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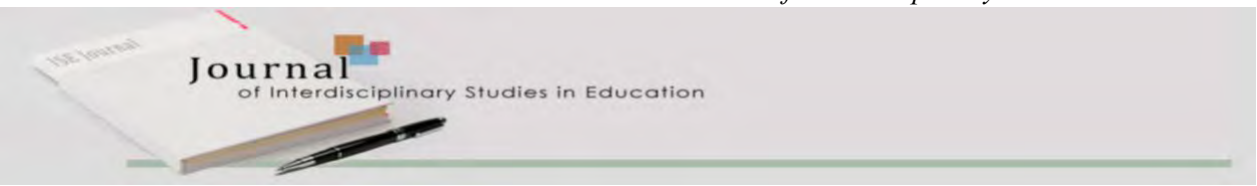

Journeying Together: Improving Parent Relations within Dual-Language Immersion Programs as a Model for Cross-cultural Understanding and Collaboration

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Abstract

When visiting Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs within today's public schools, sociocultural divides and linguistic barriers between parents of each represented language group become quickly recognizable. Should it be a priority of DLI programs to foster intercultural parental relations as a means for improving student learning? If given the opportunity, would DLI parents participate in such initiatives? If successful, could these efforts be implemented beyond DLI programs to impact entire school communities or even communities at large? Drawing upon data gathered from an extensive case study at an elementary school in Virginia, this paper explores the intercultural relations between DLI parents and the need to re-examine the overall purpose of such programs. Findings revealed strong participant motivation to work collaboratively in establishing relationships and supporting DLI learning opportunities that transcend language instruction for their children to include cross-cultural understanding and a commitment to creating more inclusive communities.

Keywords: dual language immersion, parental involvement, cross-cultural relations, cultural sensitivity, community engagement

Introduction

Extensive research has occurred since the early 90s on bilingual education, particularly in the areas of program design and curriculum development. One of the most commonly examined models of bilingual education is Dual Language Instruction (often referred to as Two-Way Immersion). Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs are a type of bilingual instruction where English and a partner language are used for content instruction (time typically split 50/50 between languages) with an even number of native speakers from both language groups enrolled and integrated into the same classroom. As of January 2017, 782 U.S. schools were listed in The Center for Applied Linguistics' Dual Language Immersion National Program Directory (CAL, 2016). This number is constantly increasing as the Adequate Yearly Progress reports for schools

offering DLI programs show significant learning gains from student participants in both content areas and second language proficiency levels (Calderon and Minaya-Rowe, 2003; Howard et al., 2007; Lindholm-Leary and Block, 2010; Perez, 2004; Valentino and Reardon, 2014). As more schools turn to this model of bilingual instruction, educators continue to examine effective teaching practices that support these positive outcomes thereby maintaining the program's overall attractiveness and enrollment competitiveness.

Despite the attention Dual Language Instruction has received as a successful academic model for producing bilingual and bi-literate children, critical research on such programs has also emerged. One of the common questions asked in these inquiries is who are the primary beneficiaries of such programs? DLI program composites across the nation vary in terms of languages represented, race and ethnicity of its participants, and socio-economic and educational levels of its parents. Yet, the most common student demographic in today's DLI programs consists of English-speaking white students from middle-class families and Spanish-speaking Latino/a students from first generation working-class families (Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Izquierdo, 2011; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Valdés, 1997). When examining the different student populations within DLI, concerns have been expressed regarding perceptions of how such programs benefit students (Izquierdo, 2011). Is DLI, for example, seen as a necessity for underperforming language minority students in order to gain basic English competency? Or, is participation perceived as an opportunity for upward mobility linked to perceptions of giftedness, particularly of white students? If these perceptions exist, how are they manifested in the interpersonal relations between peers from each language group? Educators and students? Educators and parents? Parents from each language group?

Due to the increasing emphasis placed on assessment in today's public schools and the demand for dual language instruction, DLI programs often highlight measured learning outcomes with limited attention placed on increased cultural awareness, parental inclusivity or community collaboration. For native English speakers, this results in learning a new language without being provided any cultural context or understanding for the importance of cultural diversity. For English language learners, the lack of emphasis on cultural histories/identities results in a "sanitizing" or "whitewashing" effect turning language into a commodity for an already empowered group (Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Izquierdo, 2011; Valdes, 1997). For both student populations, DLI instruction is typically not reinforced at home due to parents' limited exposure to different cultures and lack of proficiency in their child's newly acquired language (Howard et al., 2007; Linholm-Leary and Block, 2010; Pimental, 2008; Scanlan and Palmer, 2009; Valdés, 1997; Zentalla, 1997).The immediate results are native English speakers (often white) who become bilingual with limited cultural competence derived from their DLI instruction. Or, native speakers of the partner language whose first culture is devalued in the learning process. This approach is often referred to as the "subtractive approach" to dual language instruction (Cummins, 2000). Language may be acquired but at what cost? Without attention and commitment to intercultural communication and understanding within DLI programs, opportunities to create more inclusive communities amongst DLI students and their families are lost.

By design, DLI programs have the distinct potential of not only promoting bilingualism but also significantly impacting the way community is defined and how individuals perceive one another. Such programs could serve as a model whereby participating DLI families become collaborators toward the common goal of empowering and enriching the lives of children. Yet, this will not happen without first addressing relations between participating families in the program. How can children begin to make cross cultural connections when their families are not interacting with one another? The prospect of family engagement, particularly among a culturally, socio-economically and linguistically diverse population, can seem daunting for school administrators who are already trying to juggle the day to day political and instructional demands of the larger school agenda and curricula. As a result, schools with DLI programs tend to hold the traditional parent conferences and open houses, field trips, and occasional potlucks. Although hopeful for high attendance at such events, administrators are acutely aware that such efforts most often result in the same few families attending. Even if frequented by a broad parent base, these types of events typically do not foster interactions between parents from different cultural and linguistic groups. As a result, an invisible line is drawn between parents based on these differences generating two distinct groups sitting on "opposite sides of the cafeteria", using psychologist Beverly Tatum's (2003) infamous phrase, during such events.

This article examines how traditional parental involvement models exclude potential contributions of culturally and linguistically diverse families and limit the focus of DLI programs to language learning void of cultural understanding and inclusivity. Utilizing a case study involving DLI parents, perspectives from parents are shared and recommendations for rethinking current parent involvement strategies are explored.

Understanding the Limitations of Parent Involvement Models Using Social Capital Theory

In order to build a more inclusive DLI program that promotes intercultural family relations, parental involvement needs to be redefined and obstacles must be addressed. For too long, parental involvement in schools has been equated with attendance. Whenever an event occurs, a head count is taken to include in the annual district report. Involvement, in its most traditional sense, has often been linked to fundraising or event planning whereby parents are asked to serve as volunteers (Henderson et al., 2007). Joyce Epstein's (2002) six-category typology on parental involvement is one of the most referenced works on the subject. Epstein's typology focuses on how schools can better collaborate with parents in order to improve school outcomes. The categories include: school help for families; school-home communication; families helping schools; increased parental involvement in learning activities at home; involvement in governance and decision making at school; and collaborating with community partners. Epstein's typology serves as a framework for discussion and provides comprehensive examples of parental engagement beyond fundraising or PTO meetings. Yet, it is extremely 'school-centric' or directed by the school in hopes of improving relations with the school. Little focus is given on parents' interactions with other parents. Further, this typology excludes culturally and linguistically diverse families and low-income parents who may not have the ability to participate in these ways due to language constraints or employment challenges (Auerbach, 2010; Henderson et al., 2007; Lawson, 2003). As a result, parents with linguistic and

socio-economic privilege are often more visible and considered "involved" within the school community.

Involvement in many ways has become an unspoken norm that reinforces homogeneity and the concept of social capital. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986) defined social capital as the "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (p. 248). Individuals who are able to network and form associations have greater ability in mobilizing their privilege/resources to shape as well as benefit from institutional culture (Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1990; Portes 1998; Putnam 1995). When examining parents within DLI programs, white mono-lingual English speaking parents often have more knowledge of the cultural norms and institutional happenings within a public school. The level of comfort with the system and confidence with their navigation skills serve as social capital that directly impact the decision making process of the program and school, in general. Whether it be the usage of English as the default language at meetings or the amount of time DLI teachers spend accommodating the number of requests/concerns by monolingual English speaking parents, families of culturally and linguistically diverse students often become marginalized creating a "cliquish" vibe among those within the social network of *involved* parents.

In attempting to lessen socio-cultural stratification between parents within DLI programs, activities are often created that actually reinforce stereotypical or fixed notions of culture. Events intended to honor cultural diversity within K-12 schools tend to focus exclusively on festivities and food. As various critical race theorists have noted, celebrating diversity with entertainment and food is not enough (Au, 2014; Banks, 2012; Chavez-Reyes, 2010; Olivas, 2011; Norton, 2013). In fact, English-speaking white parents tend to be the beneficiaries of such events. Due to their comfort and social status within the school community, they may find such activities to be entertaining or have a heightened sense of excitement for learning something new about a culture's music or food. This excitement has the potential for serving as a starting point for interaction, especially within a DLI program committed to bilingualism and cultural competency. However, native speakers of the partner language may feel their culture has been trivialized or lumped together with other cultures (i.e. reducing Latin American cultures to Mexican cuisine). Cervantes-Soon's (2016) analysis of minority-language students as the "byproduct" of DLI programming can be applied to parental dynamics within the program, as well. Cervantes-Soon references the continual pattern of white privilege within DLI programs as the "Neoliberal face of Dual-Language Education" (p. 72). Food and music can relax an atmosphere but cannot serve as the end goal if attempting to create a more inclusive environment built on "relational trust" where reciprocity exists and respect for one another's contributions is evident (Bryk and Schneider, 2003). School administrators are often hesitant in moving beyond food, festivities and fun in order to talk about their own organizational limitations that may prevent parental involvement particularly if these obstacles are sensitive in nature for fear of being overtly political or biased. But, as evident from the increasingly divisive racial lines that continue to paralyze this nation, the time to avoid such discussions has passed.

In order to delve more deeply into the fundamental components of a DLI program while exploring questions regarding social capital, inclusivity and community, a case study at an elementary school in Virginia was conducted in the spring of 2016. This participatory-based

study involved multiple individuals from various constituencies (DLI families, community leaders, school teachers and administrators, university students and nonprofit organizations). It was developed based upon the desires of both DLI parents and administrators to "start a conversation" in order to challenge preconceived perceptions of one another, increase interactions and strengthen the vision of the DLI program.

Case Study

In 2000, approximately 41,000 people lived in the city of Harrisonburg, Virginia with 8.8% of its population identified as Hispanic/Latino. By 2014, the city's population increased to approximately 53,000 with 18.6% identified as Hispanic/Latino (2000, 2014 US Census). Thirty-four percent of the student population in the Harrisonburg City Public Schools (HCPS) as of September 2014 was identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) of which 71% considered to be native Spanish speakers. In 2010 HCPS launched its first Dual Language Immersion program. Since that time, public support for HCPS's DLI program has been overwhelmingly positive with an increasingly high volume of applicants seeking admission in its annual lottery. As of fall 2016, HCPS's DLI program was offered in four of its five elementary schools. Yet, despite its popularity, linguistic and socio-economic barriers between families within the DLI program continue to be a challenge.

During the 2015-2016 academic school year, a qualitative research project was conducted within a Dual Language Immersion program at an elementary school in Harrisonburg, Virginia. With grant funding from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, a five-week pilot seminar titled *Journeying Together*, was created for parents with children enrolled in the site's DLI program. The intent of the seminar was to create a space in which parents from both language groups could engage in meaningful activities that would: A) begin to bridge the gap between native English and native Spanish speaking families B) develop a heightened understanding and appreciation for the life stories representative of the group C) reflect on individual perceptions and experiences to foster transformation; and D) support collaboration beyond the seminar. Meals and childcare were provided to encourage parental participation for the duration of the seminar.

Research Design and Methodology

Although the selected school was not the first in the division to offer a dual language immersion program, the leadership at this site had a positive reputation for trying to establish a sense of community within the school and address the needs of language-minority parents. As a result, the principal welcomed the opportunity to offer the *Journeying Together* program to Dual Language Immersion parents and encouraged the school staff to promote the seminar. Parents of the designated school's DLI program received information about the *Journeying Together* seminar via flyers and during parent-teacher conferences. The bottom of the flyer included a perforated contact form for parents to complete and return to the school if interested in participating. The initial goal of the researcher was to limit the group to 24 parents with an equal number of native English speaking and Spanish speaking participants. The form was distributed to 126 families. Within two weeks, 37 parents had responded, exceeding the goal. Parents were

contacted by phone to confirm their participation and 33 arrived the first night of the seminar. The retention of the program remained consistent with 26 individuals attending the final seminar.

"Journeying Together," was organized thematically with a new topic each week. Despite parents acquiring basic terminology in the partner language through interactions and guided activities, the seminar was not designed for language development. Rather, it concentrated on building trust and cultural understanding in hopes of lessening socio-cultural divisions between the two represented parent groups. As a result, organizing language interpretation services for the discussions was an integral part of the design.

After extensive screening and collaboration with the Director of Service Learning, the Latino Student Organization and the Coordinator of Adult Learning at [location masked for blind review], five native Spanish speakers (four of whom were first-generation college students) were selected to serve as "Community Liaisons." The role of the liaisons was to serve as interpreters during the seminar's activities and small group discussions as well as promote conversation to help "bridge the gap" between parents. Latino students, rather than bilingual school staff, were intentionally selected for this role due to their lack of affiliation with the elementary school as well as their relatability with both parent populations as Latino/as who attend a predominately white institution. Liaisons received training prior to the seminar by the HCPS's Coordinator of Language Interpretation Services who also served as a community mediation counselor at a local nonprofit agency. In addition to working with the liaisons, this individual co-facilitated weekly seminar discussions and activities.

The two co-facilitators represented the cultural and linguistic diversity of the group- a native Spanish speaker and English speaker, with proficient to fluent bilingual skills in the partner language allowing them to transition between languages during group discussion and converse with both sets of parents. From the selection of the community liaisons to the collaboration of the facilitators, the intention was to provide a space where language wouldn't deter connections from being made. Each week began with a meal together that included an interactive family activity (bilingual stories, songs, table games, etc.). Shortly thereafter, children were dismissed to the gymnasium where one school employee and five additional student volunteers from [location masked for blind review] led activities during the parent seminar.

Themes were used to organize the weekly parent sessions. The themes were first introduced to the entire group and usually included a hands-on activity or demonstration to contextualize meaning. Small breakout sessions would follow for parents to debrief as well as expand upon the topic at hand. Parents were asked to reflect on their own perceptions and experiences each week through individual writing activities and personal sharing in small groups. Following breakout sessions, the entire group would reconvene to reflect on the evening before departing.

The first week's theme was titled, "The Story of My Name." Cultural emphasis was placed on understanding surnames (traditional order of names in Hispanic cultures as well as choices commonly seen by married individuals in the U.S. such as to hyphenate, use spouse's name, or maintain maiden name). Participants were then asked in small groups to share the story

behind his/her first name (or nickname) as a reminder of the value of recognizing one another by name. Family name plates were created and hung on the school wall for the duration of the seminar. Other themes explored during the seminar included: respecting commonalities and differences, negative impacts of stereotyping, social norms and feelings of being an insider/outsider, and key components of a collaborative community including goals for moving forward.

In addition to weekly activities based on themes and personal reflection, the design of the program also strived to continue conversation and collaboration beyond the five-weeks. One way this occurred was through the organization of a community resource fair during the final session. The fair served as a culminating experience to highlight opportunities that further support community-building and the participants' goals. The fair hosted 15 nonprofit agencies and programs from the greater Harrisonburg community.

Another measure taken to promote continued dialogue was the creation of a *Journeying Together* magazine that included pictures, contact information, quotes and goals of participants as well as a phone script in English/Spanish for parents to use when arranging a playdate with their children. Finally, a reunion picnic occurred at a local park two-months following the seminar where 17 of the participants and their families attended. Both at the picnic as well as during the seminar, participants requested that ongoing reunions be organized.

Extensive observation notes were collected during each session in order to look for patterns and key themes. Additionally, parents were asked at the end of the seminar to complete a twelve-question anonymous survey that examined their rationale for participating in the seminar, level of school involvement prior to this event, relationship with other parents in the dual immersion program as well as overall satisfaction with the seminar.

Findings

Connecting Support with Desire

Although this particular school site had explored various community building activities in the past, there hadn't been an intercultural parent discussion group with topics like those explored in the *Journeying Together* seminar. Participants from both language groups indicated on their surveys that they felt comfortable at this school and interacting with staff, but admitted to not participating in most school events. One English-speaking parent, whose child had been at the school for three years, said that this was the first event he'd attended beyond parent/teacher conferences. Despite school support for the *Journeying Together* seminar and parents' relatively high comfort level visiting the school, something became apparent. Parents were being intentional about what they attended. They wanted something that felt meaningful and allowed for dialogue and discovery. Unfortunately, most school functions in today's schools continue to resemble Paulo Freire's (1972) "banking concept" style of interaction where officials deposit extensive amounts of information into the parents with little space for collaboration or dialogue to occur (p.72). This type of interaction often leads to "top down" initiatives with little buy-in or impact on improving relationships. (Chavez-Reyes, 2010; Olivas et al., 2011; Warren and Mapp, 2011). For this particular school, the motivation to create a different venue was evident.

Unfounded Assumptions

Recruiting participants for fieldwork can sometimes be a laborious task that requires persistence and ongoing networking. In this study, one of the first surprises was the desire on behalf of the parents to participate. Administrators from the school predicted that extremely involved English-speaking parents may respond to the invitation at a faster rate and higher volume than the Spanish-speaking parents due to their social capital (access to the predominant school language and/or involvement with previous school activities). However, this was not the case as it pertained to the *Journeying Together* project. As previously indicated, the response rate of participation from both language groups exceeded expectations with very little recruitment needed. Retention was also surprisingly higher than predicted. Often programs that are voluntary can be challenging to sustain with the complexities of family schedules. Given this reality, both the school administrators and researcher were skeptical about the lasting power of a five-week program. Again, prior assumptions were unfounded as the majority of participants remained active for the entire seminar.

Another preconceived notion was thinking it would be difficult for the two groups to address complex issues surrounding social inequalities based on life experiences particularly with strangers who may be viewed in a completely different socio-economic class. Would participants be willing to open up about their life's journey? Would it be multi-directional? Would participants be able to recognize their own privilege and/or discuss feelings of marginalization often a result of this privilege? Moreover, how would it be done with limited language? From the onset of the seminar, it was a goal to prevent another stereotypical multicultural gathering from occurring where interactions either remained on a very surface level or resulted in teaching white people about other cultures. In this case, a high level of relational trust appeared quickly between the two groups based upon their roles as parents. It became very clear that parents were eager to connect and understand one another. Additionally, they were comfortable sharing their stories. Often these stories included dangerous entries into the United States, admissions of preconceived perceptions of immigrant populations, examples of discrimination in the community, and more. The seminar became an organized and supportive space for DLI parents to engage in a way that had never happened before. And, unlike traditional parental involvement models, the school was not leading the agenda.

Stereotypes and cultural bias became apparent in participants' assessment of one another. Four of the native Spanish speakers were fluent in English and had grown up in the United States or had come to the US as working professionals with a proficiency in English thus complicating general notions by most native English speaking white parents that the Hispanic community within Harrisonburg was first-generation families with limited English and/or formal education. Preconceived notions were also challenged in regards to English speaking parents of which four were completely fluent in Spanish as a result of living abroad or holding professional roles that required bilingual skills. The bilingual parents not only inspired others to practice what limited English or Spanish they knew but also reinforced the work of the student liaisons from [location masked for blind review] in building connections between the two parent groups. It became apparent that there were families within the school whose language skills weren't being utilized to assist the broader community.

Taking Risks

Despite high retention and evidence of relational trust, interaction between both language groups was extremely limited without a structured activity in place. Before the parent seminar began each week, families were still sitting with their own language group during dinner and tended to congregate with each other before and after each event (even when liaisons were readily available). However, when discussions began, an intentional break occurred between each constituency and blended groups formed without prompting. It was apparent that a strong desire to interact existed but the comfort of sustaining these relationships autonomously had not. This same pattern occurred outside of the school building for the reunion picnic. As soon as an organized activity was in place (kickball), families engaged with enthusiasm, even if limited to basic conversation/gestures. It is highly likely that this pattern was influenced by language ability grouping. Yet, this was also observed amongst the eight participants fluent in both languages which reinforces the inclination to group homogenously by race or ethnicity.

One of the areas where parents initiated interaction beyond structured time was in voicing their desire (both during conversation and as an identified goal on the survey) to set-up playdates across language-groups. Much like structured activities, the focus on peer relations between children allowed parents to work collaboratively on a specific task while overcoming some of the initial discomfort surrounding socio-linguistic differences. To aid in this process, an invitation script was inserted in the *Journeying Together* magazine in English/Spanish as well as a contact list with participant phone numbers. Parents were given the basic tools to initiate next steps. During the seminar, two sets of monolingual parents from each language group initiated playdates and were anxious to share about it the following week. They were able to piece together the logistics of the event and then relied upon the dual language skills of their children upon arrival. Because of their connection through the seminar, they expressed their comfort with having limited skills and knowing they were both trying to achieve the same goal.

As mentioned previously, the intent of the seminar was to support intercultural relations that would be mutually beneficial where all parties felt like equal contributors. Although it was a priority of the facilitators to avoid superficial "ice breakers" often associated with seminars, carefully planned engagement activities were designed in order to delve into sociological issues surrounding privilege and marginalization. This process required a lot of forethought and relied upon expressed parent sentiments when signing up for the seminar. For example, a native Spanish speaking participant expressed her desire to feel more included in the school and community at-large. The facilitators responded to this desire by developing a prompt for one of the small group discussions asking participants to reflect on a time when he/she had ever felt like an outsider. The results of this question were more prolific than expected and continued the thread of conversation for weeks to come. Many of the native English-speaking parents, of whom all but one were white, either admitted that they had never felt like an outsider or had recalled times when traveling where they had difficulties asking for directions or knowing what to order from a menu. Although each experience shared was valued, as some of the Latino/a parents shared their moments of feeling alienated, recognition of privilege and the distinction between examples caused for rich self-reflection on the part of the English-speaking white participants while Spanish-speaking Latino/a parents expressed validation during the debriefing session for being able to speak openly about these instances. Such discussions won't radically ameliorate the socio-cultural stratifiers beyond language that are prevalent between the two designated groups. But, the response of each group demonstrated the possibility of parents

engaging in discussions surrounding inequality, racism and privilege in a supported environment where all were asked to participate. This setting differs from typical multicultural gatherings where representatives of ethnic communities are often asked to share their stories amidst an audience of observers who have the benefit of removing themselves from potential issues raised. In this instance, a shift occurred in terms of agency. Narratives shared became part of a dialogue within a circle of participants rather than a stage used for informing or entertaining. Following the conversation, parents were asked to reflect on how these shared stories might translate into a heightened awareness and level of action moving forward. Some of the ideas shared included: Organizing parent networks with incoming families, improving methods for reporting and responding to injustices, creating self-advocacy groups particularly for language minority parents, and continuing intercultural activities that encourage communication between cultural groups. The final goal for the seminar was for families to discuss how these ideas could enhance DLI programming and support raising children in a culturally and linguistically diverse atmosphere.

Implications/Conclusion

Did lasting friendships amongst parents evolve whereby color and linguistic lines became blurred? Was there significant reform that occurred within the dual immersion program at this school as a result of the five weeks spent together? Time will tell. Like most community-based projects, the impact of such efforts evolve slowly and require reflection, repetition and collaboration for transformation to occur. Foremost, the immediate impact of the *Journeying Together* project revealed a desire among DLI parents from differing socio-linguistic groups to engage with one another in a format that felt meaningful and safe. Parents will determine for themselves if an activity is worthwhile. And in this case, the participants kept coming and continued to request to the school administrators and PTO leaders to organize similar activities for the coming year. Two additional schools within the division have since requested facilitation of this project at their sites. The catalyst for the increasing momentum on such programming is simple. Parents want children to have the unique opportunity to learn a language and become more culturally informed and engaged in the world. They recognize the value of a DLI experience even if they themselves have limited understanding or exposure to the cultures and languages represented. The need is identified and the desire is evident. These are the two greatest feats in enhancing community engagement. Next, it is up to the schools to determine how to support this need/desire. Who will take responsibility in offering and/or supporting parents in developing a collaborative platform for discussion?

As demographics of communities across the nation become increasingly diverse amidst a politically charged time in this country's history, finding ways to foster dialogue and create welcoming and collective spaces is vital. The best location to begin such work is often within public schools where families are invested (or most usually want to be) in their children's future. Having this common ground can often be a starting point for collaboration and understanding beyond the school walls. Dual Language Immersion programs have been targeted specifically for this project because they are in such demand locally, regionally and nationally. *Journeying Together* serves as a small-scale example of how schools can proactively address one of the largest criticisms of DLI/TWI programs in current scholarly work: The lack of attention placed on parental and community involvement in order to reduce cultural divisions and model

collaboration. Regardless of children's experiences within the DLI classroom, if cultural sensitivity isn't modeled in the home or if a demonstrated comfort with cultural differences isn't reflected by the parents, DLI programs become nothing more than language learning without context or substance. Meanwhile, opportunities to begin to dismantle the divisions within the community at large are never fully utilized.

So, how can DLI programs serve as a model for rethinking engagement that reflects a multidimensional and meaningful sense of community for all participants? How can programs similar to *Journeying Together* persist on a regular basis? If frequently offered, how can they begin to lessen the linguistic, cultural and socio-economic differences that stratify parents in DLI programs (and the larger school community)? Why should it be a priority? The stakes are high. Cultural insensitivity, racism and divisiveness permeate our society. Programs like DLI that emphasize cultural and linguistic diversity must lead the way in developing school cultures that emphasize respect and model the fundamental elements of social justice and equity. Such programs, if truly honoring both languages and encompassing all participants, can serve as a platform for children that could potentially transform how they navigate future interactions as a friend, family member, community participant and world citizen. For this to happen, DLI programs must be seen as an asset beyond serving as an attractive program to English speaking parents or a solution for serving large numbers of English Language Learners.

It is safe to assume that parents will continue to remain segregated and students will never truly grasp the importance of their participation in a DLI program as long as parents aren't a part of the experience. Parents, regardless of their dominant language, most likely enrolled their child into the DLI program with hopes of bettering their prospects for the future. It is up to the school to help foster the endless potential of what "betterment" can mean well beyond language learning as a marketable tool toward an intentionally designed DLI program that models intercultural intelligence, collaboration and respect.

Research Ethics

This research involving human subjects was approved by the Institutional Review Board at [location masked for blind review] (#16-0277) and performed in accordance with the ethical standards articulated in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its subsequent amendments as well as the American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics. All human subjects for this study gave their informed consent prior to their participation and careful measures have been taken to protect participants' confidentiality.

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