the

criteria for dual-immersion programs and is not content-driven, it is a microcosm of the

dual language movement. More importantly, an alternative dual language program could

provide schools with the wherewithal to change the status quo—the lack of inclusion of

immigrant students. Students could have opportunities to get to know their mainstream

peers, learn and teach language. Administrators and teachers could positively identify

newcomer as language and cultural resources versus Limited English Proficient (LEP) or

"at-risk."

Theoretical Framework

　　While interaction studies and their instruments may not have specifically focused

on language practice, social interaction, and student perceptions of their interaction in an

alternative dual language program, the contributions of these researchers and their

instruments provide an invaluable backdrop for this case study.

　　Instruments from the 1970s and 1980s intended for student-teacher reflection via

classroom observations were created by researchers including Flanders, who developed

Interaction Analysis in 1970, Moskowitz, who developed the Flanders' Interaction

Analysis categories (FLint) in 1966, and Allen, Fröhlich, and Spada who developed

Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) in 1984 (Allwright & Bailey, 1991).

Bellack's (1966) study of classroom communication was expanded by John Fanselow (1977), who developed Foci for Observing Communication Used in Settings (FOCUS) to review not only teaching behaviors but also language communication in or outside of the classroom. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) also looked at categories of classroom communication not all too dissimilar from Fanselow's.

Meanwhile, other researchers, such as Long, Adams, McLean, and Castaños (1976) identified specific strategies students used with peers (cited in Celce-Murcia, 1985). Wong Fillmore (1983) and Ventriglia (1982) also studied how the characteristics of verbal fluency and others increases exposure to the new language and their ability to acquire it, as well as the use of conversational strategies by young bilingual children engaged in social interaction, respectively.

While these above-mentioned studies are enlightening in terms of language pedagogy, the field is still lacking in its exploration of the types of interaction that occur when middle school students attempt to learn language from their peers with little direct assistance from a teacher in an alternative dual language setting.

Fanselow (1987) has suggested that alternative teaching methods, moves, and structures be used to change the routine ways of teaching. By looking at how children learn language we may discover ways in which language learners vary the themes they discuss and the teaching styles and strategies they employ.

The realization that second language acquisition and language learning cannot solely be accomplished through rote memorization of vocabulary, the study of grammar, nor repetition has led a number of researchers such as Cummins (1984, 2000), Thomas

and Collier (2002), Perez and Torres-Guzman (1992), Wong-Fillmore (1983), and

Ventriglia (1982) to promote authentic communication in social contexts.

Middle schools and high schools need to take advantage of their human language

resources. If language interaction does provide us with ways in which to learn language

and culture and can be an alternative or supplement to language classes, then it seems that

opportunities need to be provided to language learners so that they might "authentically"

practice, learn, and teach language with native speakers of the target language.

The research questions in this study use a qualitative approach that captures the

complex social as well as verbal dynamics that occur in dual language settings to increase

our understanding of the student-to-student relationship—a far cry from the teacher-

centered approaches so well chronicled in the history of language teaching.

Because dual language immersion and dual language interaction is a viable model

of collaborative aspects of language learning, it is important not only to study the ways in

which students interact in the dual language environment and the types of strategies that

they use, but also observe how they learn and construct language. "Languages reflect and

refract speakers' and writers' evaluative orientations and mediate their social

relationships and sympathetic understandings of the world" (Maguire & Graves, 2001, p.

590). How peers construct their language learning realities during their interaction can

provide invaluable insights for the language researcher as well as the teacher/practitioner.

With pressure from the California State Department of Education and other state

educational departments around the country to provide opportunities for multicultural

education, the results of this study provide data that may help others consider the

possibility of implementing peer-interactive multicultural environments for students

studying language at middle and high schools.

Alternative Dual Language Program Setting

The Alternative Dual Language Program took place at a rural middle school in Northern California. Of the 837 students, 70% were White, 21% Latino, and 9% other. The program took place in a math classroom from 1:30 to 3:00 pm on early-out Wednesdays and was supervised by the math teacher who did not intervene during language practice.

Three dyads of English Learners and Spanish Learners met one and one-half hours every Wednesday from February 12th to April 9th. Students spent 15 minutes setting up, 60 minutes practicing language (language alternated between English and Spanish—30 minutes for each language), and 10-15 minutes for journal writing and closure in a math classroom directly from the researcher's mainstream Spanish class. This format allowed Spanish Learners to leave their mainstream class once a week to practice language with the English Learners and still receive credit for the mainstream Spanish class.

The English Learners did not have to attend schools after 1:30 pm on Wednesdays. They volunteered their time from 1:30 to 3:00 pm to participate in this program.

Research Questions

The research questions driving this study of three dyads (English Learners paired with Spanish Learners) interacting in an alternative dual language setting are:

1. How do English Learners and Spanish Learners negotiate meaning in a peer-interactive dual language environment? (Who are they? What do they do and how do they interact together?)

2. How do English Learners and Spanish Learners perceive the dual language

program and working together with peers? (How do they perceive their peer

interaction and the challenges, frustrations, and rewards they may have

encountered?)

Selection of Participants

This study focuses on how newcomers (identified as English Learners with less

than three years experience living in the United States) and first-year Spanish language

students (with at least six months in a Spanish course) interact in a dual language setting.

The subjects were asked to volunteer. Of thirty-three students, five volunteered,

and another, Helen, was asked to participate after initially withdrawing her application.

She agreed to participate. For those selected, pseudonyms were used to protect the

confidentiality of the participants. The English Learner-Spanish Learner dyads consisted

of Sam and Leticia, Sylvia and Maru, and Helen and Teresa. (English Learners are native

speakers of Spanish who want to learn English. Spanish Learners are native speakers of

English who want to learn Spanish.)

The following criteria below allowed for analysis of language interaction between

purposefully sampled newcomers (English Learners) and their mainstream counterparts

(Spanish Learners)—the phenomenon under study.

English Learners were selected if they (1) were Spanish-speaking, (2) had not

lived in the United States longer than three years, (3) did not exceed intermediate scores

on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) or the Bilingual Syntax

Measure (BSM), (4) had at least an 80% attendance rate (as their presence was needed in

order to complete the study), and (5) volunteered in order to participate in the study.

Spanish Learners were selected if they (1) had taken at least six months of first-year Spanish, (2) had at least an 80% attendance rate, and (3) volunteered to participate in the study.

Modes of Inquiry

This case study explored how six middle school students between the ages of 12 and 14 interact in a dual language setting, each desiring to learn the native language of their peer, and, how they perceived their interaction.

The research is based on Patton's (2002) framework for qualitative case study and, in this case, two months of fieldwork is used to describe a single alternative dual language program and the interaction of three dyads of language learners. Using "multiple methods" triangulation, a variety of data was collected from journal entries, interviews, taped peer interaction, and researcher field notes that corroborated emerging stages and corresponding themes (Patton, 2002, p. 248).

All participants engaged in language interaction once a week on Wednesdays for two months. Language sessions alternated between Spanish and English each week. The entire language session lasted approximately 90 minutes—15 minutes for set-up, 60 minutes of alternating language interaction, and 10 minutes at the end of the session to complete journal entries.

Data Sources or Evidence

In order to determine "what" peers do and "how" they interact in an alternative dual language program in addition to participant perceptions, this qualitative case study was accomplished through "multiple methods" triangulation of data sources collected from: (1) journal entries; (2) interviews; (3) audio- and videotaped peer interaction; and (4) researcher field notes (Patton, 2002, p. 248).

Journal Entries

      The participants wrote weekly *journal responses* based on "guided" questions and statements such as, (1) Tell about what happened when you tried to communicate with your language partners today; (2) How did you feel about your communication today?; (4) What kinds of strategies do you and your partners use to help each other learn English or Spanish?

      Student journaling followed Patton's (2002) "guided" questioning method based on interviews. The idea is to ensure that participants are asked to respond to similar "focusing" questions that could be used to more readily identify patterns in their reports of their thoughts and actual interactions.

      Students were also given the option of writing journal reflections that were free-writes about their language experience and interactions. Because some students had written journal reflections but had not answered journal responses, the researcher combined the two reflective pieces that would provide a more detailed picture of what they reported thinking and doing during their weekly interaction.

      All journal responses and reflections were typewritten and organized chronologically on a spreadsheet to garner an idea of the types of themes that emerged at the beginning, middle and end of the program for all students. After some analysis, it was evident from their journal responses that all, except Maru, were either embarrassed, shy, and lacked confidence during their first experience. Other patterns emerged as well that identified specific stages that all three dyads went through during the program.

      Similar patterns and themes emerged from the journals that would be corroborated after analysis of transcribed interviews. For instance, the journal data that

indicated how participants became increasingly confident, closer, and perceived language improvement was reflected in interviews as well.

<u>Interviews</u>

The majority of the interviews utilized "The Interview-Guide" approach so that the participants responded to similar questions during interviews (Patton 2002). This approach was used to find out their perceptions about their language practice, interaction, and experiences, as well as the program in general.

The researcher employed open-ended questions but guided questions were employed to glean specific information relevant to the research questions posed. Therefore, interviews during and after the program attempted to answer the overarching research questions.

Interview data was collected from all participants based on the above questions and any other linking questions that further probed the topic. The researcher then transcribed the data verbatim for each person interviewed. "Doing all or some of your own interview transcriptions…provides an opportunity to get immersed in the data, an experience that usually generates emergent insights" (Patton, 2002, p. 441).

Patterns and insights emerged using cross-case analysis as the researcher "grouped together answers from different people to common questions" (Patton, 2002, p. 440). These interviews focused on three central issues: (1) What can you tell me about your experience during the language sessions? (i.e., What happened? What did you do? Why did you do it?), (2) How do you perceive these language sessions? (i.e., What do you think about? What is it like?), and (3) What can you suggest about the program? (i.e., What do you think about the program? What is your role in it?)

Participant responses were then organized and categorized according to similar answers as well as patterns based on verbatim quotes. Similar answers led to emergent themes. As in their journals, interviewees indicated how they became increasingly more confident in themselves as language learners, felt positive about the program, how they enjoyed working with their language partners and had become closer, and how their language improved over time.

It was also important to consider these questions while analyzing the data: "How have the people in this setting constructed reality? What are their reported perceptions, 'truth,' explanations, beliefs, and world-view? What are the consequences of their constructions for their behaviors and those with whom they interact" (Patton, 2002, p. 96).

For instance, some participants described interactions differently. Sam and Helen revealed that Leticia and Teresa started to engage in "off-task" behavior. They reported how the two cursed on occasion in Spanish, mumbled underneath their breaths, and spoke Spanish so quickly that the English Learners had a hard time keeping up. Leticia and Teresa, however, never reported speaking too fast or "goofing off," but they did say how much fun they had in the program. Analysis of taped interactions later verified the "truth" about their interactions, but the tapes could only limitedly provide for participant perceptions in terms of their own truths, explanations, and beliefs.

Thus, the interviews provided rich information from the participants that could not be observed on tape that delved into how they thought about themselves, their peers, and the dual language interaction process. The patterns that unfolded from these interviews were corroborated by the journal entries and taped interactions that reached a point of saturation (Ambert, Adler, & Detzner, 1995). While only Helen and Leticia

were interviewed once, rich dialogue and verbatim quotes from language partners also

helped confirm how they interacted and what they did during their interactions.

<u>Tapes</u>

While interviews provided in-depth information about the participants and their

perceptions, the video- and audiotapes and their transcription provided opportunities for

the researcher to enter the participants' world. "…Comfort with tape recorders and video

cameras has made it increasingly possible to use such technology without undue intrusion

when observing programs…" (Patton, 2002, p. 308). The taped data allowed the

researcher to delve unobtrusively into their language practice and behavior during these

interactions. Verbatim quotes tie information from various interviews and student

journaling sources that serve to enhance interpretive validity of this case study (Johnson,

1997).

Each interactive session was taped from beginning to end. At the end of the

program the tapes were transcribed verbatim. There were "holes" when some of the

language learners spoke too softly or mumbled, but the majority of tapes were transcribed

in their entirety in both English and Spanish.

The researcher made sense of the what the participants said, looking for patterns,

"putting together what is said in one place with what is said in another place, and

integrating what different people have said" (Patton, 2002, p. 380) to triangulate the data

from not only the tapes, but the interviews and journals as well.

 The themes and sub-themes were validated as the journals, interviews, and tapes

corroborated what happened throughout the two initial months of the alternative dual

language program. What was said in the journal could be corroborated by what was said

in an interview as well as what was seen and/or heard on an audio- or videotape. What could not be corroborated was also included in the results.

This methodological triangulation of data presented a clearer picture of the particular case study—three dyads of English Learners and Spanish Learners engaged in an alternative dual language program in a rural middle school setting with no curricular supervision. This case study explored what language learners did, how they did it, and how they perceived their interactions in a setting with minimal intervention by adults. In addition, it explored how those students perceived their self-directed language practice. They engaged in an authentic dual language classroom setting whereby the researcher was a distant observer discovering the naturally unfolding events of the students' interactions during and after the alternative dual language program ended.

<div align="center">**Researcher Role**</div>

The researcher role in this study is based on Patton's "Dimensions Showing Fieldwork Variations" (2002, p. 277). In looking at these dimensions, the researcher was one of an outsider yet long-term observer who obtained partial participant feedback and disclosed some of the program to the participants while taking the information to create a holistic view of the mixed peer interactions in the program being studied.

While the researcher role tended to be "etic" in terms of researcher absence during journal writing as well as the time when students are being taped, that role changed in its dimension during interviews. In this case, the researcher's role changed to one of asking as well as sharing. The researcher conducted the inquiry and obtained participant feedback that provided new as well as corroborative information concerning themes that emerged in journals and taped interactions.

While gaining this participant feedback through interviews, there were times when the students asked questions about the program and their role in it or discussed some of the frustrations or challenges they faced. On those rare occasions, the researcher intervened. For instance, Sam mentioned becoming frustrated because the English Learners did not want to engage in some activities, or they would speak too quickly. The researcher offered tips for handling some of those less agreeable situations.

Researcher Bias

Bias is inherent as the researcher is interested in the exploration of an alternative dual language program and possibilities for increasing interaction as well as linguistic and cultural sharing. The research is not "disinterested." According to Gunnar Myrdal (1969), "The only way we can strive for 'objectivity' in theoretical analysis is to expose the valuation in full light, make them conscious and specific, and explicit, and permit them to determine the theoretical research" (Myrdal, 1969, p. 56).

Assumptions

Newcomers are provided with few opportunities to interact verbally with their peers (Dubetz, 1995). Based on my experiences as an English Language Development Chair and Bilingual Teacher, even if newcomers are included in a mainstream with an aide, these students still remain linguistically isolated from other students. Newcomers may be placed in P.E. class or during lunch with mainstream students, but they generally associate with other English Learners due to the language and cultural barrier.

Schools, rarely, provide opportunities for newcomers to interact directly with mainstream peers. Due to this lack of intervention on the part of schools, newcomers rarely venture outside of their newcomer group. English Learners are rarely tapped as a valuable language resource. Lack of interaction prevents these students from being

included in the mainstream and adjust to their new world or make friends with

linguistically different peers.

Limitations

The limitations in this study include time constraints (e.g., students rushing to

write journal responses because they were concerned about missing the bus), difficulty in

scheduling interviews, and the regrouping of students outside of their dyads with other

language partners due to absences sometimes caused disruptions in their activity as well

as off-task behavior.

While student journals and interviews are self-reported information, it is assumed

that this information is honest and accurate. However, it is normal to find in this type of

study the inclusion of self-reported data, as well as author data, and interactional data in

the pursuit of multiple methods of data analysis as a way to achieve internal validity.

This study does not address the process of teacher interaction with the students

except for any interventions that may have affected the outcomes of the study.

Additionally, the study was also limited to the exploration of dual language interaction

between three dyads of English Learners and a Spanish Learners in a rural middle school

setting. While this study cannot be generalized to populations as a quantitative study, this

qualitative case study can be informative to researchers doing a similar study of a similar

population participating in a similar alternative dual language program.

Findings

Journal, interview, and data from tapes provided the framework for the theoretical

or emergent model of the alternative dual language program (ADLM). This model

represents the stages that unfolded as well as the challenges the participants faced.

Several distinct themes materialized according to particular periods of time that are akin to the stages students went through and talked about in reporting their perceptions of their experiences in the dual language program: These three stages are referred to as (1) *Language Apprehension*, (2) *Language Initiation*, and (3) *Language Acquisition*.

Table 1. Theoretical model of challenges participants encounter during an alternative dual language program.

Language Apprehension →	Language Initiation →	Language Acquisition
Participants question their • confidence, • language ability, • teaching ability, • strategies they use. Participants are frustrated.	Participants begin to • problem solve, • initiate language strategies, • increase their confidence, but still have some anxiety, • perceive some language acquisition, • engage in some conversations. Participants still become frustrated and some off-task behavior occurs.	Participants • continue to problem-solve, initiate strategies, • engage in more conversations, • humor becomes highly evident, • confidence and comfort are also evident, • perceive language acquisition, Participants appear to be less frustrated about language, but some off-task behavior still occurs.

This theoretical model is faithful to the data that unfolded from Journals, Interviews, Analysis of Tapes, and Field Notes.

Major themes that emerged within or across stages are: Confidence (Low and Increasing), Language Practice (subthemes: Structured Language Practice or Conversations), Frustrations and Misunderstandings (including off-task behavior), Strategies, Optimism, Humor, Perceived Acquisition. While these themes exist in each

of these stages, some themes are more pervasive than others during the chronological encounters of the students.

When the participants went through the Language Apprehension stage, they encountered a lack of confidence in themselves, their language and teaching ability, and were frustrated with their inability to communicate in the target language.

When they entered the second stage, Language Initiation, they began to problem solve. They overcame some of their lack of confidence by initiating games and strategies to learn and teach language. With the focus on games and strategies such as spelling tests in the form of structured language practice, they were not focusing on their anxiety or inability to communicate. However, they continued to be frustrated with their language ability.

By the Language Acquisition stage, students appeared more relaxed and mentioned having fun. Laughter, games, and having fun (taking the program a little less seriously) became associated with greater confidence, perceived language ability, and fewer frustrations.

These stages and themes are more thoroughly explained via the additional findings below that help answer the research questions delineated at the outset of the study.

Revisiting Research Question #1

Just exactly what the students did together, how they did it, as well as how they perceived their interaction was the focus of this study. The first research question this case study focused on specifically was "How do English Learners and Spanish Learners negotiate meaning in a peer-interactive dual language environment?" (What do they do together? How do they do it?).

A number of findings based on the triangulation of data specifically address the first question: (1) interactive peers play games rather than converse, (2) conversations unfold within the context of personal, familial, and social topics, (3) regrouping from original dyads disrupts the participants' learning, (4) dyads in proximity to one another influence the activities they choose to do, (5) all dyads go through similar stages but retain their own characteristic ways of interacting, and correspondingly, (6) students use a variety of strategies to negotiate meaning.

Interactive Peers Play Games Rather than Converse

The findings suggest participants at the beginning of their interaction in an alternative dual language program choose to play games in order to avoid awkward and uncomfortable conversations in which they cannot find the words to express themselves and/or they become embarrassed.

Because students complained that keeping up a conversation was difficult and uncomfortable due to the long pauses, the researcher allowed them to brainstorm ideas for their language practice. Per Maru's second interview, "In the beginning because like one couldn't understand how the other felt about talking and not speaking well. Before, the only thing that we knew to do was play cards and not anymore." So, instead of trying to keep up with conversations, students predominantly played games throughout their language practice.

While all three dyads played games, two of the three dyads (Helen-Teresa and Sylvia-Maru) predominantly played games or involved themselves in other forms of structured language practice such as matching, hangman, and concentration more than they conversed from February 19th to March 19th. For most dyads this game-play

intermixed with short conversations continued until the end of the program, with the exception of Sam and Leticia.

Unlike the other two dyads, Sam and Leticia's conversations consisted of more than 10 exchanges using sentences, not just the repetition of words. Sam noted in his journal that Leticia and he conversed as early as February 19th. According to the taped recordings, those conversations were in Spanish. While Sam and Leticia also played games, they interrupted their games, however, to engage in conversations about family and friends. From February 12th to April 2nd, it was Sam who engaged Leticia in Spanish conversations. However, after April 2nd, the conversations were in English, and Leticia would confirm being able to comprehend Sam in the final Language Acquisition stage.

"It was difficult in the beginning [of the language sessions] but the good thing is, he understands me," wrote Leticia on March 26th. This is the first time Leticia wrote about being understood. By April 2nd, she talked about finally being able to communicate, "It was a lot of work, but I was able to communicate." She continues, "I felt happy because I knew how to help him."

Why do some dyads such as Leticia and Sam have more conversations than others? Sam and Leticia engaged in more than just language practice but communicated about family, friends, and school.

Conversations Unfold around Personal, Familial, and Social Topics

The findings show that conversations existed and were reported in journals, interviews and seen in taped interactions. However, journals and interviews could not be used to distinguish between short and long conversations. It was the analysis of tapes that further revealed why conversations tended to become longer.

Shorter conversations are identified as fewer than 10 exchanges, while longer (or "extended") conversations of 10 exchanges or more emerged when personal, familial, and social topics were discussed. In other words, students converse more when the topics are about their personal lives, including family, friends, or seeing each other in the social environment of school life.

"Vygotsky saw an interactive relationship between language, thought, and social conditions… The interpretive rules of language use are acquired through social interaction at a very early age" (Perez & Torres-Guzman 1992, p. 27). In this case, not only social interaction but also social topics of personal concern to mixed peers engaging in an alternative dual language program promote extended conversations.

Classroom researchers encourage the use of students' backgrounds to increase meaningful and authentic communication in the classroom as well. Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2000) explain the importance of students' personal experiences: "New information is tied to students' background and experiences, and strategies are used to scaffold students' acquisition of knowledge and skills" (p. 41). When participants in this study used meaningful language, their conversations became extended.

Helen and Teresa engaged in more than 10 exchanges when they talked about their birthdays and ages. Maru and Sylvia's exchanges extended beyond 10 when they talked about their favorite dishes.

Sam and Leticia's conversations that extended beyond 10 exchanges and up to 50, mostly revolved around personal or family topics. As found in the analysis of tapes, Sam and Leticia talked about their family and their houses. At one point, Leticia found out that not only does Sam have a sister but all of the animals in his family are females,

which caused Leticia to laugh at his female-dominated life and possibly helped lower her

level of anxiety.

Another instance when conversational exchanges unfolded far beyond 10

exchanges occurs when Sam and Leticia talked about their families. Leticia even fibbed

about some of her family being from Russia. On other occasions when the Leticia-Sam

dyad was regrouped with Teresa, their conversations revolved around what happened

during P.E. On a couple of occasions, they talked about how fast they ran the mile in

P.E. One of those conversation digressed to who got into a fight at school that day and

then to the following topic—how Sam eats so much and is as skinny as "un palo" (a

broomstick).

> T: Un palo [a stick].
> S: ¿Qué en [what in] English? I don't know what that means in English.
> T: Palo de escoba, palo de escoba. [Broomstick, broomstick.]
> L: No eets brum.

Sam and Leticia carry on a conversation about their family and, in this case, they

talk about the houses they live. Sam draws conversation out of Leticia by using drawings

to prompt her responses.

> L: My house color is brown.
> S: Brown house.
> L: Uh huh.
> S: My house is white and green.
> L: Oh.
> S: Yeah, two stories, like ladders.
> L: Dos pisos.
> S: ¿Dos pisos?
> L: Pisos.
> S: Stairs.
> L: Uh huh. One.
> S: Only one floor. ¿Sí?
> L: Uh huh. Sí.
> S: ¿Qué? What's floor? Not carpeta, floor. It's carpeta (he appears to get
>   an answer from either from Maru or Teresa.)
> S: I only have one, too. Backyard?

L: Uhm hm.
S: Backyard, like uhm, like he's your house and here's driveway where
     your car goes.
L: Uhm hm.
S: Car with wheels. And there's a front door. Say it's my house. I'll
     draw my house.
L: Uhm, garage.

Thus, conversations or real communication unfolded during familial, personal and social topics. Whether Sam and Leticia conversed did not appear to influence the others unless someone like Teresa was included in their group.

Despite the emergence of fewer conversations for two dyads and many more for Sam and Leticia, mixed dyads had a tendency to focus on structured language practice. In doing so, most structured language practice took place in the form of games or tests. When students engaged in structured language practice, other mixed dyads saw what they were doing and often followed their lead.

Regrouping of Original Dyads can Disrupt Participant Learning

Sylvia and Maru were able to work together during most of their sessions since they were rarely absent. However, others had to be regrouped when their language partner was absent. These regroupings affected the social dynamics of original dyads. The findings also suggest that peers prefer, initially, to be in their original dyads and not split up once they have begun to build trust and a pattern of learning. Disrupting the original dyads affects the participants in different ways.

Each dyad has its own dynamics. Each dyad has its own way of learning and any regrouping changes the way learning takes place as new individuals are added or taken away from the original group. For instance, when Teresa was regrouped with Sam and Leticia instead of her original language partner, Helen, she engaged in more conversation than structured language practice. The first time Leticia was regrouped with Helen and

Teresa, off-task behavior occurred. When Helen attempted to keep them on task

February 28th, English Learners Leticia and Teresa began to get off task. The evidence

during the taped interaction showed how both Leticia and Teresa would carry on private

conversations, speak too quickly, and use a lot of slang, none of which could be

interpreted by Helen. Although Helen does not write in her journal on February 28th, she

does mention the cursing between Leticia and Teresa on March 5th even though they were

placed in separate groups.

The dynamics of the groups change once the original patterns are disrupted. In

the case of Leticia and Teresa, their "private conversations" continued whether they were

regrouped or placed apart. It was in the regroupings, though, that off-task behavior was

most prevalent. As Perez and Torres-Guzman (1992) note,

> Variations and change occur in the relationships between individuals and groups
>
> over extended periods of time and at times when different groups come into
>
> contact with each other. It is important to understand both patterns and variations
>
> as a way of speaking about the dynamics of a group… (p. 5).

In other instances, when groupings were changed, it did not necessarily lead to

off-task behavior, but such groupings would assume the culture of the two most dominant

people in the group. In the case of Spanish Learner Helen and English Learner Teresa

and their regrouping with English Learner Leticia, Helen mentioned having little control

over how and what Leticia and Teresa did. In taped interactions, Leticia and Teresa

speak to Helen but then continue with their private conversations. The dialogue was not

geared toward Helen's language learning but their diversion.

When Sam and Leticia's dyad is interrupted and Helen becomes part of the

regrouping on March 12th, Teresa takes a far stronger role from the beginning and starts

creating cards with Sam and Leticia. In the case of two Spanish Learners and one

English Learner, Leticia, the English Learner, tended to take a passive role. Leticia rarely

commented or engaged in the decision-making process or determined what they would

do. Most conversations were in English as Helen and Sam discussed how they would

teach Leticia. Leticia interacted less. However, once Helen left just before the second

half of the language session began, Leticia and Sam resumed their normal form of

language interaction, (i.e., games interspersed with long conversations).

On March 25th, Helen is absent and Teresa is regrouped with Sam and Leticia.

The social dynamics of the regrouping of Helen and Teresa with Sylvia on March

5th also show, per analysis of tapes, that Helen and Sylvia dominated the language

session. While Teresa participated, her role was minimal by comparison.

On March 25th, Helen is absent and Teresa is regrouped with Sam and Leticia.

While Sam has trouble getting Teresa and Leticia to initially focus, he is patient, uses

humor, and appears to understand their conversations. Sam's ability to participate and

joke with them steers them away from their private conversations. They actually begin to

talk at length about their times for the mile, what else happened at school, and why Sam

as skinny as a "broomstick" if he eats so much, calling him "palo de escoba"

(broomstick).

The dynamics resulting from the grouping of students may have implications for

setting up alternative dual language programs at school sites. This leads to the subject of

"future implications" for teachers interested in setting up alternative dual language

programs and for researchers studying such programs that can be found later in this

chapter.

Dyads in Proximity to One Another Influence the Activities They Choose to Do

Although peers had a tendency to work with their original language partners, the findings indicate they did rely on other language learners' ideas about game-play, language practice or language help. The February 19th taped interactions show the dyads playing hangman, participants talked about playing hangman in their interviews, and they all noted "hangman" as the game of choice in their journals. "We played hangman a lot, and when we didn't understand what letter we were telling each other we would write it down," writes Helen.

Sam also played hangman but drew as well, "We played hangman in English. Then we drew pictures and guessed what they were in Spanish and English." Of the two dyads, however, Sam is the only one who also wrote about conversing, a characteristic that would carry over into future meetings during the Language Initiation and Language Acquisition stages.

In other instances, a dyad or grouping of students would see what other language peers were doing and then copy as well as share their strategies. Maru and Sylvia shared the word bank they had created with Sam and Leticia. Sam looked over and asked Helen if Teresa knew how to play hangman during the Language Initiation stage, and then proceeded to play hangman. When students like Maru and Sylvia started to give spelling tests, others followed their lead. Students wrote about playing hangman, giving spelling tests and then others would also give spelling tests that same week or the following week. Evidence of participants playing hangman and matching games was also corroborated in journal reports, interviews, and taped interactions.

While the participants in this program were not privy to ideas of the "natural approach," it should be noted that they incorporated some of the activities suggested in

this type of classroom research. Richard-Amato (1996) cites that the use of "jazz chants, music, games…can produce extremely rich environments where concepts are reinforced through a variety of ways" (p. 128). Richard-Amato also notes that topics should be relevant to the goals of students.

Dyads Go Through Similar Stages But to Different Degrees

There are differences in how students interact with their dyads. The data also suggest that although all dyads go through the same stages, but the degree with which each participant advances through the stages is different. For instance, by March 19th, Sylvia states that she is beginning to understand Maru in both English and Spanish. It is not until April 2nd that Helen mentions the same. While Sam is able to engage in conversations as early as March 5th with Leticia in Spanish, it is not until April 9th that Leticia is able to do so as well. Perez and Torres-Guzman (1992) suggest,

> Acknowledging broad social patterns is important, but we believe it is vital to recognize that human beings are adaptive, creative, and dynamic. They constantly challenge the standards governing group behavior, placing their stamp on what occurs. When individuals or groups of people are confronted with the new or the unknown, the cultural knowledge they have acquired through lived experiences and histories helps them to think about the new situation and helps them to frame new creations or solutions. (p. 5)

The participants adapted to their environment at their own rate and level. It appears that all participants were apprehensive during their first encounter. Journal entries and interviews predominantly support these findings, as did field notes indicating that participants were initially frustrated by their inability to communicate.

While Sam writes about low confidence in his journal and mentions that he was initially unsure in his interviews, he ends up appearing more confident than many of the others. Maru also appears more confident and even mentions so in her first journal entry. However, when it came to her interviews, she also admits that she was apprehensive and nervous about her first encounter. Also, on the first day of the program all participants

Table 3. Participant theme comparisons supported by journals, interviews, and field notes during Language Apprehension.

	Confidence (embarrassment, shyness, nervousness)	Language Practice (1) SLP (2) Conversation	Frustrations and Misunderstandings (not being able to communicate, long pauses, forgetting what was learned)
Sam	Low – J, I, FN	*Conversation attempts – FN	J, I, FN
Leticia	Low – J, I, FN	Conversation attempts – FN	J, I, FN
Sylvia	Low – J, I, FN	Conversation attempts – FN	J, I, FN
Maru	Low – I, FN Increasing – J.FN	Conversation attempts – FN	J, I, FN
Helen	Low – J, I, FN	Conversation attempts – FN	J, I, FN
Teresa	Low – J, I, FN	Conversation attempts – FN	J, I, FN

[a]Confidence (Low) – participants are apprehensive, anxious, shy, lack confidence
[b]Confidence (Increasing) – participants more comfortable, more confident
[c]Language Practice – (a) Structured Language Practice (games, tests, etc.), or (b)
    Conversations (10 exchanges or more)
[d]Frustrations and Misunderstandings – not being able to communicate, off-task behavior
[e]Strategies – to thwart misunderstandings by using visuals, code-switching, translation

[f]Perceived learning – participants believe they have learned language or understand better
   than before
[g]SLP – Structured Language Practice
[h]Key: J = Journals, I = Interviews, FN = Field Notes
[i]*Conversation attempts: Students attempt to converse using the "Topics of
   Conversation" worksheet as a crutch for conversation, since they have not yet had an
   opportunity to brainstorm strategies for Structured Language Practice until February
   19th.

could rely on the "Topics of Conversation" guide that contained prompts to help them

converse. Again, they all mentioned their frustrations at not being able to communicate

or remember what they had learned from their language classes as Table 3 shows.

As time progressed, the rate at which confidence increased and how and when

students perceived their learning differed for each of the participants. Overall, journals

and interviews provided data that show how student confidence continually increased.

However, one person's confidence during Language Initiation varied from that of the

others. Teresa did not perceive her own confidence until the end of the second stage,

while Sylvia, Maru, Sam, and Helen often wrote about being more relaxed and

comfortable with their language partners. Analysis of journals and interviews

demonstrated that Sylvia perceived her language acquisition as learning new words and

vocabulary. Sam, on the other hand, perceived acquisition in terms of increased

conversational ability, the ability to apply what he learned in Spanish class regarding

verbs and other parts of speech in combination with his authentic conversations to

communicate with his language partner.

Teresa, Leticia, and Maru did not seem to perceive the same language progress

for different reasons. Teresa writes on March 19th, "Well I don't communicate much

because we play a game in which we only say words." So for Teresa, saying a word is

not communication. She continues to say that she has only been able to "communicate a

little." However, in her interviews she is optimistic about learning more language. Leticia does not write in her journals during this stage but she does mention in a late interview that she did begin to comprehend more. Taped interactions provide evidence of Leticia and Teresa's frustrations about communicating in English. They both moan and groan about having to practice during their English sessions. In a journal excerpt, Maru, on the other hand, does not mention learning but writes about teaching Sylvia. In her interviews, she also discusses how she enjoys helping Sylvia progress.

While Teresa and Leticia are frustrated about not being able to communicate, Helen and Sam mention their own frustration in journals and interviews. They summarily agree that Leticia and Teresa need to slow their speech and not "goof off" or just say inaudible and inexplicable words. More specifically, Helen mentions that all is well except for the "cursing between Leticia and Teresa" which can undermine language practice.

Language Practice is predominantly in the form of structured language practice. All participants utilize a number of strategies to help their peers learn language. In other words, the participants find ways to advance language forward with spelling tests and games.

Sam notes the need to problem-solve during the language interaction to determine the language partner's needs: "You know they're so used to the [their own] language and stuff. And it's also problem-solving, too, because you have to figure out the way you want to teach them, and the games totally help them." He gave examples, "Like hangman and stuff because we just learn vocabulary words in a fun way."

Peers also utilized such strategies such as drawing on small white boards, the creation of concentration cards, correcting each other's language, and adjusting their language level.

Students Use a Variety of Strategies to Negotiate Meaning

A secondary finding then, within this same context, is related to how strategies used in structured language practice differ from strategies that help extend conversational exchanges. Strategies most associated with structured language practice include adjusting language in terms of word difficulty, syllabication, correcting language or just identifying errors peers make. All groups used these types of strategies during their game-play, tests, and other forms of structured language practice.

The types of strategies that focus on structured language practice, however, are very different from strategies used to extend conversations. The predominant strategies that the participants utilize to extend conversations include code-switching, translation, and asking language peers for help through question facilitators and drawing.

"Research has demonstrated that conversational adjustments can aid comprehension. There is evidence that modification which takes place during interaction leads to better understanding than linguistic simplification or modification which is planned in advance," (Lightbown & Spada, 2002, p. 43). Yet these methods of modification are only part of the answer as to why conversations can be extended. For the most part, conversations unfold at length when these methods are applied while students discuss personal, familial, and/or social topics.

As mentioned earlier, while most participants engage in mostly structured language practice, Sam and Leticia tend to move on to extended conversations, typically talking about personal or familial topics. While the other two dyads engage in short

conversations and a couple of longer ones, they are intent on practicing language in a structured format. (See Table 4 for "Participant theme comparisons supported by journals, interviews, and taped analysis during Language Initiation.")

During the Language Acquisition stage, confidence continues to increase but there are no more journal entries from Leticia and Teresa complaining that they are not learning or did not understand. In their journals, all participants write about being more comfortable and being less shy. All of them also discuss having fun in their journals and interviews and how the program became more fun towards the end.

Table 4. Participant theme comparisons supported by journals, interviews, and analysis of tapes during Language Initiation.

	Confidence	Language Practice (1) SLP (2) Conversations	Frustrations and Misunderstandings	Strategies	Perceived Learning
Sam	Increasing– J, I	SLP/Conversations – AT	J, I, AT – off-task behavior, need to slow down	J, I, AT	J, I
Leticia	Increasing– I	SLP/Conversations – AT	I, AT	I, AT	I
Sylvia	Increasing– J, I	SLP – AT	I	J, I, AT	J, I
Maru	Increasing– J, I	SLP – AT	None reported	J, I, AT	None reported
Helen	Increasing– J, I	SLP – AT	I, J, AT – off task behavior, need to slow down	J, I, AT	J, I
Teresa	Increasing– J, I	SLP –AT	I, J, AT	J, I, AT	I

[a]Confidence (Increasing) – participants more comfortable, more confident
[b]Language Practice – Structured Language Practice (games, tests, etc.), or Conversations (10 exchanges or more)
[c]Frustrations and Misunderstandings – not being able to communicate; off-task behavior
[d]Strategies – to thwart misunderstandings by using visuals, code-switching, translation
[e]Perceived learning – participants believe they have learned language or understand better than before
[f]SLP – Structured Language Practice
[g]Key: J = Journals, I = Interviews, AT = Analysis of Tapes
[h]One theme, "Language Peers as Resources," has been left out of the table as all participants engage in helping one another out. In addition, Language Peers as Resources includes the use of "Question Facilitators," a strategy to move language forward, such as, ¿Qué significa ___ en español? (What is ___ in Spanish?).

The language practice does not deviate much from that in the Language Initiation stage. Sam and Leticia still have multiple extended conversations about their families, friends, or school. The only difference is that Leticia cites in her journals and interviews that she is finally able to communicate. There is also evidence in taped interactions, that she does so in English for the first time. In the past, conversations between her and Sam were in Spanish. While Leticia constantly complains about practicing English during taped interactions, Sam manages to eventually keep her engaged by talking about topics of interest to her (e.g., school life, family or friends).

Maru and Sylvia as well as Helen and Teresa continue to play games. There were increased instances of conversations but mostly between Helen and Teresa. Teresa mentions, in her journal entry on April 2nd, that she was able to work together with Helen and that they understand each other better. Helen also comments that using the strategy of drawing, a strategy Sam has used repeatedly in the past to move language forward while conversing, helped Teresa understand.

Leticia and Teresa make no comments about learning only "a little." Instead they talk about finally being understood and being able to communicate. Sam still has

frustrations with Leticia and Teresa as they continue to speak quickly and have private conversations per interviews; however, it is evident from the taped interactions that he has learned how to apply humor, leading Teresa and Leticia to believe he understands during the Language Acquisition stage. Wong Fillmore (1976) talks about the utilization of "social strategies such as 'join a group and act as if you understand what is going on, even if you don't'" (as cited in Cook, 1993, p. 119). Sam does just that.

Teresa and Leticia comment on Sam's ability to understand and communicate in Spanish at this stage. Sylvia also comments in interviews about seeing Sam communicate on a regular basis with his partner.

Sylvia, unlike the others, writes on April 2nd, "Today all we did was play hangman the whole time." In the next sentence, however, she seems pleased about it: "I thought it was fun, and I learned some new words." Sylvia considers learning vocabulary and words a form of language acquisition. She continues to say, "We are playing different games and activities than before."

Maru also feels comfortable with Sylvia and talks about how easy it is to speak to her. However, taped interactions show mostly game-play and few, if any, extended conversations. In interviews and journals, Maru does not refer to her own learning but to Sylvia's. She does cite on the 9th of April that she hardly learned with her and that it is "always the same." Yet, in the next sentence she talks about employing a new game. Per analysis of tapes, their language session is generally the same. There is no off-task behavior and few side conversations about personal events in their lives.

Regarding frustrations, Sam makes little mention, except in his interviews, about the off-task behavior. In his journal, Sam writes about how he and Leticia have become friends. Maru, on the other hand, does write how she can no longer let Leticia and

Teresa's disruptive behavior go unnoticed. Helen, despite writing in her journal that she

is having more fun, understanding more, and getting closer to her language partner,

reveals in another journal reflection that she wishes to leave the program since she

believes that she is getting behind in the mainstream Spanish class and would rather be

with friends.

Table 5. Participant theme comparisons supported by journals, interviews, and analysis
of tapes during Language Initiation.

	Confidence	Language Practice (1)*SLP (2)Conversations	Frustrations and Misunderstandings	Strategies	Perceived Learning
Sam	Increasing– J, I	SLP/Conversations	J, I, AT – off task behavior, need to slow down	J, I, AT	J, I
Leticia	Increasing– I	SLP/Conversations	I, AT	J, I, AT	J, I
Sylvia	Increasing– J, I	SLP	I	J, I, AT	J, I
Maru	Increasing– J, I	SLP	J, I	J, I, AT	None reported
Helen	Increasing– J, I	SLP	J, I, AT – off task behavior, need to slow down	J, I, AT	J, I
Teresa	Increasing– J, I	SLP	J, I, AT	J, I, AT	J, I

[a]Confidence (Increasing) – participants more comfortable, more confident
[b]Language Practice – (a) Structured Language Practice (games, tests, etc.), or (b)
    Conversations (10 exchanges or more)
[c]Frustrations and Misunderstandings – not being able to communicate; off-task behavior
[d]Strategies – to thwart misunderstandings by using visuals, code-switching, translation
[e]Perceived learning – participants believe they have learned language or understand better
    than before
[f]Key: J = Journals, I = Interviews, AT = Analysis of Tapes
[g]*SLP – Structured Language Practice
[h]One theme, "Language Peers as Resources" has been left out of the table as all
    participants engage in helping one another out. In addition, Language Peers as

Resources includes the use of "Question Facilitators," a strategy to move language forward, such as, ¿Qué significa ___ en español? (What is ___ in Spanish?). [i]"Humor" as well as "Optimism" are also highly evident themes in the last stage as revealed by journals, interviews, and analysis of tapes.

In sum, while all the participants go through the stages, they do so in very different ways. While some played games, others digressed from those games and engaged in extended conversations about family, friends, and social topics. All perceived their language learning in different ways as well. Sylvia believes that the acquisition of words and vocabulary demonstrates language learned, while Sam believes that language acquisition also includes the application of the newly acquired language in conversations.

It is difficult to keep one research question separate from the other since the themes overlap. While the above findings refer more to what language learners do together as well as how they do it, there were also references to students' perceptions about their language learning and confidence level. These personal references lead to the second research question.

Revisiting Research Question #2

The second research question in this study focused on "How do English Learners and Spanish Learners perceive their interaction process?" (How do they perceive their peer interaction and the challenges, frustrations, and rewards they may have encountered?) This study uncovered two major findings: (1) peers begin to see each other differently by the end of the program, and (2) peers perceive increasing language advancement in terms of understanding and acquiring language during their two-month journey in the alternative dual language program.

Participants See One Another Differently from Beginning to End

The findings indicate that participants began to see one another in a different light by the end of the program. Whereas they hardly talked to one another initially outside of the alternative dual language program, they gradually began to engage one another in conversation in and outside of school. These findings are primarily supported by journal entries and interviews, although there is also evidence from analysis of taped interactions that concern the personal lives of students at school.

All participants write either during the Language Initiation or Language Acquisition stages about how they have achieved higher levels of comfort and were not as shy or as embarrassed as they were during the Language Apprehension stage. Evidence of this change in terms of comfort level, confidence, and ability to understand and learn the language is also supported by all student interviews with the exception of Maru. She does not admit to being shy, lacking confidence, or being nervous in her journal entries, yet she does admit to these initial apprehensions during interviews.

While confidence and comfort level is difficult to support via taped interactions, there is evidence of more camaraderie as the language sessions unfold, an increasing use of humor, and evidence of humorous situations. The humorous situations seem to emerge mostly during the extended conversations between Leticia and Sam. They talk about family in Russia then tease each other about their mile times (how fast they run the mile) in P.E., and Sam makes fun of his female-dominated home-life.

Then there is also the instance in which Teresa, Leticia, and Sam write in their journals about their teasing when they interacted on March 25th. Teresa writes, "He made me laugh when Sam wrote 'Teresa gordo.' And also when I wrote to Sam, 'Palo de escoba' (broomstick), and after it made me laugh when he said 'hombre ahorcado'

(Hangman)." Leticia and Sam's journal entries support what happened, taped interactions show evidence of that interaction, and Sam mentions it in his interview.

By March 5th, Sylvia perceives that she and Maru are "closer than the first time" and on March 12th comments that "we're not shy that much." On March 19th, Samantha writes, "I felt like I understood most of the things Maru said to me." Helen also admits that her comfort level had increased since her first encounter, and as early as the second encounter she felt "less stressed." Helen's partner Teresa writes, "I feel very comfortable because we talk about fun things." Helen writes in her journal two weeks later than Sylvia that on April 2nd she had reached a point at which they "could really understand one another" and were more "comfortable." Teresa says on that same date, "I feel very comfortable because we talk about fun things." And in his second interview Sam mentions that he and Leticia have "become friends."

Not only did the initial apprehension decrease as their own confidence increased, but as this increase happened, there was a change in their behavior with one another. They began to see each other in a new light and became friends. During their March 25th taped interaction Sam wants to know if Leticia notices him in P.E. Maru mentions being excited to see Sylvia outside of class in one interview. Closer relationships appear to have developed between Sylvia and Maru as well as between Sam, Leticia, and Teresa.

Helen does mention a greater comfort level and understanding and she appears on tape to get along with Teresa yet does not mention becoming closer. Helen and Teresa can be seen laughing and getting along well during their taped interaction, but Helen wants to leave the program. On April 9th she writes in her journal about the three main reasons for leaving: (1) Leticia and Teresa's continued off-task behavior, (2) missing her

friends in the mainstream Spanish class, and (3) worrying about getting behind in the mainstream Spanish class.

An interview with Helen a year later does reveal that because of her participation in the alternative dual language program, she became more sensitive to those who are new to the country and learning a new language: "I like that I got to interact with people who really speak the language because it was a good learning experience. I was in the same seat, so you better understood their point of view."

Peers Perceive Advancement in their Own Language Understanding and Acquisition

"What is needed is an understanding of how children perceive, remember, and express experiences and of the different ways they choose from the array of mediational means accessible to them in particular contexts" (Maguire & Graves, 2001, p. 590). The findings show that students believe that if given authentic opportunities to learn language, their ability to comprehend, learn, and acquire language increases. The data indicate that participants use and acquire language within the social context of conversations, language game-play, and utilizing strategies to overcome initial apprehension about learning (and teaching) a language.

All participants, with the exception of Maru, admit in journals or interviews being able to understand one another better in both languages. In interviews Sam comments about conversing with Leticia, and Sylvia also comments on how often she sees Sam and Leticia talking. In taped interactions on March 25th, Leticia mentions to Teresa that Sam really does understand and know Spanish. She also mentions on other occasions, e.g., in her journal from March 25th, about how Sam understands her. Sam is also cognizant of his increased ability to understand and speak the Spanish language. While he admits to a

lack of "language competence," he does admit to having enough of a working knowledge of the language so as to communicate with his peers.

Leticia appears surprised about her own language acquisition. As she states April 2nd, "It took a lot of work but I was able to communicate." She continues, "I felt very happy to know how to help him [Sam]." And, on April 9th Leticia said, "It was very difficult but I was able to communicate a little." Per April 9th tapes, she did communicate in an extended conversation almost entirely in English for the first time since she began the program.

Sam, Sylvia, Leticia, and Teresa mention in journals and interviews that Maru is the most bilingually advanced of the group. Taped interactions show evidence that she becomes a major resource for words, vocabulary and phrases for all students.

However, Maru does not mention gaining new language insights. She does, however, mention enjoying her role as a language instructor for Sylvia. Sylvia concurs in journals that Maru helps her learn more words and vocabulary. This is corroborated in interviews with Sylvia who also mentions that Maru is better than a teacher because she works more closely with her and can provide her with the type of language practice that she needs and challenges her with new vocabulary. For instance, during taped interactions Maru works with Sylvia's knowledge of basic numbers from one through 100. Then she takes her step-by-step, advancing to the numbers just within her reach. She does this during vocabulary practice as well.

Overall, when mixed dyads get together, they have a tendency to play games rather than converse, and they are willing to come up with various strategies such as game-play, spelling tests, and drawing to help their language partner negotiate meaning. Dyads within proximity to one another will copy from or share strategies with one

another. While peers may generally focus on structured language practice during their

interactions, peers do have lengthy conversations when they generally concern engaging

personal and familial topics.

      If peers are regrouped from their original dyads, the social culture changes and so

does the interaction based on those who become the more dominant members of the

group.   For example, when Leticia and Sam were regrouped with Helen, they engaged

in structured language practice mostly consisting of games like Hangman. However,

once Helen left their dyad, they resumed their normal language practice that included

lengthier conversations. Thus, regrouping can change a dyad's own characteristic ways

of interacting.

      Alternative dual language programs provide newcomers and possibly other

English Learners with opportunities to interact with mainstream students on a school

campus, engage in authentic language practice, foster cross-cultural understanding and

multicultural education, and take on the "prestigious" role of teacher/expert that

empowers and allows them to build social competence and confidence.

      Journal and interview findings reveal that participants said they became more

confident and less shy about learning and teaching language. As Fanselow (1987)

suggests, students who desire to learn a target language take charge of their own learning

process by assuming administrative and teacher-type roles. When it came time for Sam

or Helen to teach the English session, Leticia and Teresa, correspondingly, would protest.

The teacher role empowered students. In this role, it is assumed that the native speaker of

the target language is the expert. Allowing the newcomer to take on such a leadership

role with someone of the dominant language and culture may at first seem daunting, but it

provides newcomers with a sense of purpose and power in their foreign environment, especially when they are viewed as language experts.

Did the new role of "teacher" in this scenario reinforce their confidence? The students talk about being more confident with their language ability and about learning new words. Sam even mentions the opportunity to speak with more fluidity, apply what he has learned, and how he has gained more confidence over time.

Confidence just to speak in Spanish and words. I mean, not as much as like a test, but gradually, small words like "mercado," you know. I'm learning. It's more speaking than words, you know because you are not forced to know it. But I can try to talk it or whatever but not like "Uh, I don't want to do this." Like the first day it was kind of like we looked at the paper [the conversation guide sheet] and now we're kind of friends and we're not just afraid to try.

Newcomers (or other students) are not generally placed in the role of teacher or language helper. This type of program provides students who speak another language with pride and confidence in being the expert. Being able to share their expertise and knowledge by teaching other students may build confidence but also help students think outside of the box and come up with strategies on their own instead of being provided with topics and ideas from the teacher.

Implications

What types of implications does the role of student as teacher have for alternative dual language programs in the future? Should there be a more structured format that would still allow students to brainstorm or critically think about their roles as language learners and teachers?

A dual/cross-cultural or multicultural program might be set up to build language communities at the outset as a way to possibly to alleviate some of that initial language apprehension. This program could elicit student discussion concerning issues of race, class, and gender. Students could be provided with opportunities to learn how to negotiate not only language but also their lives in a continuously changing and diverse society.

How an alternative dual language program can be implemented in middle or high school campuses that have many second language learners and how such language interaction can foster cross-cultural and multicultural education that can meet students' needs should be addressed.

Setting Up an Alternative Dual Language Program

Program Set-Up

Implementing an alternative dual language program requires a great deal of initial preparation. Develop an initial plan that would describe how the Alternative Dual Language Model (ADLM) would work within the following academic year. Include the dates, times, and where the interaction will take place; who will supervise the program; the language to be utilized; whether the program will occur before or after school or as an elective during the day, and if students will volunteer to participate; orientation times and agendas for teachers and students; what data to use for feedback and ongoing analysis; and, determine how the program will be structured as well as how much teacher input will become a part of the program. (See the Alternative Dual Language Model and Timeline in Table 6.)

Therefore, the plan would include the target languages of study, where and when the program will take place either as an elective during the school day or whether it is to

be included as part of English Language Development (ELD) and other language programs. Note that this alternative type of dual language program is meant to fit the needs of the school community in terms of its English Learner population and the language study offered. If the school offers Japanese but there are no native speakers of Japanese, than an alternative dual language program cannot be implemented. If, for instance, the school offers Spanish classes and you have native speakers of Spanish who are your English Learners, you can implement a dual language program to serve the needs for language practice and authentic interaction.

Because two culturally different communities are being brought together, it is imperative to identify the dates of orientation for the teachers who will run the program as well as dates for the students who volunteer to participate. Discussion about cultural differences and/or similarities should be included to build community before implementing dyad interaction.

Before setting up the program also make certain there are high numbers of English Only students and English Learners that are interested in the program by using a school survey. English Only students should at least be familiar with the target language of the students they have worked with for at least six months to a year. It would be a good idea to offer the language of study for English Only students in 7th grade and provide opportunities to apply that language in 8th grade. (This program may be modified to provide direct language instruction in the target language as the English Learners may be taught in one class while English Only students may be taught in another and come together once or more a week to apply what they have learned in the language classes.)

In addition, identify the teachers who will run the program. The program may end up being a joint effort between the language teacher (e.g., Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, etc.) and the ELD teacher.

Secondly, determine whether the administration would be willing to create an elective within the school day that could lead to a similar program. Additionally, determine which language(s) to focus on—most likely the dominant language at the school and possibly a language that can be reinforced through a mainstream language program. Another consideration would also be whether the second language is offered at the local high school. If so, this choice would be important in validating the second-language student population who could become tutors or teachers that help mainstream students progress in their language studies, and it could promote inclusion. District and school site administrative support for alternative dual language programs is important in changing present school cultures. It is equally important to create an alternative dual language program that adds prestige to the district, setting it apart from others.

Before, After, or During School?

Conducting a program after school, as in this case, was extremely difficult. While the students were able to participate in the majority of the language sessions, those who volunteered and did not have to attend after school (i.e., two out of three of the English Learners) tended to engage off-task behavior. They also appeared to be less serious, initially, about the program.

Because the program was conducted after school and English Learners were not obliged to be there, it made it more difficult to have them be as serious about the program as the Spanish learners who were required to attend the extra period at the end of the day on Wednesdays.

Participants will most likely see the legitimacy of an academically graded elective during the day. Secondly, students should be allowed to volunteer for such a program. Students who volunteer have a vested interest in the program and may put forth greater effort.

According to participant interviews, an alternative dual language program such as this will be more successful if the participants volunteer. Maru said, "If you put a child in a program that doesn't want to be there, you will only get disobedience. He'll get mad at the teacher, or simply he won't want to do anything, and he will not learn."

Students who are not interested in learning about another language or culture should not be forced to take the elective because that is the only slot left besides band or choir. That is one reason why it is so important initially to make sure the administration understand how the program can be included in the school culture and how it can be managed from the very beginning.

Table 6. Alternative dual language program model and timeline.

Program Set-Up	Program Implementation	Ongoing Feedback and Discussion
• Develop an initial plan of action (include dates, times, place, supervisors or teachers involved, student and teacher orientations) by October—almost one year before the program is to be implemented. • Obtain site and district administrative approval by January.	• Based on the initial plan, the program could be implemented on a daily basis or twice or more a week. (August or September). • Orient students the first month to help build community. • If this program occurs after school, ensure that this program is sanctioned by	• Determine the goal and type of feedback that will come from participants as well as teachers. • Once feedback is obtained, it should be communicated to the participants, the teachers, and the administrators to modify the program.

• If possible, validate the program by making it part of the mainstream school culture as an elective during the day. • Select student volunteers early (May to June). • Orient teachers and students to structure of program (May to June).	the site and district. • Check students for the stages they may go through and challenges they will face. See theoretical model. (This check is ongoing and it becomes part of the feedback and analysis.)	

Once administrators approve the plan and program, the program designer must work with the scheduling committee or principal. To find out if there is enough interest, the program designer should meet with those students interested in the target languages of study to estimate the numbers of participants. A survey would be beneficial to get a clearer picture of those who would volunteer to be in the program. The numbers should be presented to the scheduling committee and the principal so that elective is available from among other choices such as band, choir, art, etc.

Depending on the goal of the program, the elective may be a language program with a dual language component. For example, the elective for 8th grade may be called the Spanish and Dual Language Program for English Only students. For those who are the native speakers of the target language such as Spanish, they might elect ELD and Dual Language Program. Both the ELD and the Spanish teachers could conduct direct instruction in the target language of study on, for example, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays while providing dual language on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Whether the program will be a daily alternative dual language program or a variation of that program, use criteria to select students. If the numbers are greater than

expected, the program designer may wish to add extra courses if he/she has faculty that with experience in those languages. If not, then choose students based on criteria such as grade point average prerequisites and target language practice for at least six months to a year prior to entering the program.

While the researcher's alternative dual language program was set up in order to see how students would interact with little supervision, another study could, instead, include more structure and have a different focus. Students in this study felt obligated and were purposely left to create some form or structure mostly on their own. The burden of conversation at the very beginning when learners are so new to the language made them anxious. At the same time, it was interesting to find out what students would do under such circumstances where there was no designated leader or teacher. Future studies might delve more into the leaderless role or add more structure to this type of program.

Program Implementation

In order to build community, trust, and pride in the program, it may be better if the program is implemented as an elective during the day to give it a more valid place as part of the mainstream curriculum. If this is not possible, before and after school are alternative times.

Select volunteers as early as possible between April and June. (Students involved in the study recommended having students choose to be in the program. Forcing a person into the program may limit successful outcomes.)

If this program occurs after school, ensure that this program is sanctioned by the site and district and that there are funds for a supervisor or teacher, and that they are trained in the structure of the intended program. So, this form of orientation should be a

part of the initial plan that the administration has approved and should go over the Theoretical Model that shows how students go through various stages, encountering various challenges, frustrations, and misunderstandings that may have repercussions in terms of their confidence, language practice, and other behaviors. The administration should allocate professional development and collaboration time for this type of teacher orientation.

It is just as important to orient students to the structure of the program, the language and cultural issues that may occur, and discuss and answer questions. During this professional development time, teachers will determine how students will be oriented to this new program before they actually participate with their partners. The topics of these orientation sessions may include "Being Aware of Cultural Differences," "Ways of Working with Language Peers," "Possible Frustrations," "Language Interaction Rules," etc. Student input and discussion is essential in building this initial part of the language community, which may help stave off the initial anxiety students experienced in this language study. The orientations can be teacher-directed as well, but getting the students involved in these group discussions will also prepare them for their language interaction. To determine how to set up these groups see Elizabeth Cohen's (1986) book, *Designing Groupwork: Strategies for the Heterogeneous Classroom*.

After the orientation(s), the students may appear more comfortable with one another and know what to expect from the program. It is up the teachers to determine if the students will be paired or grouped. The author of this model suggests starting out with pairs in order to build trust, and then possibly moving into groups of four at a later date.

Depending on the focus of the program, the program designer or teachers determine what type of structure they will provide. It could be a structure in which students are given topics or less structure in which students could be asked to create curriculum on their own. The pilot study conducted by the researcher had more structure as students were given suggested topics to work on. This case study, on the other hand, allowed students to discover how to teach one another.

Ongoing Feedback and Discussion

Determine whether the program will include ongoing feedback and discussion between students and teacher, teacher-to-teacher, etc. Be prepared to check students for the stages and themes that will occur. (See Theoretical Model.) Feedback could come from participants as well as teachers in the form of journals, interviews, and tapes of the interaction and/or subsequent group discussion. Also determine the goal of the feedback. Is it intended to ease interaction between students to promote conversation, structured language practice, multicultural education, or a combination of the above?

Once feedback is obtained, it should be communicated to the participants, the teachers, and the administrators so that they may see possible changes that need to be made for the following year in terms of program set-up and implementation.

Conclusion

Participation in an alternative dual language program gave newcomers an opportunity to become part of the mainstream. Their inability to communicate, to be validated and to feel fully a part of the school culture appeared to handicap them. These newcomers in addition to English Learners labeled Limited English Proficient (LEP) and are often perceived as having a deficit to overcome rather than being rewarded for what they have to offer schools. This alternative dual language program gave them the power

with which to become teachers, tutors, or guides for mainstream students who wanted to learn Spanish. This program gave all participants opportunities to exchange ideas and language and develop friendships while at the same time develop pride in their native languages.

This study also revealed that linguistically different middle-school peers can come together and learn in a dual language setting and how this setting provides them with opportunities not only to learn language but to become curious about one another despite their differences.

While Sam, Sylvia, and Helen crossed Leticia's, Maru's, and Teresa's paths on a daily basis, they did not speak or interact. It was not until they volunteered to participate in an alternative dual language program that authentic language learning with native speakers would be possible and the seed of friendship could be planted.

The likelihood is that none of the students would have progressed in their language study in the authentic communicative sense, they probably would not have associated with one another, and they, most likely, would not have become friends. How were they to know that a program like this would open the door to frustrations, misunderstandings and challenges that would take them from being apprehensive, motivate them to initiate language strategies, and then authentically practice and learn language.

This alternative dual language program allowed mainstream students who were curious about linguistically different peers to meet one another in an unforced situation. If a program such as this could be implemented school-wide, how many students would volunteer to participate?

What matters is not so much the numbers in the beginning but offering students exposure to other people and cultures and giving them the chance to learn from one another and build trust, confidence, and pride. Second language learners gain pride as language experts and they begin to be included as they participate with mainstream students.

In most middle schools and high schools, newcomers and other English Learners rarely venture outside their groups, but neither do the "preps," "goths," and other cliques. A program like this might not be able to break down barriers that normally divide linguistically and culturally diverse peers. However, an alternative dual language program could validate language learners and their home languages. A program like this one could help teach children how to negotiate their lives in a diverse society.

It becomes our responsibility to ensure that English Learners receive an equitable education and are included more fully in our schools. Research findings such as those reported here can provide evidence for such advocacy and social change.

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