The Impact Of A Dual Language Program On School Climate In A Large Urban District

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THE IMPACT OF A DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM ON SCHOOL CLIMATE IN A LARGE URBAN DISTRICT

BY

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ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF A DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM ON SCHOOL CLIMATE IN A LARGE URBAN DISTRICT

The purpose of this study was to analyze the establishment of the Dual Language Program as an agent for school change and reorganization and its effect on the climate of the school. The Dual Language Program provided the students with an enriched academic program that strives to offer linguistically and culturally diverse students as well as English-speaking students an opportunity to become bilingual, attain higher academic achievement and cross-cultural understanding.

The underscoring belief of the study was that climate is an important component of the school and that it is a factor that either promotes or impedes student achievement. Thus, the intent was to add to the research literature information about the importance of school climate and its contribution to an environment that is conducive to learning.

A qualitative research approach that utilized semi structured, ethnographic interviews was used with the aim of collecting data that is embedded in the perceptions, interpretations, and experiences of the informants. The main focus was to examine the cultural meanings the informants used to organize and interpret their experiences and get their perspectives as they restructure and implement the Dual Language Program.
Selective themes provided an understanding of how the establishment of the Dual Language Program influenced the climate of the school. The following themes were explored: the change and implementation processes, the culture of the school, the leadership of the administrators, the role of the parents, the school environment, and the organizational climate. These overarching themes framed the findings of the study.

Findings revealed that in the process of internalizing educational change, the Dual Language Program has caused people in the school to confront, examine, and reconcile their feelings about educational change and about their own prejudices and assumptions towards bilingual education. The program afforded the administrators with a vehicle to help them restructure and to provide the much needed services and professional development. These increased efforts resulted in a change of the culture of the school that contributed to a more positive climate that is conducive to learning for both teachers and students.
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Many thanks to the Superintendent of Schools for allowing me to do this study and signing the consent letter on the spot without any hesitation.

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To my husband, Donald, not only gratitude but also my undying love for his insurmountable support, lasting patience, and deep devotion. How can I ever repay the long hours he waited for me without a word of reproach?

How can I ever thank my children, Jeanne and Cindy, whose love and admiration were the biggest motivators that provided me with the fuel to continue when I wanted to quit?
DEDICATION

With tears in my eyes, this is dedicated in memory of my parents. I wish they were here to witness this. I can only imagine my father’s proud face and I can hear my mother’s voice bragging to the rest of the family.

I dedicate this work to my children and my husband who are undoubtedly the most important people. My children who are truly the love of my life and the force that has grounded me. My husband whose relentless devotion, love and admiration have been my guiding lights. He once told me that I was the reason he could fly. However, his love gave me wings to soar.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Multiple calls for educational programs have occurred throughout history. Calls to ensure that their programs and services are refocused on higher standards and on achieving results. This study is about an inner-city school in an urban district that is answering a call for change through a complete restructuring of the existing transitional bilingual education program to a maintenance, dual language program.

As the face of America changes, the faces of our schools change just as rapidly. Lindholm-Leary (2000) reported that the rate of growth for the different ethnic groups has increased tremendously in the past 20 years and that Hispanics are the fastest growing group. Currently Hispanics represent 11.7% of the United States population, but will double to 24.3% by 2050. The significance of this demographic shift is that today’s schools, being a reflection of society, are filled with students who come from varied backgrounds and cultures and speak different languages. In the United States an estimated 9.9 million of the total 45 million school-aged children live in households in which languages other than English are spoken. These students enter school not only with a different language, but also with a wide variety of language abilities in their native language. Schools are challenged to meet their linguistic as well as their cultural needs.

Halliday (1990) proposed that these language abilities are used as an important tool for intellectual development. For students whose native language is English, the process of cognitive development continues on its normal path and without interruption.
However, for those students who do not speak English and enter school speaking other languages, the process of cognitive development is interrupted and cannot continue on its normal path. These students must learn enough English so that their intellectual abilities can continue to flourish to higher levels (Cummins, 1991).

For too long linguistically and culturally diverse students have been subjected to instructional practices and programs that have given them little chance of being successful (Knapp & Shields, 1990). The goal of public education is to enable all students to achieve high academic standards and to ensure that all students are given equitable opportunity to learn and to demonstrate what they know and are able to do. English language learners should be afforded with the same opportunities.

Bilingual education programs were created in an effort to provide linguistically and culturally diverse students with equitable opportunities for success. In New Jersey, state law prescribes the type of program and services that must be provided to students who come from linguistically diverse backgrounds and who through a language assessment process are identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). The law stipulates that bilingual programs must be offered to the state’s LEP population.

While legislation does not prescribe the type of program that needs to be provided for LEP students, it does stipulate that districts address the English language deficiencies through bilingual programs that prepare students to make the transition to mainstream programs and facilitate their integration to the regular public school curriculum.

According to Krashen (1996), ever since bilingual education programs were created as an alternative educational program for students whose native language is not English, they have been marred by a lot of debate. Opponents continue to stir controversy
and they frame their arguments around program effectiveness. They contend that bilingual education does not work and that students who have not participated in bilingual programs have done just as well, or in some instances even better, than those who have participated in bilingual programs. In addition, there is a feeling especially in urban districts that the English language is being deteriorated and that bilingual programs are contributing to the deterioration of English. Bilingual education has also been attributed to low literacy levels and low social mobility among Hispanics (Cummins, 1997).

Against this backdrop of controversy school districts are faced with the challenge of providing quality programs for all students, including linguistically and culturally diverse students. School programs are challenged to rise to new expectations and to make major programmatic and curricular shifts (Romero 1999). Cloud, Genesee, and Hamayan (2000) and Lindholm-Leary (2000) suggested one such shift. These authors called upon dual language programs (also known as partial immersion, developmental bilingual, two-way immersion, two-way bilingual) to fulfill the affective as well as the linguistic needs of our diverse student population and to fulfill the multilingual demands of this century’s workforce. Romero stated, “our challenge is to equip future generations with the competencies necessary for multilingual workforce demands” (p. 1). She insisted that to be competitive in today’s global economy, there is a need for today’s students to become bilingual and that dual language programs are a means to success in the 21st Century.

Dual language programs are designed to create systemic reform and restructuring of the more prevalent transitional or immersion bilingual programs. In transition
programs students are expected and encouraged to assimilate to the mainstream language and culture as soon as possible. In contrast, dual language programs are considered maintenance programs. In these programs, English speakers and non-English speakers are integrated in the same classroom. The program strives to recognize and value both groups of students and maintain their first language while learning a second. The objectives sought are higher student achievement, increased student learning, positive affect, and cross-cultural understanding (Cloud et al., 2000; Lindholm-Leary, 2000).

The School Setting

The study school is an elementary K-4 school with an enrollment of 650 students. It is a large, old building located in the section of town that is predominantly Hispanic of Puerto Rican descent. The school represents the community with a student body of approximately 86% Hispanic, 12% African American, and 2% of other ethnic groups. With an LEP population of 36%, the school houses one of the largest bilingual programs in the district.

The school is an inner-city school in an urban district and as such it suffers from many of the economic, social, and achievement problems attributed to urban, inner-city schools. The poor conditions of the school district are evident in most of its schools, which are deteriorating and in state of disrepair. All of these have raised concerns at state and local levels as to the quality of education provided to students learning in these circumstances.

With a mobility rate of 39.9%, the school can be considered highly transient. Its attendance rate of 92.3% indicates at any given day approximately 8% of the students are absent and therefore cannot profit from the educational opportunities that are being
offered to them. Approximately 83% of the student population is eligible for free or reduced lunch through the federal food program and thus is characterized as being socioeconomically disadvantaged. The achievement level of the students is quite low. Only 18% of the student population is on grade level and results from the mandated fourth grade state assessment indicate that only 35% and 18% of the fourth grade students are at the proficient level in Language Arts and Mathematics respectively.

However, low achievement is not only a problem at this school, but endemic in the school district. In fact, because scores are so low, the school district has been identified as being in dire need of restructuring and upgrading instruction for all students through mandated programs of whole school reform. Consequently, Whole School Reform presents a context under which the Dual Language Program must operate.

In 1998, the State Supreme Court ordered the State Department of Education to institute a plan of comprehensive reform that would improve and correct the institutional and educational deficiencies that prevented the poorest districts from meeting the goals as stated in the Core Curriculum Content Standards. Whole School Reform has offered the school a chance to link up to an external program. In the 1999-2000 school year, the school adopted the Accelerated Schools Model as its model for whole school reform.

Accelerated Schools developed by Henry Levin of Stanford University focuses on the school’s own resources and strengths and believes in providing all students with equal opportunity so that they can be afforded the best education (Deal & Peterson, 1999). In addition, the Accelerated Schools program matches the philosophy of an enriched education, which is the hallmark of dual language education as well.
Levin theorized that students are often taught the way they are viewed. If they are viewed as “at risk,” the tendency is to teach them basic skills and to remediate. On the other hand, if they are viewed as “gifted,” they are taught with programs that are enriched and accelerated. Thus, Accelerated Schools offer enriched curricula similar to the one reserved for gifted and talented students. Their goal is to help at-risk students perform at grade level by the end of sixth grade (Hopfenberg, Levin, & Associates, 1993).

An aura of resentment and apprehension envelops this whole area of whole school reform. The district has sent mixed and conflicting messages. For instance, the previous school year (1999-2000), all educational plans and activities revolved around whole school reform. The year of this study (2000-2001), the emphasis was diverted to meeting the minimum levels of proficiency as dictated by high-stake state assessments. Whole School Reform was still a presence, but it no longer underscored everything as far as the educational program. Thus, the Core Curriculum Content Standards and the Whole School Reform Model presented the context under which the Dual Language Program operated.

Currently, the school has a transitional bilingual program that is designed to prepare students for the mainstream English only program as soon as possible, generally within a period of two to three years. All LEP students are eligible for bilingual education. Students are identified as LEP as the result of an assessment process that includes the Home Language Survey to determine the language that is spoken at home and the Language Assessment Battery (LAB) to determine the degree of proficiency in English. The transitional bilingual classes are divided into three tiers according to the degree of English proficiency of the LEP student.
Many of the students were born in Puerto Rico with a few from Central and South America. Some of the students have learned sufficient English at home or prior to entering school to have scored over 40% on the LAB and be placed in the general program. These students are not eligible for English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction or any type of bilingual education services because they are not classified as LEP. While classified as English Proficient (EP) by their LAB score, many of these students are not yet completely fluent speakers of English. Their English proficiency is not equivalent to that of the native born, or students who come from families where English is spoken as the home language.

Presently, students who are classified as LEP are placed in the transitional bilingual program. In this type of program, the students' native language is only used as a language of support as the students are learning English. Consequently, there is little growth in Spanish language proficiency. The use of the Spanish language as a medium of instruction decreases progressively as the students move through the different tiers.

The Dual Language Program will redirect the transitional bilingual program into a maintenance dual language program. The Dual Language Program includes the development and maintenance of the students' primary language and the acquisition of a second language in an integrated educational environment (Lambert, Genesee, Holobow & Chartrand, 1993). Thus, Spanish Language Arts and Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) are taught, just as English Language Arts and ESL are taught to all students thereby meeting the language development needs of all the students. Currently, all five-kindergarten classes and all five grade one classes follow a dual language organizational
construct. A total of 215 students or approximately 33% of the student body is taught in dual language classrooms.

The Dual Language Program is tailored to meet the linguistic needs of the students by providing them with an exemplary early childhood foundation that incorporates the native language and culture of all students. The entire school will be restructured to a dual language model starting with the kindergarten classes. Each year of implementation an additional grade level will be added to the model. In the 1999-2000 school year, the program made its debut in the five kindergarten classes. One year later, 2000-2001, the program was extended to the five first grade classes. Eventually, the program will involve all students.

Statement of the Problem

One of the most fundamental problems in education today is that people do not have a clear, coherent sense of meaning about what educational change is for, and how it proceeds. Thus, there is so much faddism, superficiality, confusion, failure of change programs, unwarranted and misdirected resistance, and misunderstood reform. What we need is a more coherent picture that people who are involved in or affected by educational change can use to make sense of what they and others are doing (Fullan and Stiegelbauer 1991, p. 4).

The school under study is undergoing a complete restructuring of its traditional bilingual program to a more innovative, child-centered dual language program. Accordingly, this study sought to examine the establishment of the Dual Language Program as a catalyst of change and its impact on the climate of the school.
There are no easy answers for the problems that plague our school systems. Although all children want to learn and can learn, it is up to us to provide them with the right environment for learning to take place. The literature on site restructuring and reform consistently states that successful and sustained improvement occurs only when the informal culture of the site is unified to support a distinctly different set of student outcomes from those previously supported by the old culture (Sorrensen, 1992). This reculturing process helps to create a strong, supportive, and productive school climate whereby learning can take place (Fullan, 1998).

Edmonds (1979), in his research on effective schools, stressed the importance of having a positive school climate. He stated that collaborative planning and collegial relationships, a sense of community, clear goals and high expectations, and order and discipline are the four characteristics that are essential and act concordantly to sustain a productive school climate. Fullan (1998) talked about the necessity of a “reculturing” process that must occur if change attempts are going to be successful. Reculturing refers to the process of developing new values, beliefs, and norms. He insisted that since people are the ones who change systems, everyone within the site must take leadership roles and become involved in the change process. Senge (1990) talked about schools coming together to form “learning organizations” in which all stakeholders are collectively and continually enhancing and improving the educational process at every level thereby creating a collaborative culture. Hargreaves, Earl, Moore, and Manning (2001) added that successful change depends on building collaborative cultures among teachers, administrators, and parents.
School site transformation is frequently riddled with the problems of different expectations from community groups who vie for political power. To achieve the changes necessary in transforming a bilingual education program from a transitional model to a maintenance dual language model many things are required. Administrators, parents, teachers and other staff members must be actively involved and included in every phase of the change process (Fullan, Bennet, & Bennet, 1990).

The literature further supports the notion that everyone in the school should genuinely participate in the change process and in the creation and maintenance of the new climate and culture (Schein, 1992). Successful projects appear to be enhanced when all stakeholders take leadership roles, and become actively and collaboratively involved in the change process, and support the same outcomes in a consistent manner (Deal, 1987).

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study analyzed the Dual Language Program as an instrument and agent for school change and reorganization and its effect on the climate of the school. For this investigation, face-to-face ethnographic interviews were used as the main source of data. The interviews focused on seven sets of questions dealing with: (a) the change process, (b) the implementation process, (c) the elements that support a unique culture within the school, (d) the leadership of the administrators, (e) the role of the parents, (f) the school environment, and (g) the organizational climate. Follow up questions that probed deeper were based on the preliminary analysis of the interviews.

It is hoped that the answers to these questions provide a clear and much larger picture of the Dual Language Program and its impact on the climate of the school.
Hopefully, answers to these questions will lead to improvement of services to LEP students and it will motivate others to further research into this area.

Significance of the Study

It was the objective of this study to contribute to the research literature information about the importance of the school-learning environment. The underscoring belief was that climate is an important component of the school and one of the attributes that contributes to student achievement.

This study provided a snapshot of the Dual Language Program as it was being implemented and as such it may not only provide a deeper understanding of the people who are involved in the process of educational change, but also valuable data on the probable causes that promote or impede the successful implementation and ultimately the success/non success of the program.

Although this study on the impact that a new program has on the climate of the school would probably not lead to a how to do it handbook of rules for effective practice; its significance was drawn from the fact that it may produce concepts and findings that are of value to teachers, administrators, parents, and others who act as decision makers. “Helping policy-makers understand the workplace conditions that enhance teachers’ learning opportunities, their physical rewards, their freedom from uncertainty, and their commitment to the profession is paramount in creating a compelling rationale for well-conceived changes.” (Rosenholtz, 1995, p. 218).

Change is an evolving process that occurs over a period of years. This study may help policy makers and other interested parties form a way of thinking about change and
see it not as an event, but rather as an dynamic evolution that must be given time to mature and ripen.

Finally, this study has important implications for the controversial issue of bilingual education. It may help identify the critical attributes of an effective instructional program for a student population that is growing more linguistically and ethnically diverse. This work, largely through the analysis of ethnographic interviews, offered a glimpse of bilingual education and its effects on creating a school climate that promotes student learning. Perhaps attitudes regarding modern bilingual instruction can become more proactive and based on research rather than reactive and based on misinformation and passion.

Limitations of the Study

First, the study was limited primarily by its scope and research design. The study focused on one school in an urban district that is establishing a dual language program and the research design focused on in-depth and detailed analysis of ethnographic interviews.

Second, the small sample size and short time span involved dictated that only limited conclusions can be drawn from the data collected and that the results may not be generalizable beyond the sample.

Third, the study was limited by the researcher’s interpretation of the data collected that has been sifted through personal values, beliefs, and perceptions.

Fourth, this study was limited to the informants’ perceptions of the organizational climate and their responses.
**Definition of Terms**

**Additive Bilingual Program:** Includes the development and maintenance of the students' native or primary language and the addition or acquisition of a second language in an integrated educational environment (Cloud et al., 2000).

**Language Majority Students:** Students whose primary or native language is English.

**Language Minority Students:** Students whose native language is not English and students who are still in the process of learning English.

**Limited English Proficient (LEP):** Student whose limited English language skills exclude them from the regular instructional program.

**School Climate:** The perceptions of all staff members of the organization. Climate is determined by the behaviors of the collective group. "The organizational climate of a school is the set of internal characteristics that distinguishes one school from another and influences the behavior of its members" (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991, p. 10). Climate is the general feel or atmosphere of schools that expresses the quality of life (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

**School Culture:** The social fabric of the school together with the established beliefs, expectations, values, traditions, goals, relationships, school mission, and climate. "The shared orientations that hold the unit together and give it a distinctive identity (Hoy & Miskel, 2001, p. 176).

**Subtractive Bilingual Program:** Does not include the development and maintenance of the students' native or primary language. Students often lose their primary language.
**Target Language:** The language that is being learned.

**Transitional Bilingual Program:** A program where students are transitioned into the mainstream program as quickly as possible. It is subtractive in nature in that students do not develop and often lose their native or primary language.

**Organization of the Study**

This study was organized in five chapters. Chapter I included an introduction with a description of the program and school setting, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, limitations of the study, the definition of terms, and the organization of the study. Chapter II focused on the theory and research on dual language programs and school climate. Chapter III described the methodology used to carry out the research and included the following sections: introduction, research methods, participant selection, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter IV presented an in-depth analysis of the data and the research findings. Selective excerpts and quotes from the interviews with dual language stakeholders provided an understanding of their investment in the program and their commitment to the objectives of dual language education and how they influenced the climate of the school. Chapter V presented the summary of the study, conclusions, implications and recommendations as well as direction for future research.
CHAPTER II

Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the literature and research that relates to this study. Accordingly, dual language programs are discussed along with their theoretical and pedagogical foundations including goals and objectives, important features, benefits, implementation issues and models. The fundamental underpinnings of school climate including differences between climate and culture, importance, conceptualizations, and variables of school climate are also reviewed in this chapter.

Dual Language Programs

The social as well as the pedagogical value of bilingual education have been debated and continue to be argued in many educational and political arenas. Critics abound. Many argue that language minority students without the benefit of bilingual education do very well or perhaps even better than those who have participated in bilingual education programs (Krashen, 1996). The capability as well as the capacity of bilingual programs to deliver students who are truly bilingual, biliteral, and bicultural have been questioned and continue to be under scrutiny.

According to Tinajero and De Villar (2000), the United States is on the road to becoming a truly multilingual nation, if not in policy at least in practice. While the battle to make English the sole and official language in this country rages on, our classrooms, communities, and workplaces are becoming more linguistically diverse. There has been a
tremendous increase in the number of students who speak a language other than English and this trend is expected to continue on this path.

Immigration to the United States during the 1970s and 1980s was about nine million. About one third of this immigration has been from Asia and another third from Latin America. Latinos are the fastest growing group. Currently, they represent 11.7% of the United States population. However, there are estimates that this figure will double to 24.3% by 2050. The Asian American populations at 3.8% in 2000 will more than double to 8.9% by 2050. It is estimated that the number of students who speak a language other than English will increase from just over 2 million in 1986 to over 5 million by 2020 (Lindholm-Leary, 2000).

As the United States becomes more global in its economical and political outlook, many businesses want their employees to have language skills to help them compete effectively in the international marketplace. The recent concern of business leaders about our nation's lack of ability to provide fluent speakers of languages other than English has spurred many systems across the nation to seriously consider implementing world language programs at the elementary and middle grades. It is widely recognized that in order for students to achieve any level of meaningful proficiency in a second language, they must begin language instruction much earlier than high school and continue studying it for longer periods of time. (Curtain & Pesola, 1994).

Thus, school programs are challenged and invited to rise to new expectations and to make both programmatic and curricular shifts. Romero (1999) suggested one such shift. She called upon Two-Way Bilingual Programs (also known as partial immersion, developmental bilingual, two-way immersion, and dual language) as a means to prepare
students for the challenges of tomorrow. She stated that to be competitive in today’s global economy, there is an increasing need for today’s students to become fully bilingual. She added, “Our challenge is to equip future generations with the competencies necessary for multilingual workforce demands” (p. 1).

Dual language programs are designed to create systemic reform and restructuring of the more prevalent transitional or immersion bilingual programs. Transitional programs provide instruction in the students’ native language and in ESL only until these students are considered proficient enough to exit into the English only program (Ovando & Collier, 1999). These programs are considered to be subtractive in nature because students are expected and encouraged to assimilate to the mainstream language and culture as soon as possible. In this process, students usually do not gain additional proficiency in their native language.

In contrast, dual language programs offer students instruction in the students’ first and second language. Thus, assuring a solid foundation in the first language (Cummins, 2000). These programs are considered maintenance programs and are additive in nature. In these programs English speakers and language minority students are integrated in the same classroom learning all grade level skills that are presented separately through two languages. (Lindholm-Leary, 2000). Consequently, language majority and language minority students gain proficiency in a second language.

Dual language programs are gaining in acceptance in the United States. According to a longitudinal study conducted by the Center of Applied Linguistics (1999), there are approximately 230 dual language programs in 23 states. As the number of programs continues to increase, new research and information is disseminated which inform not
only about the benefits but also the pedagogical implications. There is evidence that dual language programs have the potential to bridge the educational equity gap between language minority and language majority students and to lead to high academic achievement for all students (Cloud et al., 2000).

**Objectives and Goals**

According to Romero (1999), dual language programs strive to recognize and value both groups of students and to maintain their first language while learning a second. The objectives sought are higher student achievement, increased student learning, positive affect, proficiency in English and in another language, and cross-cultural understanding.

Cloud et al. (2000), stated that the goal of the program is to promote bilingualism and biculturalism along with the objectives of the regular school program. The program accomplishes this by: sharing the same challenging, academic program and language development standards as the regular program; developing high levels of functional proficiency in both languages; promoting an understanding and appreciation for other cultures; and using English along with the minority language to learn academic subjects.

Lindholm-Leary (2000), cited the following four major goals for dual language education: (a) high levels of bilingual proficiency, (b) biliteracy in both languages, (c) content area achievement at or above grade level, and (d) multicultural competencies.

Christian (1994) summarized by saying that all dual language programs basically share the same common goals of language proficiency, increased achievement, and cross-cultural understanding. Hence, these programs seek to meet the academic, linguistic, and social needs of all students. Although there are many variations of dual language
programs, Christian emphasized that the only crucial differences between programs lay on the approaches and strategies they use. She felt that these approaches and strategies could be contributing factors to either the success or the failure of dual language programs.

**Important Features**

The important features of dual language programs are examined in the context of program effectiveness. As mentioned earlier, as research in dual language develops it continues to shed light as far as the essential features that when present increase the probability of program success. In a program that purports to develop full bilingualism while attending to the language, academic, and social development of language minority and language majority students, several criteria should be considered in ensuring program effectiveness. Among them is the amount of time required to become proficient in the use of another language. A minimum of four to six years of bilingual instruction with at least 50% of the class time dedicated to instruction in the second language are required. The classroom should be balanced with both English and non-English speaking students (Romero, 1999). The core curriculum should be delivered using the two languages as mediums of instruction.

Cloud et al. (2000) claimed:

It is not whether a program is called bilingual or English only, but rather whether the program adopts instructional approaches that will result in strong bilingual and biliteracy development among its students. Programs that take effective steps to ensure that students develop full bilingualism and biliteracy succeed. By contrast, programs that adopt a remedial approach and encourage bilingual students to
results in English, despite the often exclusive emphasis on that language in the program. (Foreword)

The authors list nine critical features of effective language enriched programs: (a) parental involvement, (b) high standards, (c) strong leadership, (d) developmentally appropriate practices, (e) student-centered activities, (f) integration of language instruction with challenging academic instruction, (g) reflective teachers, (h) integration with other programs, and (i) additive bilingualism (Cloud et al., 2000).

According to Lindholm-Leary (2000), studies associated with effective education programs name the following seven critical factors for successful dual language education: (a) administrative support and instructional leadership; (b) a positive school environment for all students including these features: a school environment conducive to learning, an additive dual language environment, a positive instructional program, and multicultural components; (c) high quality instructional personnel; (d) professional development/teacher training; (e) instructional design that promotes achievement, bileteracy, and bilingualism through: an academic curriculum with high standards for achievement, a program duration of at least six years, exposure to ultimate dual language input, language output, promotion and support, integrated language arts instruction, separation of languages for instruction, ratio of English to the target language; (f) understanding student needs and best ratios for classroom composition; (g) parental involvement and home/school collaboration.

Preliminary results show that dual language programs are effective in their promise of expanding our nation’s language resources by conserving the native language of language minority students and developing second language skills in English speaking students, and in their hope of improving relationships between majority and minority groups by enhancing cross-cultural understanding and appreciation (p. 1).

Christian (1994) as well as Romero (1999) cited the same criteria for program effectiveness. Christian, however, was more explicit about the balanced integration of the three goals of the program and about the variables that affect implementation. To this end, Freeman (1996) asserted that program planners must play close attention to the students’ self-esteem as well as to higher expectations of their cognitive abilities.

Lindholm and Gavlek (1994) gave several examples of schools where student achievement on standardized tests demonstrated academic progress as well as fluency in both languages. They claimed that while the goals of dual language programs generally remain constant, the methods through which these goals are realized change depending on local conditions, demographics, and community attitudes toward bilingual education. These factors are in accordance with Freeman’s (1996) implementation issues. Both researchers felt that implementation considerations affected the program in many ways. Nevertheless, several reports revealed that the dual language approach is effective not only in the teaching of the two languages to both language groups, but also in the development of academic excellence.

Even though the programs studied by Lindholm and Gavlek (1994) have shown some preliminary proof of their success, the controversy about the value of bilingual
education continues. Many opponents simply refuse to recognize the validity of the data presented. Ongoing research by Thomas and Collier (1995) in five urban districts have also shown that language minority students in dual language programs experience more long-term educational gains than students in other bilingual settings. Thomas and Collier listed three "key predictors" of academic success that have been proven to have more influence than any other factors: (a) cognitively complex academic instruction through the students' first language for as long as possible, (b) use of current approaches to teaching through both languages, and (c) changes in the socio-cultural context of schooling whereby the integration with English speakers takes place in an environment that not only is supportive but also affirming to both groups of students.

Dual language programs fulfill all the predictors cited above and are, therefore, considered the best and most effective for improving minority student achievement as measured by standardized tests across all subject areas.

Benefits

Dual Language Programs have increased in popularity in the last few years. Their popularity rests on the fact that they serve the language, academic, and social development needs of the students in an academic program that is often associated with enriched programs (Christian, 1994; Ovando, 1999).

According to Romero (1999), the benefits to be reaped from dual language programs are many. Traditionally, students speaking little or no English have been, and in some instances, still are considered a burden to the educational system because they require additional funds and services. However, in the context of dual language education these students are now considered a valuable "national resource" and an asset. (Campbell
& Kreeft, 1998; Brecht & Ingold, 1998) This viewpoint contributes to an enhancement of the students’ self-esteem as well as to higher expectations of their cognitive capabilities. “Being truly bilingual and biliteral means they will tend to have higher income levels” (Romero, 1999, p. 5). Higher income levels usually translate to increased socio-economic status.

In the discussion of benefits, it is crucial for all stakeholders to understand that the beneficial outcomes of dual language programs are cumulative and, therefore, grade-appropriate levels of English proficiency may not be achieved until students have participated in the program for 5 or 6 years (Cloud et al., 2000). Many researchers have documented the benefits of knowing two languages. Among them are: academic, cognitive, socio-cultural, and economic benefits.

The academic benefits of dual language instruction are a result of the integration of content area instruction and language learning. This integration is achieved through content area instruction in both languages (Cloud et al., 2000). Research has shown that students who come to the United States with no or limited proficiency in English make better progress in acquiring English and in academic development when they receive some schooling in their primary language at the same time they are introduced to English as Second Language (Cummins, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997).

Cummins (1991) stressed the importance of providing students instruction in their native language, especially in literacy. This helps to establish a solid foundation on which they can acquire another language. Consequently, students who acquire strong literacy skills in their primary language are able to transfer these skills to the acquisition of a
second or even third language. Literacy in their primary language facilitates the acquisition of literacy in the second language.

Genesee and Lambert (1983) postulated that dual language programs which naturally provide students with the opportunity to develop their primary language along with a second language and even a third language are feasible and effective in developing high levels of literacy in both groups of students. Students benefit from these programs because they acquire increased degrees of language proficiency, which are very hard to achieve in other types of program.

As far as the cognitive benefits, Cummins (1991) reported that students who acquire high levels of proficiency in second languages often experience certain cognitive and linguistic advantages when compared to monolingual students. Research showed that bilingual students perform better than monolingual students on tasks that call for divergent thinking, pattern recognition, and problem solving. Bilingual children also seem to have enhanced levels of metalinguistic awareness, which facilitates decoding (Adams, 1990). Furthermore, research findings by Lambert et al. (1993) dispelled fears that acquiring a second language during the early school years is detrimental to the development of the primary language. In addition, Genesee (1995) found that below average students were not delayed by dual language instruction as was previously believed.

Regarding the socio-cultural benefits, studies have indicated that proficiency in other languages permits students to expand their world to include other groups of people and cultures. It allows them to communicate in the context of their everyday living thereby expanding their understanding of other cultural groups. It affords them a different
way of looking at their own values, social customs, and cultural understandings. As a result, students not only develop a second language but a second culture as well. Students gain deeper insights into worlds, which perhaps they might not have gained otherwise (Cloud et al., 2000).

Romero (1999) highlighted the economic benefits. She claimed that everyone knows that proficiency in another language will widen the job prospects of the future workforce. Nowadays, businesses want their employees to have language skills that will help them to compete effectively in the international marketplace. Individuals who know English along with other languages will clearly be at an advantage in the competitive world of the 21st century.

*Implementation Issues*

Christian (1994) indicated that dual language programs are not new and that they have been in existence for many years. In fact, some date as far back as 1960. However, there has been a renewed interest since the 1980's. Christian reported:

This renewed interest is the result of a convergence of factors, including increased attention to foreign language learning for English speakers, research on effective programs for educating minority students, and the availability of federal and state funding for programs using this approach (p. 2).

As result, there are growing numbers of dual language programs where students are learning content in two languages and where language minority students are integrated with language majority students.

When referring to the effectiveness of dual language programs, Christian (1994) is very explicit about the variables that affect implementation. Freeman (1996) also added
that program planners should pay close attention to implementation issues because they could have a tremendous impact on the effects of the program. According to Cabazon, Nicoladis and Lambert (1997), the success or failure of bilingual education cannot be addressed as a whole since several different kinds and variations of bilingual education programs exist. "These programs differ in the degree to which they promote and/or use English and the home language of the students in the classroom, Thus, the value of bilingualism is seen differently in the different programs", (p. 1).

In addition, Freeman (1996) reported, "Researchers indicate that macro level and micro level issues related to planning and implementation must be examined to understand how the socio-political context of schools may favor or impede the planning of good language programs", (p. 5). While some differences in programs appear to be of a philosophical nature, Cabazon et al. (1997) stressed that the different programs have psychological impact on the students that should not be underestimated because they have repercussions for achievement as well as self-esteem.

According to Amrein and Peña (2000) there are many negative attitudes about bilingual education programs and some of the negative perceptions are reinforced by the way the programs are implemented. For instance, there are various pedagogical imbalances as far as what language should be used for each subject and to what extent each should be used in teaching and communicating with students. There are also discrepancies in the availability of materials, and inconsistencies in student population. They concluded, "without a systematic review of their practices, dual language programs may be subjecting students to inequality, to fewer educational opportunities, and to
policies and practices that separate students according to race, ethnicity, and language orientation” (p. 11).

Although Amrein and Peña (2000) found discrepancies between theory and practice in the school they did their research, they go on to emphasize that the successes need to be noted as well. They felt that dual language programs have a lot of promise for developing true bilingualism in English speakers as well as non-English speakers, for developing high achievement and cross-cultural understanding, and for helping states meet standards-based reforms.

Meeting state standards is important since systems across the nation are undergoing a standards-based way of reform and work is underway to base our entire educational system on standards of performance. As a result of the introduction of the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Performance Guidelines and Standards for K-12 learners (1998), local districts are engaging in conversational topics that were not part of the scene a few years ago, one such topic being foreign language education for all students.

In a country where monolingualism has been promoted for so long, endorsement of bilingualism in order to prepare students to successfully compete in a global economy is an entirely new concept. In that sense, standards have indeed established a new context in the direction of foreign language education in this country both at the national and at the state level. To this respect, Lewelling and Rennie (1998) commented, “The development of standards has galvanized the field of foreign language education . . . the standards provide a broader, more complete rationale for foreign language education that
we have sought for decades but never managed to capture in words or in concept until now” (p. 24).

The introduction of K-12 Standards for Foreign Language Education (ACTFL, 1998) has indeed revolutionized the entire country. There is a new view on foreign language education and their rightful place in American society. The United States has traditionally been a country that has welcomed immigrants from all over the world. However, their main objective and concern was to learn English in order to succeed in the “new world” where rapid acculturation was the goal. Therefore, the emphasis was on the quick acquisition of the new language with the study of other languages being considered inconsequential and not important.

Students who did not speak English have been traditionally looked upon as a burden to the educational system. In some instances, state departments of education have been required by federal and compliance mandates to appropriate additional funds and services in order to institute programs that meet the needs of the students who are considered Limited English Proficient (LEP).

In a country where historically monolingualism has been promoted for so long, it is not a surprise that most of the programs are transitional in nature. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to institute the kinds of programs that would yield bilingualism in all students.

According to Lewelling and Rennie (1998) the standards recommend the best types of programs. “They support the ideal of extended sequences of study that begin in elementary school and continue to high school and beyond” (p. 2). In this light, dual language programs hold a lot of promise in promoting bilingualism in all students thereby
preparing them to compete in a global economy as well as enhancing our nation’s language resources.

In implementing dual language programs, the status of each language within the school and the community must also be taken into account. Although one of the goals of dual language programs is to promote proficiency of both languages in an equal manner, the two languages rarely share the same social status. The more equal the status of the two languages involved, the more likely is that the students will develop high proficiency in both languages.

Cabazon et al. (1997) based their research study on students’ attitudes toward their own bilingualism. They found that students, particularly those in regular bilingual programs or English as Second Language Programs, actually preferred English to Spanish because English was perceived to be the language of more social value and higher status. Students as young as those of kindergarten age, even in dual language settings in which both languages are supposedly of equal value, Spanish and English speakers alike preferred using English. Negative perceptions about the minority language had already been internalized in these children.

Native English speakers reported that they did not feel comfortable with Spanish until the third or fourth grade. Spanish speakers did not feel comfortable with English until the second grade. Such sentiments spurred Grecco (1994) to study perceptions about biliteracy in dual language classrooms. Previous studies have concentrated on student achievement and students’ perceptions about learning a second language.

In a program that purports to promote balance, fairness, and equality in order to produce students who are bilingual, biliteral, and bicognitive; inconsistencies in such
practices have to be taken into consideration and studied further. “Without conscious attention to these factors, we are operating on assumptions about students’ motivation to learn” (Grieco, 1994, p. 4). Grieco reported, “the buy-in into biliteracy is not automatic on the part of students, and educators who propose to develop biliteracy would do well to examine attitude as a factor that can inhibit or promote biliteracy” (p. 4).

Models

Lidholm-Leary (2000); Cloud et al. (2000) indicated that dual language programs are basically the same. They vary with respect to the amount of the use of the second language in instruction and the grade level in which partial immersion in the second language is offered. Dual language programs serve both language majority students and language minority students in the same classrooms. Generally 50% of the students come from each language group.

There are two basic models. In the 90:10 model, 90% of the curriculum is taught to both groups of students using the majority language and 10% (usually language arts) is taught using English. The general rationale behind the 90:10 model is to promote the minority language as much as possible on the assumption that the minority language is the one that needs the most support. In subsequent years, the percentage of instructional time in the minority language is gradually decreased as the students progress through the program.

In 50:50 programs, English and the other language are both used 50% of the time to teach the curriculum. This model is based on the premise that both languages are equally important and need to be reinforced from the beginning. These programs are
often more cost effective because they require fewer teachers since one bilingual teacher could teach in both languages (Ovando & Collier, 1999).

There are different variations of these two models. Schools make their choices according to their resources, priorities, and goals. Thus, program models depend on student demographics, availability of bilingual personnel and teacher preparation, and availability of bilingual materials and support services (Cloud et al., 2000).

School Climate

There cannot be a study about school climate without also studying, even indirectly, the culture of the school as well because both are intertwined and offer perspectives for examining the character of a school. Culture and climate are complimentary to each other. The culture of the school can improve or hinder its effectiveness while the climate acts to sustain it (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). Because school climate is an aspect of the school’s culture, the relationships between the two should be highlighted.

Hoy and Miskel (2001) made a distinction between climate and culture by stating that the definitions of culture and climate appear to often overlap and therefore can be confusing and non apparent. Culture consists of the shared assumptions, values, or norms, whereas climate is defined by shared perceptions of behavior. In this sense, climate is the commonly held interpretation of culture. Culture is made up of the shared assumptions and climate of the shared perceptions. Unlike climate, which is the result of the daily happenings, culture embodies values, beliefs and norms that have been developing over a period of time. Both culture and climate describe the nature of the workplace and both are important in attempts to capture organizational life. Although Hoy and Miskel felt that it
is premature to define culture as an aspect of climate or to define climate as an outcome of culture. The distinction of the two frameworks is useful.

*Difference Between School Culture and Climate*

Culture is the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that have been built over time as people work together solving problems and confronting challenges. These sets of informal expectations not only undergird the values people hold but also how people think, feel, and act in schools.

This highly enduring web of influence builds the school together and makes it special. It is up to school leaders—principals, teachers, and parents—to help identify, shape, and maintain strong positive, student-focused cultures. Without these supportive cultures reforms will falter. School morale and commitment will wither, and student learning will slip (Peterson & Deal 1998, p. 29).

Hence, scholars who focus on the culture of a school emphasize the organization as a whole and how its practices and beliefs function to maintain the social structure.

The term has been used synonymously with a variety of concepts including climate. The definitions of culture are varied and include different factors for different people. According to Schein (1992) organizations have shared meanings, underlying assumptions, and values that make up the culture of the organization providing its members with articulated sets of ideas and beliefs. Brown (1965) postulated that values, beliefs, norms, goals, and feelings are the ingredients of culture. Deal and Peterson (1999) reinforced that the belief system, the way things are usually done is generally the “ethos” or culture of the organization. Deal and Kennedy (1982) defined culture as consisting of patterns of thought, behavior, and artifacts that not only stand as symbols
but also give a sense of meaning to the workplace. Later in 1999, Deal and Peterson defined culture as the deep pattern of values, beliefs and traditions that have evolved over the course of the years.

Rosenholtz (1995) claimed that culture is the psychological and social force that stimulates not only the direction but also, most importantly, the quality of work. This work culture is very powerful and it should be considered as one of the greatest resources of a school. Its power rests on the fact that it serves as a stimulating and motivating force, which acts to generate growth and performance. Deal and Peterson (1994), summarized the concept of culture by saying:

Although hard to define and difficult to put a finger on, culture is extremely powerful. This ephemeral, taken-for-granted aspect of schools, too often overlooked, ignored, is actually one of the most significant features of any educational enterprise. Culture influences everything that goes on in the schools: how staff dress, what they talk about, their willingness to change, their practice of instruction, and the emphasis given to student learning (p. 28).

Effective Schools Research by Brookover et al., (1978) and Rutter, Maugham, Mortimore, Ousten, and Smith (1979) claimed that school culture is important because healthy and sound school cultures correlate strongly with increased student achievement and motivation as well as with teacher productivity and satisfaction. Deal (1985) stated that effective schools that have strong cultures usually have two things in common: shared values and a consensus on how to do things. At the heart of these shared values are the beliefs that schools are for students and that teachers in their endeavor for excellence should experiment with their teaching, be professional, trust colleagues, and be open to
behavior and communication (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). Thus, schools that have strong positive cultures are places with a shared sense of what is important, a shared ethos of caring and concern, and a shared commitment to help students learn. In contrast, schools with negative cultures have staffs that are fragmented and have lost the purpose of serving students.

As far as school climate, even though there is a lot of research, there is some vagueness as to how climate is defined and conceptualized. Tagiuri (1968) defined climate as the environmental qualities within the organization. He proposed that just as particular personal traits serve to mold and later shape the personality of an individual; a particular amalgam of characteristics act to shape the climate of a school. These characteristics are composed of the “ecology” of the school, which encompasses all the physical and material features; “the milieu,” which represents the human features; the social system representing the way in which members interact; and the culture, which comprises the values, beliefs and norms of the school. All these characteristics constitute the climate. In this sense, the climate of a school could be termed as the personality of the school. That is “personality is to the individual as climate is to the organization” (Halpin & Croft, 1962, p. 1).

Hoy and Miskel (1996), and Litwin and Stringer (1968) defined climate in terms of the shared perceptions that serve to distinguish the organization from other organizations and that also serve to influence the behavior of the people in the organization. Hoy and Miskel (2001) added that these perceptions are influenced by the formal and informal organization, the personalities of its members, and the leadership of the organization. Rutter et al. (1979) used the term “ethos”. Hoy and Miskel (1982)
argued that climate is the psychological context in which the organization is embedded. According to them school climate is a dimension of the social system of the school. Later, Hoy and Miskel (2001) claimed that climate is the broad term used to refer to teachers’ perceptions of the school environment, the formal and informal organization, the personalites of its members, and the organizational leadership that influence it. They stated, climate is “the set of internal characteristics that distinguishes one school from another and influence the behavior of people” (p. 189). Thus, school climate is a quality of the school environment that is experienced by the members of the organization and is based on their shared perceptions and therefore it serves to affect their behavior.

There are many qualities of the school environment that make up the climate of a school. Some are very concrete and visible such as the general appearance, the physical structure, the comfort levels – heat, lighting, ventilation, and noise. Other elements such as the nature of the relationships among all its members and their feelings of safety and belongingness are not as readily evident. Nevertheless, it is important to note that not one single factor influences the climate, but rather a combination of ingredients (Freinberg, 1998).

The Importance of School Climate

Inner city schools suffer from many of the economic, social, and achievement problems attributed to urban districts. Schools in these districts often face the debilitating task of trying to create positive classroom environments. Schools in urban districts must rise to the challenge and create environments where children feel they belong and where they learn to love learning in spite of the realities of their lives. Kohl (1998) stated that unless schools create these types of environments, children will not be able to learn. He
added that schools must inculcate students with a sense of self-worth and respect along with a sense of hope and promise so that they can overcome their problems and rise above their difficulties.

The importance of school climate has been documented in many studies. There is research that supports the notion that school reform is more effective when a good climate is present (Bulach & Malone, 1994). And that a healthy organizational climate is crucial for a good school (Hoy & Tarter, 1992). Thus, studying the influence of change efforts on the climate in which teaching and learning take place should be key in any attempt of school reform that purports to improve learning conditions by offering an enriched educational program that strives for excellence. Unfortunately, schools often embark on a journey of school reform and change without first considering the conditions that might enhance or impede the reform process.

School climate is frequently cited in the Effective Schools Research as one of the most important variables that influences student achievement (Brookover & Lezzotte, 1979; Rutter et al., 1979; Wynne, 1980). In fact, Hoyle, English and Steffy (1985) added, “school climate might be one of the most important ingredients of a successful instructional program. Without a climate that creates a harmonious and well functioning school, a high degree of academic achievement is difficult, if not downright impossible to obtain” (p. 15). Sackney (1988) contended that when the school climate is right, the results are people who are inspired and motivated to do their best. Urban (1999) warned that unless schools build positive and supportive climates, students might never reach high levels of achievement and therefore reach their full potential.
Hensen and Childs (1998) asserted that an improved school climate is a paragon that should be pursued in all schools. A good school climate indicates that people are working together towards a common goal and that everyone takes responsibility for and is an intricate part of the learning community. It also means that members of the school community are united in their strive to enhance and enrich the culture and the conditions in the school that promote a learning environment where teachers can teach better and students can learn more. In this sense, climate is determined by the behaviors of the collective group and it is often reflected in the schools’ instructional patterns and in the behavioral practices that serve to enhance or impede student achievement. Freinberg (1998) added that a healthy school climate contributes to effective teaching and learning and that feedback from climate could play an important role in school reform and school improvement efforts.

Brookover and Lezzotte (1979) reported extensively on the characteristics of effective schools. They cited a positive school learning climate, high expectations, and a principal who helps to establish, influence, and maintain such climate as the characteristics of effective schools. They argued that in order to influence the climate of a school, there needs to be involvement of all its members and clear communication of the school’s goals and expectations with the principal carefully monitoring, guiding, and facilitating progress towards these goals and expectations. They further claimed that climate affects the general feel of the school thereby affecting both the quality of the organizational life and the quality of education in school.

In effective schools that have positive climates, teachers embrace cooperative practices that synergize and empower them to continue to pursue higher levels of
achievement in their students. A positive climate lays the foundation for a sound educational program (Sweeney, 1988).

*Conceptualizations of Climate*

Halpin and Croft (1962) pioneered much of the work on climate in schools. They identified basic school climates ranging from open to closed. An open climate is described as authentic and conversely, a closed climate is described as inauthentic. Further conceptualization of these climates was based on three dimensions of principal behavior and three dimensions of teacher behavior.

The three dimensions of principal behavior are: supportive, directive and restrictive. The supportive principal behavior emphasizes a genuine concern and support for teachers. The directive is task oriented with little consideration for the personal needs of teachers. And the restrictive is characterized by rigid, close, and constant control over teachers.

The three dimension of teacher behavior are: collegial, intimate, and disengaged. The collegial teacher behavior emphasizes support and interactions among teachers. The intimate teacher behavior fosters close, personal, and friendly relationships inside and outside of the school. And the disengaged teacher behavior engenders alienation and separation among teachers.

Using the dimensions of principal and teacher behaviors, four types of school climate are possible: open, engaged, disengaged, and closed.

An open climate is characterized by widespread cooperation and respect within the faculty and between the faculty and the principal. The principal listens, is open to suggestions, gives genuine and frequent praise, and respects the professionalism of the
staff. Teachers, in turn, have the autonomy to perform without close scrutiny and have collegial/congenial relationships. The behavior of the principal and the faculty is open and authentic.

The engaged climate is marked by the attempts of a controlling principal and by the high performance of the teachers in spite of the behavior of the principal. The principal is rigid, autocratic, and hinders teachers with burdensome tasks. In contrast, the faculty is cohesive, committed, supportive, and open. They conduct themselves as professionals, have collegial/congenial relationships, and cooperate with each other.

In the disengaged climate, the principal’s behavior is open, concerned, and supportive. But, the faculty acts to immobilize and sabotage the principal’s leadership attempts. Teachers neither like nor respect each other. As a result, they are divisive, intolerant, and uncommitted.

In the closed climate, the principal and the faculty just go through the motions. Principals are non-supportive, inflexible, hindering, and controlling. The faculty is divisive, intolerant, apathetic, and uncommitted (Sackney, 1988).

Later, Hoy and Tarter (1992) used a health metaphor to conceptualize climate and the conditions that facilitate or impede growth and development. Healthy organizations deal successfully with forces that are disruptive whether they are outside or inside forces. The principal not only provides the leadership, direction and maintains high standards of performance, but also creates an environment where teachers are supported and a sense of trust, openness, teamwork, and commitment permeate. A healthy school climate flourishes in an atmosphere where there is trust and openness and where there is a sense of cooperation and loyalty between the teachers and the principal (Hoy & Tarter, 1992).
Teachers, in turn, are committed to teaching and learning and maintain high standards of performance for themselves and for their students. The students are highly motivated, respect one another, and are proud of their school. The environment is orderly and serious (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). A healthy organizational climate is crucial for a good school because it contributes to effective teaching and learning (Freinberg, 1998).

In contrast, an unhealthy school climate is vulnerable to destructive outside forces. The principal provides little direction or support for the teachers and has low influence both within and outside the school. In turn, neither teachers nor students feel good about each other or their work. As a result, morale is low and teaching and learning are affected negatively (Hoy & Tarter, 1992).

The concept of pupil control offers another view of school climate. However, this one focuses on teacher-student relationships rather than on principal-teacher relationships as in open and closed climates. Hoy and Miskel (2001) conceptualized the school climate in terms of control patterns that teachers and administrators use to control student behavior. Willower, Eidell, and Hoy (1967) postulated a pupil control sequence from custodial to humanistic.

The traditional school where a rigid and high controlled maintenance of order is of utmost importance characterizes the custodial school climate. Control is achieved through punitive sanctions and students are expected to conform without question. Teachers do not attempt to understand student behavior or the reasons for their misbehavior. The flow of communication and power is unilateral and downward.

The school that is conceived as an educational community in which there is a definite attempt to understand the behavior of the students in psychological and
sociological terms characterizes the humanistic school climate. This type of climate engenders a democratic atmosphere because there is two-way communication between teachers and students. Thus, "it stresses both the importance of the individual and the creation of an atmosphere that meets student needs" (Hoy & Miskel, 2001, p. 205).

Not surprisingly, Appleberry and Hoy (1969) found that humanistic and open climates are strongly correlated. Hoy and Miskel (2001) stated, "schools with a restricted, pupil-control orientation had significantly greater disengagement, less esprit, more aloofness, and less trust than those with a more humanistic pupil control orientation" (p. 206).

In schools that had high custodial climates, there were more incidents of student vandalism, more violent acts, and more suspensions. In contrast, humanistic schools provide healthy social climates where students are motivated, engage in problem solving, and are serious about learning. Evidence from research studies further indicates a need for more humanistic and less custodial school and more open climates because students feel less alienated, more satisfied, and more productive (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

*School Climate Variables*

Creating a positive school climate involves many things and although the indicators of school climate might vary from researcher to researcher, there is an underlying belief that certain variables are more relevant than others to student achievement. One of the most important aspects of school climate is the whole concept of creating positive and safe learning environments where students’ minds are engaged and allowed to reach their full potential (Scherer, 1998). The work of Brookover and Lezzotte
(1979), Rutter et al. (1979), and Wynne (1980) support the belief that a school’s climate greatly increases the probability of student academic success.

According to Sweeney (1988) ten factors highlight schools with good climates: a supportive and stimulating environment, student-centered strategies, positive expectations, feedback, rewards, a sense of family, closeness to parents, community communication, achievement and trust.

Hoy, Tarter and Kottkamp (1991) listed seven components of school climate: institutional integrity, principal influence, consideration, initiating structure, resource support, morale, and academic emphasis. Sackney (1988) indicated that the variables that are related to school climate could be divided in two general dimensions: those that deal with the academic climate and those that address the social climate.

The academic climate directly impacts on the quality of instruction and student performance. The academic climate is an outcome of the use of reward and praise, the effectiveness of the principal and teachers, and the collaborative processes that exist within the school.

The social climate results from the appearance, comfort and orderliness of the school, the opportunities students have for participation, and most importantly, the nature of the staff-student-relationships. Because the social climate affects their behavior and perceptions it has a direct influence on the morale and productivity of its members. It also influences the degree of satisfaction people in the organization feel (Hoy et al., 1991).

Purkey and Novak (1996) proposed that by concentrating on places, policies, programs, processes, and people; schools could be successful at creating better learning environments for both teachers and students. Education Week on the Web (1997) listed
such factors as scale, local autonomy, school safety, teacher and principal roles, and student and parent roles as the main indicators of school climate.

Although the variables of school climate appear to be slightly different from researcher to researcher, all of them share certain commonalities. The following attributes that are discussed are representative of the many variables that have been identified by different researchers as important attributes of school climate. They are by no means all-inclusive. They are merely indicative of some of the variables that are most commonly listed.

*School facility characteristics.* The way schools are structured and the conditions in which they exist have a great impact on the academic success of its students. Purkey and Novak (1996) indicated that schools exhibiting a positive climate are clean and nicely decorated. They concluded that behavior and academic achievement are better when the school is clean and when it is decorated with student work, pictures, posters, and icons that depict the school ethos. Kohl (1998) talked about an environment that is not only warm and inviting but also friendly. He spoke of an environment where students are valued both as individuals members of the learning community and as members of the larger community in which they live.

*Local autonomy.* Schools are more likely to change when the staff has a sense of ownership and control. Schools where teachers, administrators, and other members of the community participate in the decision making process usually have higher degrees of cooperation and collaboration along with a higher sense of collective responsibility for student learning. Students perform better in schools where teachers work together to
solve problems and are empowered to make decisions (Education Week on the Web, 1997).

*Safe and orderly environment.* There cannot be engagement of the students' minds if they do not feel safe and their fears are assuaged (Scherer, 1998). Murphy, Weil, Halliger and Mitman (1985) claimed, “effective schools maintain a safe and orderly environment for learning” (p. 368). In a safe environment, students and staff feel free from danger and harm to themselves or their property. In an orderly environment, the school has a systematic set of school policies and practices with rules that are specific and behavior expectations are clear and consistently enforced. In addition, to ensure a total school approach, there is a regular review of the schools practices and policies.

The need for order in schools and its implications for student learning when there is a lack of it have been well documented. Concern by educators and the public for orderly learning environments have been a consistent issue in education. Teaching and learning cannot take place if schools do not offer a safe and orderly environment. Violence, drugs, gang activities are realities that spill out to classrooms where teachers report increased numbers of discipline problems and classroom disturbances (Education Week on the Web, 1997). Scherer (1998) indicated that there is an increasing need to teach students alternative ways to deal with the violence, which is manifested as a result of their anger and frustration. Schools have to channel their energy and intelligence in more constructive ways. Unfortunately violence has become part of students’ lives and as a result they resort to violence as a way of solving their problems.

*Opportunity for student participation.* Rutter et al. (1979) and Wynne (1980) found that schools that empower students with responsibility and participation had better
student behavior, better attendance, less delinquency, and higher achievement. Thus, students should be provided with opportunities to learn responsibility, to practice leadership behavior, to identify with adult role models, and to learn the skills of participation.

*Use of reward and praise.* The use of a clear and concise reward system was also associated with higher student achievement. In effective schools, there are numerous and varied opportunities for school-wide student recognition of academics, citizenship, attendance, etc. (Rutter et al., 1979).

*Clear goals and high expectations.* Edmonds (1979) and Rutter et al. (1979) have related high expectations to school effectiveness more consistently than any other variable. In a school that exhibits high expectations, the staff not only believes in their ability to influence student achievement but is also held accountable for student learning. In this type of school, there are clear and achievable goals and all students are expected to do well.

Clear goals and high expectations are not confined to the classroom setting. There are school wide expectations and goals for the enforcement of specific policies, practices, and behaviors. High expectations for student and staff performance have been linked to positive student outcomes (Edmonds, 1979; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Phi Delta Kappa (PDK), (1980) stated that expectations not only influence the way people think about their performance but also the way they explain their performance. “Students do better when the staff of a school has a coherent idea of its goals and mission and is focused on achieving that mission” (Education Week on the Web, 1997).
Collegial/collaborative relationships. Sergiovanni and Starrat (1998) talked about collegiality and collaboration as the main ingredients of learning communities. They further claimed that change efforts would not be effective in a climate that is not conducive to these type of relationships.

Later, Hargreaves et al. (2001) contended that strong collaborative cultures and collegial relationships provide the supports needed for the implementation of effective changes that are sustained over time. They added that strong collaborative cultures have been linked to effective classrooms and increased learning as well as to an increased sense of teacher efficacy and confidence.

Shlechty (2001) further emphasized that isolation weakens commitment and therefore leaders must do everything in their power to promote a sense of collegiality. Collegial relationships are enhanced by the savvy skills of a good leader. In effective schools principals tend to emphasize collaboration, participation, and consensus.

Students and staff relationships. Poor quality relationships between staff and students interfere with the educative process and poor relationships among students disrupt the learning process (Comer, Haynes, Joyner, Ben-Avic, 1996). Schools with good climates are attributed with good student-teacher relationships. Shared activities whereby students and staff work together not only serve to add cohesion but also are associated with good student behavior and academic achievement. PDK (1980) found that in schools where student-teacher relationships are good, students are more apt to work harder and enjoy their schoolwork to a greater extent.

Rutter at al. (1979) and PDK (1980) found that in effective schools teacher cooperation and concern are high. Wynne (1980) found that student climate is positively
associated with the amount of socialization among faculty. Hoy et al. (1991) further stated that the organization's climate is influenced not only by the personalities but also the relationships of its members.

*Home school cooperation and support.* School effectiveness is related to the extent to which staff and parents work together to promote student learning (Rutter et al., 1979). Murphy et al. (1985) emphasized that in order to have good home school cooperation and support, schools should have frequent communication with parents along with a clear set of expectations for parents. Parents should have input in school decisions, opportunities to participate in school functions and activities, and frequent opportunities to learn about how to work with their children.

Moos (1979) added that schools with positive climates allow parents to participate and develop relationships with faculty and other staff as well as other families; contribute to the personal growth of families in terms of their knowledge of child development, parenting skills, and self-esteem; and have a say along with being an integral part of the decisions on issues affecting their children's education. Evidence shows a strong connection between parent and family involvement in school and children's academic achievement, attendance, attitudes, and continued education (Henderson & Berla, 1994).

*Morale.* A school with good morale is characterized by trust and friendliness among faculty. Teacher morale usually reflects the degree in which teachers like each other, their job, and how they feel about the school (Hoy et al., 1991).

Student morale appears to be a function of students' perceptions that teachers and administrators care. School climate and academic performance appear to be better in
schools where teachers and administrators take a genuine interest in their students. Morale is positively related to achievement and self-concept (Brookover et al., 1978).

*Instructional leadership.* The principal's involvement in instruction has been positively associated to both climate and learning outcomes. Young (1980) believed that the principal is the key in improving school climate. The principal is the one that must provide the kind of leadership that fosters positive climates where learning can take place. Based on his Effective Schools research, Edmonds (1979) identified the principal as the person positioned to guide and improve instructional programs and thus provide instructional leadership. The principal provides the staff with the information and the support that is needed in order to have a strong foundation.

*Teaching skills.* The importance of effective teachers in providing a climate conducive to learning cannot be overemphasized. "What happens in the classroom is an important first step to establishing a climate that is conducive to learning" (Sackney, 1988, p. 14). Much of what happens in the classrooms has repercussions for the entire school because it is carried over to the rest of the building. Professional growth and development is key in enhancing the repertoire of teaching skills that would ultimately help teachers in their efforts to increase pupil achievement, which in turn, would increase their sense of efficacy and self-esteem.
CHAPTER III
Methodology

This study examined the Dual Language Program as an agent and catalyst for school change and reorganization and its impact on the climate of the school. Thus, this study is not an evaluation of the Dual Language Program, but rather an assessment of the program’s impact on the organizational climate. To achieve this purpose, qualitative research methods were used. Qualitative research methods in education allow for the exploration of multiple contexts that are reflected in individuals’ beliefs and behaviors (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996). To explore the various contexts, this study drew on data gathered from formal face-to-face, ethnographic interviews that were tape-recorded, transcribed, analyzed and interpreted.

Research Methods

Merriam (1991) defined qualitative research as an “intensive, holistic description, and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon . . . emphasizing description and interpretation within a bounded context” (p. 21). Merriam implied that there could be numerous events, participants, or phases of a process subsumed under a unit. In the present study, the Dual Language Program as it is being implemented and its impact on the school climate was the unit of study.

Qualitative research methods were chosen because they are considered appropriate when the proposed research does not allow for high control and manipulation of the variables. These methods are highly suitable for designs that explore and examine
the natural surroundings and the unfolding of uncontrolled events. They are particularly apt when the research requires exploration of the reasons for certain behaviors and the ways in which behavior manifests itself (Drew, Hardman, Weaver-Hart, 1996).

Furthermore, this type of research is more pragmatic for those who want to learn more about the way people's experiences are internalized and how they make sense of their world and the circumstances that shape their lives (Bogdan & Biklin, 1998; Spradley, 1979).

In qualitative research, researchers are more likely to let theories, questions, themes, and hypotheses emerge from the context of the environment and the informants. Because they are more likely to describe and analyze phenomena in its natural context, there is a distinct preference for preserving the natural environment so that the analyses and descriptions emphasize what exists rather than what ought to be (Spradley, 1979).

Researchers who study organizational climate usually study the shared perceptions of the stakeholders. Their studies are based on surveys and other quantitative techniques that attempt to quantify the attitudes, feelings and perceptions of people. Quantitative investigators usually begin their studies with clearly stated questions and hypotheses. The research design is set to answer and prove the hypotheses by collecting data that are reduced to numerical representations of what is being measured. However, people's feelings, attitudes, and perceptions are not easy to quantify. Quantifying instruments rarely depict the character and the breadth and depth of the social make up of a school. (Hoy et al., 1991).

Collecting data to determine the impact that the implementation of a program has on the climate of a school could not be restricted to quantitative techniques
because these types of data do not provide enough detail to reflect on what actually
occurred. Lincoln and Guba (1985) reported that qualitative techniques allow the
researcher to approach the subjects, probe the setting, and describe reality not only in a
more natural fashion but also in greater depth and breadth.

Stake (1988) proposed that research should be confined to only those aspects that
are relevant to the research problem. In other words, he suggested that the researcher
should establish parameters in order to maintain the necessary focus. Accordingly, seven
sets of interrelated questions that probed the change and implementation processes, the
elements that support a unique culture, the leadership of the administrators, the role of the
parents, the school environment, and the organizational climate; guided and narrowed the
focus of the interviews.

*Interview Questions*

These questions explored the change process:

1. How were the different stakeholders prepared to receive the program?
2. To what extent were the stakeholders involved in the change process?
3. How effective has the program been in helping to institute and promulgate a sense of
collaboration among and between stakeholders?

These questions examined the theoretical and practical issues of the implementation
process:

1. How were the teachers who teach in the Dual Language Program selected?
2. How were they prepared?
3. Based on your perception, how effective has the implementation process been? Why?
4. Has there been any resistance? What are its effects?
These questions probed the common vision and elements that support a unique culture within the school:

1. Does a common vision or mission unite the school community? What is it?
2. Is there a school-wide focus and commitment to student achievement?
3. Has the implementation of the program affected the culture of the school? How?

These questions studied the professionalism of teachers and administrative leadership:

1. Are there opportunities for professional growth and development?
2. Do teachers have a sense of control and autonomy? What are the indicators?
3. What are the significant administrator behaviors that affect the climate of the school?

These questions helped to analyze parental involvement:

1. Do parents support administrators and teachers?
2. Are there special programs for parents? What kind?
3. What communication occurs between the school and the parents?

These questions helped to get a bird’s eye view of the school environment:

1. Are there clear goals and high expectations?
2. Is there a promotion of positive interactions between teachers, teachers and students and between students?
3. Is there a sense of routine and order?
4. What is the general appearance of the school?

These questions examined the organizational climate:

1. What are the significant parent/staff/student behaviors that affect the climate of the school?
2. What are the working conditions that affect the climate of the school?
3. How do you define the climate of your school?

The interview guide helped to maintain the dialogue on track. Although the use of an extra pad, which had the different headings helped in the writing of certain comments and observations that needed further discussion. The use of follow up questions probed more deeply the issues uncovered as the interviews proceeded. The answers to these questions provided a clear and much larger picture of the Dual Language Program and the impact it is creating on the organizational climate.

Participant Selection

Initial contact was made with the Principal of the school. The Principal approved of the study and agreed to participate as an informant as well. The researcher was provided with an opportunity to meet with the teachers, parents, and other staff to talk about the purpose of the study and to request volunteers who were willing to participate. Key individuals who played important roles in program development and implementation were identified. They were initial references who then helped to identify additional informants. The program participants were adult members of the school community who identified themselves as stakeholders and active participants in the Dual Language Program (Merriam, 1991; Spradley, 1979).

The interviews were confined to teachers in the grade levels where the Dual Language Program was being implemented and to other staff members who were representative of the various stakeholders and were intimately connected with the program. A total of 19 staff members were interviewed.

The group of 19 informants was composed of: 5 Kindergarten Teachers, 4 First Grade Teachers, 4 support staff (Guidance Counselor, Computer Teacher, Resource
Teacher, School Facilitator), 2 Teacher Aides, the Principal, the Vice-Principal, the PTO President, and the Parent Liaison.

Informants were interviewed individually. Interviews were held in the school. Some of them took place before and after school hours. But most of them were during regular school hours. The duration of each interview was approximately 45 minutes. All interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed verbatim.

Informed consent was obtained in writing from each participant (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) as well as from the District Superintendent (Appendices A, B, C). All participants were informed about the confidentiality and anonymity of their participation and that of the school. They were also made aware of their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time.

*Interviews at the Kindergarten Level*

The Kindergarten component has a total of 12 staff members. Five are self-contained classroom teachers; two are pullout support teachers who work with the English and Spanish Literacy component of the program; and five are teacher aides who work with the classroom teachers in the classrooms.

Three out of the 5 classroom teachers were interviewed along with the 2 literacy teachers and 2 out of the 5 teacher aides; totaling 7 out of a possible 12 members of the kindergarten staff. Table 1 presents a summary of the kindergarten component and the number of informants interviewed at this level.
Table 1

*Composition Matrix of the Kindergarten Component and the Number of Informants*

**Interviewed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>Number Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pullout Teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aides</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Interviews at the First Grade Level*

The first grade component consists of five self-contained classroom teachers and two pullout support English and Spanish teachers. Three out of the 5 classroom teachers were interviewed along with the English Literacy Teacher. A total of 4 out of 7 members of the first grade staff were interviewed. Table 2 presents a summary of the first grade component and the number of informants interviewed at this level.

Table 2

*Composition Matrix of the First Grade Component and the Number of Informants*

**Interviewed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>Number Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pullout Teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection

The primary source of data for this study came from ethnographic interviews with people involved in or knowledgeable about the Dual Language Program. The ethnographic interview is one of the most commonly used methods for gathering qualitative data because it provides a method for collecting data that is imbedded in the interpretations, perceptions, and experiences of informants (Patton, 1990; Spradley, 1979). This technique makes use of personal contact and interaction to gather data necessary to address the question or questions being studied. Its primary advantage is that it not only allows the interviewer/interviewee instant clarification of ambiguities, but also affords both the researcher and the informant an opportunity to reflect and probe deeper into those themes that are important to them (Spradley, 1979).

Accordingly, this study made use of in depth, face-to-face, tape-recorded interviews that were focused and semi-structured but offered an opportunity for open-ended questions as well. The semi-structured interview process was selected to acquire in-depth descriptions of the attitudes and perceptions of the participants of the study and because “interviews add an inner perspective to outward behaviors. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter the person’s perspective” (Patton, 1990, p. 109), and get the insider’s view (Spradley, 1979).

“The standardized open-ended interview consists of a set of questions carefully worded and arranged for the purpose of taking the respondent through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions with essentially the same words” (Patton, 1990, p. 198). Using a standardized open-ended interview as a guide is efficient in that it helps the researcher maximize the time allocated to each interview. It also helps to reduce
the effects of judgment bias on the part of the researcher, thereby permitting internal validity and reliability as well as facilitating subsequent analysis because it affords the researcher with a basis for comparison.

The questions that were developed for the semi-structured interviews focused on collecting the perceptions and attitudes of the informants regarding the implementation of the Dual Language Program and its impact on the climate of the school. Elaboration, clarification, and detail-oriented probes that delved into the interview responses were utilized.

Most informants had three face-to-face, tape-recorded interviews, which were conducted and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes. Interviews were generally scheduled during and after school hours in the school premises. Most interviews with teachers and teacher aides were held in their respective classrooms. The objectives of the interviews were clearly defined before each interview. Through in-depth, open-ended interviews, it was possible to build a rich data set concerning the insiders’ view of the program and its effect on the climate of the school.

Data Analysis

As the researcher starts amassing qualitative data in the form of systematic field notes, interview transcripts, researcher journals and reflections, the researcher usually conducts a preliminary analysis in order to find emerging patterns and themes in the data. Preliminary analysis may often reveal the need for additional data or a broader sample. (Patton, 1990). The process of analysis is iterative and it must be repeated continuously
throughout the study while still in the field. This directs the researcher toward additional sources of data that were not foreseen in the original research design (Drew et al., 1996).

Thus, continuous and systematic analysis of the data collected over time was carried out. Initial analysis focused on the possible patterns and principles that served to undergird the emerging themes and provided insight into issues that were later probed in subsequent interviews. Even though preliminary patterns provided insight into promising sources of data, they were not treated as findings until data were analyzed away from the setting. Analyses away from the setting ensured intellectual and emotional distance and greater objectivity.

Spradley (1979) advised that studies of an ethnographic nature should not be undertaken with specific hypotheses in mind nor should they make use of coded instruments or too highly defined categories. Therefore, the analysis of the information used the interview questions not as a dictate, but as a guide to revisit the events and situations that occurred during the research period. This revisitation process was used to organize the data and to establish “trustworthiness” and accuracy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The data collected from these interviews generated ideas, themes, and categories. As data were analyzed, the researcher looked for patterns among the responses and similar responses were grouped to determine the concepts and categories that fit the various themes. After responses were carefully and closely read and examined, any patterns and connections between responses were noted.

As Yin (1989 and Spradley (1979) advised, the researcher first extracted from the data conceptual categories or themes. As these themes began to emerge through their
continuous examination, abstract concepts also became apparent. These were then
highlighted and coded in the text. Once the text was carefully read and coded, it
subsequently was reorganized by themes. Subsequently, emerging themes surfacing from
the interviews were closely examined.

In this study the standardized open-ended interview was used to discover the
perceptions of the informants involved in the implementation process and the effect on
the climate of the school. These techniques enabled the researcher to record and
understand the views of the informants in their own words and also permitted the
analyzes of the content to discover common themes as well as patterns and linkages
between them (Spradley, 1979).

Thus, the first phase of the data analysis was to carefully and meticulously review
the verbatim and the field notes, which constituted a rich source of data. The second
phase involved a process of comparative analysis whereby data were continuously
examined and segregated around relationships, comparisons, and emerging themes. This
technique allowed the discovery of patterns and the establishment of the concepts and
categories that fit the various themes. After responses were carefully and closely
examined, any patterns and connections between the responses were noted. Quotations
and paraphrases from the interviews were identified for inclusion to provide the
necessary detail, to illustrate the central themes and to enrich the description of the data.
The third phase consisted of an intensive and methodical review of all the segregated
data, which was then used to support the findings.

The main focus was to examine the cultural meanings the informants use to
organize and interpret their experiences and feelings as they restructure and implement
the Dual Language Program and the effect those experiences have on the climate of the school. Although there are many other factors that contribute to the climate of a school, this study mainly concentrated on those that served as a catalyst for the implementation of the Dual Language Program. The following themes were studied: the change and the implementation processes, the culture of the school, the leadership of the administrators, the role of the parents, the environment, and the organizational climate.

These seven themes served as the organizing framework for Chapter 4 where the analyses and findings of the data are reported. Because the themes are naturally related, they are all interdependent and intertwined and therefore extremely hard to discuss them as separate entities. Each piece adds different perspectives to the picture and thus each is an intricate part of the puzzle where the total is much greater than the sum of its parts.
CHAPTER IV

Analysis and Findings of the Data

The purpose of this study was to analyze the establishment of the Dual Language Program as an agent for school change and reorganization and its effect on the climate of the school. Accordingly, criteria were developed as far as what areas would be eligible to investigate and what procedures would be followed when analyzing the data. There were two main reasons for determining such guidelines (a) the provision of a common focus, which would ensure the collection of data with related pieces of information, and (b) the use of common procedures which would allow a more unified presentation since the amount of research synthesis that had to be accomplished was substantial.

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the analysis and description of the collected data. The time period described in this chapter (September, 1998-June, 2000) represents the initial stages of program planning and preparation and its subsequent implementation at the kindergarten and first grade levels. The following themes were studied: the implementation and the change processes, the culture of the school, the leadership of the administrators, the role of the parents, the environment, and the organizational climate.

Change Process

Change in general can be very unsettling and it can have great impact on the organizational climate because it can create anxiety, fear, and uncertainty. It is therefore important that, especially, during the initial stages of any reform effort the stakeholders
be properly prepared for a journey that might not only entail inarguable challenges but also require them to look at problems through various lenses and through different perspectives thereby arming them with a certain amount of resiliency and foresight to guide them through the impending journey (Fullan, 1997).

The proper implementation of any program calls for a period of time that is devoted to strategic planning and other preparatory activities that serve as a road map and motivator that impels the change efforts as well as take into account and prevent future setbacks. Accordingly, the change process examined the preparation of all the stakeholders, the extent of their involvement and the degree and nature of collaboration among them.

*Preparation of Stakeholders*

As a school prepares itself to implement a program that is going to re-structure the school, preparation of all stakeholders is not only necessary but also important in order to increase the probability of success. In recognition of this fact, program planners had set aside a year of preparation before the actual implementation of the program. Long term planning also included a year of preparation for the instructional staff before the program was to be implemented at each grade level. An informant explained:

Every year the program is going to be implemented at a grade level, the year before there is a planning stage. Teachers go to different schools. They go to conferences. When the director was there, she would hold weekly meetings with the teachers and planned out what it would look like for the implementation stage. For example, before the kindergarten actually implemented the program, they spent a whole year with a consultant and the director. We had sessions where they actually went through research, read articles, and planned out what it would look like.

In all the preparation efforts the director of the program was the key figure.

Another informant retorted:
The director made a really big impact on the parents and the community through conferences and meetings. I believe everybody knows about the program. They might not know all the minute details of what it consists of, but I think that they have a very good knowledge of the program.

The director had done a “more than adequate” job of preparing all the stakeholders through the provision of practical knowledge about the school and the program’s pedagogical underpinnings and benefits.

The different ways the stakeholders were kept abreast and actively engaged in the change process can be thought of as an indicator of the extent to which stakeholder preparation was considered a priority. Accordingly, informants were asked to list and explain why they felt that there was “more than adequate” preparation. Responses indicated that the preparation of stakeholders occurred through both formal and informal processes. The formal processes consisted of organized programs or collaborative efforts initiated by the Advisory Committee or the School Management Team. The informal processes ranged from one-on-one meetings to open forums. Stakeholders were given access to this new initiative through meetings, letters, notices, pamphlets, newsletters, workshops, parent forums, retreats, brochures and other literature, and “word of mouth”.

It was interesting to note that while many felt assured that that the preparation efforts had been appropriate and “more than adequate,” there were others who emphatically disagreed with this view. Closer examination of the data revealed that primarily the kindergarten staff fell in the first category and the first grade staff on the latter. These feelings are expressed in this informant’s comments, “Oh no, absolutely not. I mean if we had limited training as a faculty, as the teachers of the program, why would they have trained the rest?” This informant felt that if the instructional staff had received
limited training, there was definitely not enough to prepare the parents and the community in general.

Another one commented, “I think they did not do the right propaganda to the community. The parents were not properly informed.” This informant’s perception was that only a select few attended the meetings. Therefore, the vast majority was not truly aware of what was going on with their children’s educational program.

Data revealed that indeed there were some gaps in the preparation process. For instance, not all stakeholders were properly prepared because these efforts were concentrated on the kindergarten and first grades and therefore the other grade levels were ignored.

Also, there was a marked difference between the amount of preparation that took place before and during the first year of the program’s implementation and the second year of implementation. To this respect one informant said:

Everything I’m telling you now refers to last year because this year I haven’t seen much. I haven’t seen meetings. I haven’t seen conferences with parents. Last year, we had so many conferences with parents and meetings that the parents were so excited, you know, you could hear them ‘Oh my god, my child, he is learning a second language. I really want to learn a second language too’. They were willing to learn too!

Thus, it appeared as though the stakeholders had been empowered with the knowledge and that everybody was given the proper preparation and support up until the program was implemented at the Kindergarten level. “The director was able to win the staff over and to give them a common purpose and vision. She bolstered their self-confidence and made them feel that anything was possible. She was a good support to them.” The fact that everybody was empowered with the knowledge and information contributed to a heightened sense of support and positive energy that was felt throughout
the school and that affected the climate in a positive way. The parents' enthusiasm for their children had been transferred onto themselves. They also expressed their desire to learn a second language.

Unfortunately, the director left as the program was going to be implemented in the first grade. As a result of her departure neither the parents nor the teachers, at this level, were properly prepared. An informant exclaimed:

People were not prepared about the realistic expectations of the program, for instance, the achievement gap that exists in the first few years of the program. People who embark in this kind of program have to know that this happens so that when it does happen, it's expected and people don't feel that they are loosing ground.

Their alluded ignorance about this aspect of the program caused the first grade teachers a lot of insecurity and self-doubt because they felt that the students were not making the expected progress. Some of the first grade teachers lacked basic information as far as how to develop literacy and writing skills. "We did not have the support of a director or someone to go when we ran into trouble and teach us the strategies we needed to teach second language learners in a dual language situation." These teachers were shocked when they were faced with the reality of implementing the program in their individual classrooms, which would probably have not happened had they been properly prepared.

Hence, it is safe to conclude that only the Kindergarten teachers along with the families of the students at this level were properly prepared. This preparation contributed to the sense of excitement and positive energy that emanated the first year of the program’s implementation and which appeared to have spilled out to the parents. In contrast, the lack of continuous preparation at the first grade level contributed to an air of
disbelief and self-doubt, which started to have negative implications on the climate of the school.

*_Stakeholder Involvement in the Change Process*

In order to feel empowered to affect some change, stakeholders do not only need knowledge and information but also to be actively involved in the change process. Fullan (1997) claimed that all stakeholders have to know what change looks like if there is going to be an understanding of its process.

Data revealed that stakeholders were well prepared to affect the change process because they were not only provided with the necessary information, but they were also invited to take an active role in all decision-making activities. Indeed, there was a very active Advisory Committee composed of representatives of all stakeholders. Everybody was invited to join this committee. Therefore, it can be assumed that “everyone had an opportunity to voice their opinion, cast their vote and have their concerns addressed.”

This contributed to a heightened sense of excitement and anticipation for the up-coming year. The perceived effectiveness of the Advisory Committee fueled the positive atmosphere of anticipation that prevailed at that point. This informant’s comments exemplify this feeling:

> It was energizing and empowering because they were involved in making significant decisions . . . They had a vote with respect to the model that was chosen . . . Everybody voted on that. Everybody took responsibility . . . Everybody in the building had the opportunity to vote and express themselves and their concerns.

Advisory Committee members felt that their contributions were worthwhile and that, when the committee was meeting regularly, they were intricately involved in the change efforts.
This informant’s comment further exemplifies the sentiments of those who were actively involved, “It was wonderful . . . we discussed our concerns and we heard from the other grades and the other stakeholders.” Unfortunately, with the departure of the director, the Advisory Committee became less active and influential.

After the director’s departure, stakeholders were kept informed. However, no one was truly involved as far as making decisions or actually implementing the program. An informant added in a very negative tone, “It appears as though they are trying to involve the stakeholders, namely the teachers, in the decisions that intimately affect them. However, teachers are asked only after the decision has been made. Why ask? It’s lip service only.” Accordingly, some informants’ perceptions were that the stakeholders, namely the teachers and parents, were not really actively involved in the change process. Two main reasons were given for their respective lack of involvement: lack of information for the former and lack of interest and apathy for the latter.

As far as lack of information, the parents had only received limited information about the program and therefore “there was little for them to question and become involved”. Another informant added, “It was not like last year where we did it in the auditorium and it was nicely presented. This year we did it privately on our own. I don’t think that the parents this year have been informed as well as last year’s.” Although the first year of implementation they made a concerted effort to not only inform the parents but also to involve them in the decision-making process, the present year (2000-2001) very little information was given to the parents and therefore they stayed at bay and did not become involved with the school.
Teacher lack of interest was another deterrent to stakeholder involvement. An informant explained:

The staff was provided with the information. The teachers did not get involved. There was polite nodding of heads, polite smiles, polite statements like, ‘Oh, that sounds good.’ But when we opened it up for discussion and questions and comments, no one really came forward with any concerns. There were no objections. There were no concerns. There was no skepticism expressed, kind of complaisant.

Their involvement appears to have been determined by the degree of interest teachers had. For instance, the degree of interest was very high among the kindergarten teachers because implementation was going to affect them first. Therefore, they were involved in all the preparation activities and decisions.

Others argued that teacher apathy was the main reason for everybody’s lack of involvement. An informant stated, “This is something new coming into the school where I worked . . . I wanted to know what was going to be happening in the classrooms and if it was going to benefit the children.” This informant could not understand why the others did not feel as she did and why offerings of decision-making opportunities met with opposition and indifference.

It can be assumed then, that stakeholder involvement in the change process during the year of preparation and first year of implementation was very effective in the sense that all stakeholders were given the opportunity to voice their opinion, cast their vote, and have their concerns addressed. Stakeholders felt privileged to have been given an opportunity in the decision-making process. This energized and empowered them, which can be attributed for their optimism and dedication to the program’s success.

However, after the director left, stakeholder involvement was limited to only those people who were implementing the program at that time, namely the first grade
teachers. Therefore, many felt that stakeholder involvement was practically non-existent at the time the interviews took place. The inactivity from the part of the Advisory Committee was a concern that was affecting the stakeholders in negative ways, which were evidenced by the tone of disdain and contempt that characterized some of their responses.

*Stakeholder Collaboration*

Strong collaborative cultures are important because they provide essential supports that are needed for the implementation of effective and sustained changes. Murphy et al. (1985) claimed that the organizational climate improves in a school where there are open communications and collaborative relationships. Therefore, the promotion and development of collaborative work cultures has to be an essential part of any change effort.

Data collected revealed that the Dual Language Program has been a good catalyst in helping to foster and develop collaborative relationships among the stakeholders, especially the kindergarten teachers. In fact, the program has initiated a change in the culture of the school. The school has come a long way by shifting from a very individualistic, isolated, closed-door policy to a more collaborative, collegial, open-door atmosphere. One informant explained this phenomenon by saying:

> Teachers closed their doors and whatever happened, happened inside closed doors. Not only because of the Dual Language Program but also because of the new administrators, they were encouraged to talk to one another. They were encouraged to leave the door open, to discuss things, and to do things collaboratively.

Data also revealed that because of the Dual Language Program the stakeholders were afforded more time to meet and discuss curricular and programmatic issues. In a
way, teachers were forced to talk and collaborate, to compare notes, and to find more effective strategies. As a result, they are more likely to share their concerns, successes, and even set backs and failures. As an informant so eloquently put it, “People sat down to talk. This never happened before. The program brought everybody together so that we can talk and express ourselves. We had a common goal in mind and that brought us together.” Thus, it became very obvious that the Dual Language Program, as a tool for educational reform, has been very instrumental in uniting teachers in pursuit of the same cause. The program has inspired a sense of community and collective responsibility by prompting an overall willingness to help each other and to share ideas. Teachers are more apt to work with one another and use each other as a resource and support.

Informants were asked to describe the extent of the program’s influence in developing collaborative relationships. They were very positive with their responses. Some of the adjectives used to describe this experience were: tremendous, great, excellent, fantastic, unmatched, unbelievable, and wonderful.

This exuberance and excitement were obvious and very evident in many of the informants’ comments. Some of their comments were:

- “This never happened before. We are privileged.”
- “It has united us in a group and in a cause.”
- “It’s been tremendous; people have actually joined together to work in committees.”
- “I think that because of the program the kindergarten teachers are very close. They are like a family.”
- “It’s a real team effort.”
- “The sense of collaboration that exists among us is not found anywhere else.”
• "The program really served as the glue, the cement to hold us together."

• "It has worked wonders. I have seen miracles as far as the teachers working together."

• "You’ll never find a more cohesive and united group of teachers."

It appeared as though the program is a very good catalyst at promulgating a sense of collaboration among the teachers. This sense of collaboration as Murphy et al. (1985) indicated, has served to raise the climate of the school and to give the teachers a true sense of belongingness and purpose. It is reasonable to assume that the program as a change agent was very successful in unifying and mobilizing teachers to work collaboratively. However, it was at the exclusion of the wider community. As stated earlier, although there were some attempts to inform the parents and the community, they failed to meaningfully involve them after the director left.

Summary

The proper implementation of any program calls for a period of time that is devoted to strategic planning and other preparatory activities that not only serve as a foundation and road map but also impel the change efforts. Thus, the dynamics of change dictates that stakeholders are afforded with the proper preparation so that they can make greater sense of what is taking place (Fullan, 1997). Accordingly, stakeholder preparation and involvement were very evident the first year of implementation. This was evidenced by the fact that there was a very strong Advisory Committee, which offered an open forum for people’s opinions, concerns, and meaningful involvement.

The fact that stakeholders were empowered with the knowledge and every one was given the opportunity to be meaningfully involved contributed to a heightened sense
of parental support and enthusiasm that was felt throughout the school and helped to
boost the climate of the school.

Although strategic actions try to take into account and prevent future setbacks, no
one could have predicted the departure of the director. Her departure caused a major
setback to the preparation of the first grade teachers and the families of these students.
The Advisory Committee’s inactivity was a cause of concern for the teachers especially
those who felt that decisions were being made without their input, which had negative
repercussions on the climate of the school.

Even though the lack of the Director’s leadership weakened the partnerships with
the parents that had been established the year before, it appeared that the bonds that the
kindergarten staff had forged were strong enough to survive even after her absence.
Teachers continued to work openly and cooperatively. They continued to be open to
comments about their teaching and to suggestions about alternative instructional
practices. They continued to see their peers as a resource and have developed a sense of
continuity that has allowed them to persist even when they encountered difficulties. Their
relationships served not only as a tremendous boost to the climate of the school, but also
have served as an inspiration for the rest of the staff.

The development of collaborative relationships has inspired collective optimism
and has energized them to continue forging on even in the absence of a director. These
relationships have helped to reduce the isolation of teachers, which had been so
prevalent. Working together has raised morale and the teachers’ sense of efficacy, which
have contributed to a healthier school climate.
The Implementation Process

In the implementation of a program that calls for a complete restructuring of a school, the call is not simply for instituting a change. The call is for school reform and systemic change. On route to systemic change, the initiation of the program and its implementation play an important part in understanding how the program functions and the effect it has on the school and the entire change process. Thus, in a study that intends to determine whether a program has influence on the climate of the school, it is only natural that the implementation process should be among the first things that are studied. In examining this process, the selection and preparation of teachers as well as the effectiveness of the program's implementation and teacher resistance to the program were studied.

Selection of Teachers

Nothing occurs in a vacuum and of course, educational reform is not different. There are many variables that either propel or impede the change efforts. Among one of the very important variables is the selection of teachers. Teachers are the front-line providers of services and as such they are on of the most crucial elements of any educational reform. Therefore, the selection of teachers who are prepared and qualified to teach in a program that requires students to learn in two languages and has an emphasis on cultural diversity is of inarguable importance (Cloud et al., 2000).

Informants were somewhat reticent to give candid responses about the selection of teachers and many were more likely to provide answers describing the perceptions of colleagues. For instance, there was a general feeling that at the kindergarten level, the Principal asked the teachers to volunteer. The final selection was made based on two
criteria: commitment to the program and ability to teach in both languages. An informant explained, "They asked us to be part of it. They wanted teachers who were bilingual because the model called for self-contained classrooms." Ultimately, the teachers were selected to fit the selected model, which mandated self-contained classrooms staffed by bilingual teachers.

Accordingly, data collected revealed that indeed at this level, the five dual language classrooms were staffed with experienced bilingual teachers who felt privileged to have been selected to be part of the program. One of them explained, "I think they invited me on this journey because I was the best qualified. I had experience as a kindergarten teacher of 10 years and I was bilingual."

All five teachers were not only knowledgeable about language and language development but also had at their disposal a repertoire of strategies that would facilitate the process of learning a second language. This added to the positive energy that emanated from these classrooms, which contributed to a very healthy climate the first year of the program's implementation at the kindergarten level.

In contrast, the first grade teachers were already teaching in this grade level. "In the kindergarten, they were selected. In the first grade, nothing changed the staff stayed the same." In other words, the first grade dual language classrooms were staffed with their five existing teachers. Theoretically speaking these teachers were also given the option to stay or move to another grade level. But, if they did not want to change grade levels, or take another position, or ask for transfer to another school, they really felt they had no choice but to stay as first grade teachers.

Another informant corroborated:
We all went to a lot of staff meetings. The principal, she did say, are you all ready to commit yourselves and be devoted to the program? We all went yes because we knew that if any of us replied no, she would have made a change.

Thus, it could be assumed that some of the teachers remained in this grade level, for personal reasons rather than a true buy-in for the program.

As a result, 2 out of the 5 classrooms teachers were not bilingual teachers. They were monolingual English speakers. Consequently, the model that called for self-contained classrooms could not be instituted at this level. Therefore, they were forced to look for other alternatives and to tailor the model according to the teachers that were there. This is an informant’s attempt to explain the events that took place:

I think basically it’s because the administration tried fulfilling the requests and the needs of the faculty and we did not have anyone who was truly willing to spend the full day in Spanish. So that’s why we had two teachers who are self-contained teaching both English and Spanish. Two other teachers are switching and one self-contained requires the need of support staff.

Thus, it appeared that the kindergarten teachers asked to be part of the program because they truly believed that the Dual Language Program was the best choice for this school. In contrast, the first grade teachers opted to teach in the program for the wrong reasons. There seemed to have been no real buy-in and, in addition, they did not feel qualified to teach in a dual language setting. In the dynamic process of change, this started a cycle of insecurity, self-doubt, and ultimately conflict that all served to add very negative tones to the implementation of the program at this level. Consequently, teacher morale suffered and thereby the climate of the school.

Preparation of Teachers

Since teachers are the front-line providers of services, teacher preparation becomes another crucial and important component in the institution of any program,
especially a dual language program (Lindholm-Leary, 2000). The proper preparation of the instructional staff not only provides them with a sense of security and self-assurance but also affords them with the necessary tools to do a successful job. "Teachers need to know what a change looks like in practice as well as in theory so that they can gauge exactly what it means for their work" (Hargreaves et al., 2001 p. 118).

The Dual Language Program made its formal debut in the kindergarten classrooms in the 1999-2000 school year. As indicated before, the preceding year, 1998-1999, was devoted to the planning process and the preparation of the instructional staff. While the kindergarten classes were implementing the program, the first grade staff was being prepared for implementation the subsequent year, the 2000-2001 school year.

Teacher preparation activities were divided in two major categories: mandatory and voluntary. Mandatory activities took the form of regular staff meetings, whole staff presentations, and grade level presentations rendered mainly by consultants and the director during regular school hours. Voluntary activities were offered in the form of after school in-service and workshop sessions, Saturday and after school workshops, visits to other schools, summer retreats, and conferences in and out of the state.

All preparation efforts were organized around particular focus areas, which were designed to inform both the theoretical and the practical issues of the implementation of the program. An informant commented, "The director ran a summer institute where she discussed the different models and strategies. We also visited other schools that had several types of dual language programs."

Kindergarten teachers reported feeling prepared for the upcoming implementation process. One teacher expressed her confidence stating that the focus on
dual language education would be a natural transition for the school given the fact that the school already housed a large bilingual program. Another one attributed her readiness to her experiences with school visits, conferences, speakers, workshops, and meetings.

Informants, at this level, felt that in general there was "a lot of training" that had adequately prepared them to teach in a dual language setting. However, there were differences between the amount and the nature of training received by the kindergarten and the first grade teachers. An informant stated, "I believe that most of the training was in the kindergarten level. The first grade was not as intensive". Another one corroborated, "The first grade was just kind of thrown into the program and they were given minimal instructions on how to really teach children... I think that not much was really done or clarified for them."

Data revealed that the first grade teachers had definitely not received as much training and preparation as the kindergarten staff. In addition, a couple of teachers felt that the preparation was more theoretical in nature. A first grade teacher said, "There was a lot of training during the initial year... a lot of theory, but you want to see it put into practice." Another one added, "You had a pretty good view of what dual language was in another building. Now, implementing it in your building was something else."

As result, first grade teachers felt unprepared and reported a certain degree of shock when they were confronted with students who did not understand them and subsequently were ill equipped to deal with them. This informant's comments exemplify these feelings, "There were specific problems coming up, which I thought I was unequipped to handle them."

Thus, the feeling among the first grade teachers was that they needed a lot more training to deal with various issues that were emerging as they were implementing the program.
When asked to describe their level of participation in the various activities, teachers described their participation at a very high level. It was interesting to note that the majority of the teachers who described their involvement at a high level were kindergarten teachers. While the others who described their involvement as intermittent or limited to mandatory activities only, were first grade teachers. Accordingly, it was safe to assume that all the kindergarten teachers took advantage of virtually all the mandatory as well as the voluntary activities. In contrast, the first grade teachers only participated mostly in the activities that they were mandated to attend. One informant reported:

There was not as much enthusiasm or volunteering. The buy-in was not there. Only a few attended the sessions... It was kind of a little disappointing because they expected everybody, but not as many showed up. There were not as many teachers to inform them how great this program would be if everybody just pulled together... I think that's why the kindergarten did so well because everybody was there and they joined and were ready to work in a partnership.

It is therefore reasonable to wonder that perhaps at this grade level, teachers did not consider these activities as priority and important for their preparation. Informants were asked to explain the reasons for their lack of participation. They all claimed their support for the program. However, they indicated that conditions that were not under their control prevented them from attending.

Their lack of involvement was interpreted as lack of interest on the part of the first grade teachers, which created a little animosity among them. However, the climate was not influenced at this point because the kindergarten teachers were so enthusiastic and positive that with time everybody would be just as interested as they were.
Implementation of the Program

Success breeds success and nothing is more motivating than feeling that sense of efficacy that reigns when a task has been effectively accomplished. Although effectiveness is somewhat an illusive concept and may vary from person to person, the focus in this section was on the informants’ perception on how effective the implementation process had been and not on an evaluation of the program as a whole.

The extent to which the informants perceived the implementation of the program as being effective revealed to have been a measurement of the attributed degree of success of the program in general. For instance, the majority of the informants believed that the program implementation at the kindergarten level had been very effective and therefore the program itself was considered effective. An informant explained, “It’s effective in kindergarten because they did it right and they own it. It’s like their own child. They created it.” Another one added, “At the kindergarten level the program flew. It went soaring. It was colorful like a rainbow.”

There was a general feeling throughout the school that the program implementation had been successful and very effective at the kindergarten level. In contrast, at the first grade level, the implementation had been very “fragmented and choppy”.

There were numerous factors that contributed to this widely held perception. Among them was the leadership of the program’s director. The director was one of the most positive and crucial forces that propelled the program. The director left in August 2000, right before the first grade was going to start implementation. The director’s
absence created a tremendous void that caused serious damage to the first grade program.

This informant's words serve to illustrate this point:

Without the director, they were like lost sheep. She was there working with the kindergarten teachers... She left when the first grade was being developed. So I don't know that in this grade level the program was fully developed to its fullest extent, as the kindergarten was.

Another explained that since the director was there for the kindergarten teachers she was able to not only guide and lead them, but also bolster the teachers' self-esteem and confidence. "She made them feel that they could do it. Even though it seemed like a daunting task at the time, but when she was not there for the first grade teachers, they fell apart."

The level of enthusiasm and the degree of commitment and "buy-in" on the part of the teachers was another strength of the kindergarten program. These teachers were exceedingly dedicated to the program's success. This commitment endured even after the director left and it continued to be upheld by a sense of collective responsibility and by their genuine belief in the Dual Language Program. An informant stated, "I would have to say that no one can put a better team of teachers together... over there, every one is responsible for every child." Another commented that the program could not have been as effective if teachers' motivation had not been at such a high level.

Another factor that contributed to the success of the kindergarten program was the fact that the kindergarten classes were staffed with experienced teachers who were also fully bilingual. This afforded full implementation of the selected model whereby students had a consistent exposure to both languages as prescribed by the model.
In contrast, at the first grade level, the perception was that the implementation had faltered in different areas rendering not only the implementation process but also the whole program ineffective or in need of improvement. This informant explained with a lot of dismay:

People are talking now that the program doesn’t work. They are blaming the program and not the implementation issues that have not been resolved. The implementation is what they have not done right. It is not the program that doesn’t work. It’s not being implemented correctly.

Thus, it appeared as though the dynamics of educational change as well as the critical attributes of the program had neither been thoroughly understood nor internalized by this group of teachers. Consequently, when problems arose in the first grade, they did not know how to deal with them. They were not able to interpret them as a natural part of the reform effort and reacted hastily. As a result, the model was changed three times during the course of the year.

The first grade teachers, as evidenced somewhere else in the study, had opted to stay in the program not because there was a sense of commitment and buy-in, but rather by a sense of fear of being changed to another grade level. They simply did not want to be moved anywhere else. Consequently, the first grade team appeared to have been riddled by confusion and misunderstanding. This informant explained:

I must say that the first year experience for the first grade was a very choppy and fragmented experience because we kept on going back to the drawing board, which probably is a lesson learned. We probably shouldn’t have done it because, in turn, it caused more disagreement and bred separation of the team members.

Her comments served to illustrate how the well-intended but misguided efforts were engendering disillusionment among the teachers, which was taking a toll on teacher morale as well.
In addition, only three teachers in the first grade were fully bilingual. This imposed changes in the model. As a result, the students did not have the necessary consistent exposure to the two-targeted languages. The Spanish component was not consistently implemented.

All these changes had negative repercussions not only on these two groups of teachers but also on the entire school. This was a cause of concern especially for the kindergarten teachers who felt that all the seeds they had planted the previous year were not being cultivated properly and therefore were not going to bear any fruit. Teacher morale went down not only because the program appeared to be crumbling at the first grade level but also they felt that the school wide perception, at that point, was that the program did not work.

All the changes ensued to accommodate the first grade teachers led to a lot of disillusionment and despair affecting the climate of the school in a very negative way. Hargreaves et al. (2001) said that when change efforts falter and unexpected outcomes arise, teachers need time, encouragement, and support. Unfortunately, the first grade teachers did not get the encouragement and support they required. The lack of leadership paralyzed them and it was not until the kindergarten teachers joined and asked for the support of the local administrators that the principal intervened and alleviated some of their concerns.

Resistance to the Program

Human beings are creatures of habit and are, for the most part, resistant to change. Change in education, as in any sphere of life, is not always welcomed with open arms for different reasons. Some just fail to see the need for or the merit of the intended changes.
While for others the intended changes dredge negative feelings that they would rather not confront. Thus, change often means compromise and giving up something that is familiar and comforting and taking on something that arouses feelings of uncertainty and insecurity (Evans, 1997). Consequently, resistance to change can undermine any project. However, Evans saw resistance as inevitable, understandable and a critical part of coping with change.

Data revealed that teachers exhibited the strongest and most enduring type of resistance. Teacher resistance manifested itself in various forms. Initially, the perception was “Oh no another program. Some people were willing to learn about it and get on board and some people were actually not interested. It’s scary for some and I guess that’s when you make the choices and some did.” Some of the teachers, especially the monolingual teachers, were intimidated because they were not sure of their future role while others were just afraid of change. They felt that their jobs were on the line and their positions in the school threatened.

There were teachers who were vehemently opposed to the program. An informant described these feelings, “Teachers felt that it’s unfair that this new program came and tore down everything. It’s like a new illness that just came and it’s destroying our family and they are trying to figure it out how to cure it and get rid of it.” Some others while appearing to respond compliantly sowed distrust and disbelieve through “nasty” comments and rumors.

Soon after the program was introduced to the faculty, six or seven teachers asked for transfer to another school, by the end of the next school year (1999-2000), as many as 18 teachers transferred out to other schools. Although some of the informants did not
attribute the program as the only reason for their transfers, many did believe that it was a major contributing factor. An informant put it this way, “Teachers left because they did not want to accept changes. Others thought that Spanish speakers were going to have more privileges, perhaps more than them.” Another one corroborated:

Teachers left for two reasons, the new administrators and the program. Both factors attributed to the great amount of change that was going to be required of them and some were just not ready or willing to go through these changes. People got frustrated and scared especially the veteran teachers because they were used to having things a certain way. Some of them were almost ready to retire. They wanted to take it easy. They wanted to be left alone. We went from a person who was very conservative to a person who was very innovative. She was for staff development all the way. She was changing everything. Her mode was let’s try something new.

Teachers who left did not leave on good accord. Some of them made “nasty” comments towards Hispanics and the language, which caused feelings that were harmful to the climate of the school. An informant exclaimed, “They felt betrayed because they knew these people for many years and they thought they were friends and they thought they knew them, but when all these things came out they were distraught. It was hurtful.” This aroused many negative feelings among the teachers that were left in the building who were enraged because they felt deceived by those whom they held as friends. There was a change in the climate as part of the change process and educational reform. A grieving and healing process had to be endured by everyone in the building resulting in a stronger feeling of motivation and commitment to the success of the program.

Even though there was teacher resistance, the program was well received by the parents and the community at large. Nevertheless, some parents were opposed to their children learning Spanish because their basic philosophy was that this is America and therefore only English should be taught in the schools.
Others believed that the program would only serve to confuse the children. An informant commented, “It’s funny, the African Americans, they accept it, only the Hispanics don’t want their children confused.” She emphasized that the African American parents were very accepting and happy that their children were learning another language. Conversely, the Hispanic parents were more interested in their children learning English rather than keeping their native language.

It is safe to assume that, as part of the educational reform, the transfer of so many teachers had a tremendous effect on the climate of the school. It was especially hard because the school had a staff that had been together for a long time. Most of these teachers were held in high esteem and were very valuable to the school. The terms under which they left were not too favorable and demoralizing for the rest of the staff. Teacher morale plummeted and stayed low for a while. Fortunately, resistance had subsided by the time the interviews took place. In its place there was a true concern for the program and the students “because the teachers that stayed were committed to make it work.”

Summary

In studying the implementation process, differences between the two grade levels where the program was being implemented became very evident. From the teachers’ perspectives, all kindergarten teachers were selected because they were bilingual and had a tremendous amount of buy-in and commitment to the program. Consequently, the model that had been selected was implemented effectively and to its fullest extent. There were no changes or revisions during their first year of implementation and instruction in Spanish was consistent as prescribed by the model. They enjoyed the guidance of a very supportive director who encouraged and empowered them in every step of the reform.
effort. A sense of security and accomplishment emanated from this group of teachers, which contributed to a very energized environment and positive school climate.

In the first grade, only three teachers were truly bilingual which meant that reparative measures were necessary in order to implement the program. As a result, the model was tailored and later changed to accommodate the teachers. Unfortunately, in the midst of all these changes, instruction in Spanish fell to the wayside and the changes did not only create confusion, but also bred an air of disillusion and disbelief in the program. Teacher morale went down and the school climate was not as positive as it had been the previous year.

The transfer of so many teachers also had a tremendous impact on the climate of the school. These teachers did not leave on good accord. Some of them made negative comments against Hispanics, which evoked many feelings of anger and betrayal. After a grieving and healing process, a renewed sense of commitment and motivation were again evident. Resistance for the most part has subsided and it has been replaced by a true concern for the program and the students.

It appears as though when the proper support services and preparation were provided, the by-products were an increased sense of commitment and buy-in. On the other hand, when the proper supports were not present, teachers were ready to abandon strategic decisions in favor of immediate accommodation to present interests. The results were discouragement, frustration, and in some cases despair. Nonetheless, a sense of accomplishment still prevailed among the staff. The following statement summarizes this feeling, “We’ve been running the show without a director, but we have done a pretty good job, even though it was a bumpy road.”
The Culture of the School

Educational reform is a call to examine existing policies, practices, and the core belief system that make up the culture of the school. "The culture of an enterprise plays the dominant role in exemplary performance" (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p.1). Hence, understanding the culture of a school is critical to anyone who purports to study the dynamics that drive the organization. The culture determines how the school works and its commitment to achievement. It ultimately provides a sense of meaning and purpose that helps to sustain the existing culture and contributes to a climate that is positive and conducive to learning (Rosenholtz, 1995). This section examined the vision of the school, the school’s commitment to student achievement, and the program’s influence on the culture of the school.

The Vision of the School

Any meaningful enterprise starts with an idea and a vision of what is desired. A common vision should undergird everything and serve as a unifying force by providing a shared belief system that operates to infuse work with purpose and meaning and to keep everyone focused (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Rosenholtz, 1995). Thus, creating a positive environment that is conducive to learning.

One of the key ingredients of any change process is the vision. Accordingly, the inception of the program was marked by a preparation period during which the goals of dual language education were highlighted as the vision that this school was embracing. This was presented as their common vision that represented not just an ideal but, with the assistance of the Dual Language Program, an attainable and real goal that would not only
provide them with direction, purpose and meaning but also with criteria for making the
right decisions. Someone’s comments were:

It’s something that is constantly verbalized in the building. Anytime there is
literature, research articles that support what they are trying to do with the vision
and the pedagogy we give it to the staff and talk about at grade level meetings.
Subliminally, in some aspect or some way, even when they talk to students, they
are constantly talking about their purpose and vision.

Thus, the school community shares as their vision the goals of Dual Language
Education. However, a vision statement has not been defined in terms of attainable goals
with incremental benchmarks. Therefore, in the informants’ minds, it was only an
abstract ideal, which could not materialize and therefore serve as a unifying force of
purpose. Someone else stated:

It would help the school if they had it all together. I think they should have
thought about it, the whole program should have been thought out from the onset,
not just one year at a time. A clear vision should have been established. That
should have been clear to every one. the glue unifying everybody.

The lack of a well-articulated mission statement was a big point of contention
since most felt that a mission statement needed to be clearly stated in order for the school
to have a real purpose. Informants further explained that as one of the mandated activities
for their Whole School Reform model, the school had been directed to “take stock” and
write a mission statement that was representative of their vision and philosophy.

It was interesting to note that although a mission statement had not been written,
all the informants shared the ideology of the program and the tenets of an enriched
education. This was evidenced by the informant’s responses when they were asked to
verbalize the vision of the school. Their comments are quoted below:

When it comes to a pedagogical, theoretical vision; most of the faculty is on the
same page . . . And I think that even though it is not written, we do have a sense
of where we’re going. We have a sense of mission. We know what we want and what we’re here for.

Our vision is to fulfill the mission of a truly bilingual school. The school is dedicated to enabling students not only to become bilingual, but also to become critical thinkers and astute problem solvers.

As far as methodology and pedagogy everybody is in the same page. Everyone is of the same mind set. We know we want authentic teaching and learning . . . It was because of the Dual Language Program coming in and the philosophy of the administrators that everybody knows where we’re going.

A school where everybody works together to get the children succeeding and all children are accepted at all levels. A school where all children will eventually speak both languages and both are equally validated and valued.

That all children at least understand one other language besides English . . . Those that speak Spanish should continue learning it and improving their proficiency while at the same time learn English and vice versa.

Success for all children, safe environment, sense of collective responsibility where everyone in the building is fully responsible for every child and the Dual Language just adds an extra layer. It’s just like an extra coating on that ice cream. You know, the hot fudge.

The vision for the children to know two languages.

We have a great vision and that is that all our students know two languages because everybody wants to be involved in learning both languages. All students are united in the same goal. They are learning together to be bilingual.

Our vision is to turn the whole school into a Dual Language School so that everybody will be able to learn a second language.

Our vision is to make sure we provide the best leaning environment for our students so that they can all achieve and succeed in life. One of the vehicles towards achieving our mission is the Dual Language Program.

As evidenced in the previous comments, informants were quite optimistic when they talked about their vision. Another example of their optimism was exhibited in this comment, “The vision will unify the entire community once different people, parents, everybody see how well the children are going to be doing and that they are learning.”
This informant's perception was that the school's vision of becoming a dual language school would eventually serve as a great unifying force. She was confident that the school community would jointly cohesively when they witnessed the success of the program.

After reviewing the data, it was then reasonable to speculate that perhaps the school had a well-articulated mission statement, a long-term plan that clearly delineated year-to-year goals and progress indicators, which could be measured and assessed periodically; it would provide all stakeholders with a more concrete idea of the big picture. Thus, transporting the vision from a mere abstract ideology to a concrete attainable goal.

The incremental assessment of the attainment of their goals would not only serve as a tool to validate the program but also might serve as fuel to reenergize the staff by bolstering their self-esteem and confidence as well as their sense of efficacy, which would ultimately account for a better teaching environment that would positively affect the climate of the school.

*Commitment to Student Achievement*

Commitment to change serves only to overcome the resistance that is so inherent to any change effort, while commitment to student achievement is ultimately the means by which schools achieve their goals and their vision (Rosenholtz, 1995). Since commitment to change does not necessarily engender a promise to follow through with the desired course of action, it is important that schools concentrate their efforts in fostering an environment that promulgates a sense of commitment and responsibility for
the outcomes of work. This commitment to achievement should undergird all educational plans and activities.

Informants appeared to have a strong sense of commitment to the achievement of their students, which was evidenced at various levels.

At the personal level, all the extra staff development and collaborative relationships that had been fostered as a result of their shared experiences implementing the program, had not only heightened teacher/staff self-esteem but also had allowed them to grow as professionals. One administrator remarked that, "enhancing their commitment and meaning through mini recognitions played a huge role and an important factor in bolstering their commitment, their energy level and their interest." The pay off of all these efforts was evidenced in the teachers' willingness to invest time and money in their own professional development. To this end, an informant said, "People put in a lot of extra hours. They are willing to do this in their own time and their own money."

Also in this process, another informant explained, "Teachers have been encouraged to be reflective about their practice in relationship to student achievement." This was a new experience to them. And because their sense of commitment had been energized one of the administrators remarked, "More teachers are staying after school to prepare and help children. Teachers even help students during their lunch hour! More are participating in voluntary meetings." In a school where its teachers had been isolated and rarely came together to discuss student achievement, these behaviors were a novelty and injected a certain degree of positive energy that was felt in the school and it helped to create a more positive learning atmosphere.
At the classroom level there were many indicators of the increased sense of commitment to student achievement. This was evidenced in the fact that “There is a marked improvement in lessons. Teachers are consistently teaching through centers, which emphasize hands-on, cooperative activities. There is an increased degree of interaction among students and among teachers and students.”

Informants reported that the classrooms in general are decorated with student work and permeate a very positive atmosphere that was conducive to learning. To this end an informant remarked, “I see a lot of teachers putting out a lot of effort. You see children’s work on exhibit. You see interaction and sharing. The kids have a positive attitude.” It also was reported that students appeared to be happy to be in their classrooms because teachers were experimenting with new teaching styles and new ways of teaching. In turn, teachers appeared to be more focused and committed to the achievement of their students.

At the school level, the school in all its efforts had an increased focus on developmentally appropriate practices and the “right” type of instruction necessary for students to succeed. An informant explained it this way, “All meetings revolve around student achievement, student progress, and student work, and there is a focus on developing readers and writers.” The result of these efforts was a school that was much more focused on student achievement than it had been in the past.

Further review of the data revealed that although there appeared to be a strong sense of commitment, teachers’ energies and sense of commitment have not always been directed and channeled properly. There has been a lot of instability due to lack of strategic planning, teacher attrition, and other mandates such as the Core Curriculum
Content Standards and Whole School Reform that the state had imposed on all the schools.

In addition, the district was always ready to embrace various initiatives in its efforts to help schools meet the state requirements. An informant explained:

The district has a high stake in trying to help students achieve. However, too many things are taken on . . . we just have to be more focused. There are so many great things . . . you can’t do everything, so you have to focus on a couple of things and keep with that.

This informant’s perception was that the district lacked the “staying power” because district leaders were always ready to embrace new things and change before they assessed the results of any of their efforts and by doing so, they did not allow any of their initiatives to reach maturity and to bear the desired results.

Accordingly, data revealed that the many programs that are concurrently at work in the school have overshadowed the informants’ sense of meaning. For instance, in addition to the Dual Language Program, under the district’s directive the school has adopted the Bank Street Philosophy, which endorses age-appropriate practices, hands-on activities, learning centers, and cooperative teaching and learning. They have also adopted the Children’s Literacy Initiative, which endorses a holistic approach to reading and writing. On top of all, embracing all these initiatives is Whole School Reform, which was mandated by the State Department of Education. As explained before, the school has opted for the Accelerated Schools Model, which endorses “powerful learning” and a belief that all children can be smart.

One informant stated that it was not that these initiatives were in opposition to one another. “It’s just that no one has taken the time to tie them all together and make people see how they all fit in the big picture.” As a result, some people felt that with so many
initiatives and mandates they were being pulled in different directions, which made it appear as though they did not have a consensual understanding of the school’s purpose and of how they should function in a day-to-day basis. This has been very evident in the first grade classrooms, but as one informant so aptly put it, “It is not that there’s a lack of commitment, it’s just that we had a hard time implementing all these things this year.”

Program’s Impact on the Culture of the School

The culture of a school is not only critical to the achievement of students but also plays a fundamental role in influencing the climate of the school. Part of the school culture are all those past experiences and beliefs that have contributed to the existing culture (Deal & Peterson, 1999). A school’s history, in many instances, continues to influence people’s behaviors, beliefs, and assumptions. The promise of school reform brings with it a whole new set of paradigms that serve as a catalyst to change the culture and climate of the school as part of the dynamic process of school change and educational reform.

Informants believed that the Dual Language Program, as part of the educational reform and change required, had definitely been a catalyst that put in motion a change in the belief system of the school. “The program has brought a lot of changes. It has changed the whole chemistry of the school into accepting change.” Beginning to accept change was a big leap towards a transformation in the belief system of the school.

Informants were asked to list the reasons they perceived the program as having a great impact on the culture of the school. Responses fell into two broad categories as they felt that the program had not only affected the professional, but also the social culture of the school.
In the professional arena, informants felt that the implementation of the program had helped to raise people's level of commitment and "professional consciousness" along with their excitement and enthusiasm for teaching. An informant commented with a lot of exuberance:

People are embarked in a new project. The program has helped them to move from just being a job to being a meaningful, significant, important project. There's a lot of positive energy in the building. This energy was not there before.

Another added that even though accepting the ensuing changes had been major roadblocks for some people, the impact on the culture of the school could be evidenced by the way people generally interacted and behaved.

To this end, there was evidence that the school had taken leaps in the area of encouraging the formation of collaborative relationships. This informant’s comments serve to illustrate this point:

There exists now a sense of collaboration that did not exist before. As a matter of fact, teachers in this school were kind of individualistic and into themselves ... They never really talked to other teachers about educational issues ... Teachers stayed in their little circle of friends and did not associate with others.

This supports and elaborates a point that was made earlier, which stated that strong collaborative relationships had been forged among the kindergarten staff especially.

It appeared that indeed these collaborative relationships, among teachers, have helped to foster a very positive learning climate for both the teachers and students.

Whereas before "The norm was you went to your classroom, you shut your door, and you taught whatever you had to teach." At that point, their perception was that teachers were more receptive to the idea of getting, giving, and sharing ideas. They were more willing to allow others to visit their classrooms and often sought constructive feedback from
other teachers. Teachers in general appeared to be more open to comments about their teaching and alternative instructional practices.

This type of open-door, collaborative setting has encouraged the development of learning communities where teachers are no longer attempting to deal with their problems in isolation but seek their peers as a resource and support. This sense of community has been very instrumental in helping them to deal with adverse conditions and has helped them to forge on even when the director left and were faced with many difficulties.

Another contributing factor to the big transformation of the culture of the school was the fact that so many teachers left. With 18 teachers leaving, an unexpected benefit that no one could have foreseen occurred. In her efforts to explain this phenomenon an informant reported, "It's not that these teachers were bad teachers, it was only that they were set in heir ways and resistant to change . . . the newly hired staff has brought with them a sense of adventure and risk-taking." Another one added, "The new teachers came in with a nice, rosy perspective. They had energy and the new pedagogy. They are risk takers and willing to try out and be very creative. They kind of gave the little push to the veteran teachers." These teachers have actually formed learning communities where exploration, experimentation, and risk-taking are more prevalent.

In the social arena, many of the informants felt that the positive changes in the culture of the school could be evidenced by the behavior of people. Their perception was that people had become more accepting of each other and other people's cultures and languages. They strongly felt that people had become more tolerant, understanding, and were exhibiting a higher degree of patience with students learning a second language. An informant stated, "People were very prejudiced. They did not want the students to speak
Spanish. Negative feelings against Hispanics were very strong . . . They don’t see Spanish as a second-class language.” It was evident that, little by little, there had been a change in people’s attitudes towards Hispanics and thereby the Spanish language.

Because of the Dual Language Program the Spanish competencies of the students are being used as a resource to help English speakers acquire a second language. Spanish is no longer relegated to “second language” status. Whereas before anything that had to do with that second language was negative and students who failed to master English in a couple of years were considered “dumb” and in need of special education, there has been a change in that perception. Spanish is simply regarded as “just another language and it has nothing to do with class or social status.” This in itself was a tremendous paradigm shift that was instrumental in boosting the self-esteem and status of the large Hispanic population of the school.

Summary

The culture of a school determines how the school works and its members’ commitment to student achievement. This commitment not only provides a sense of meaning and purpose that supports the vision, but also acts to sustain the culture and contributes to a climate that is positive and conducive to learning.

In the absence of a mission statement, it is reasonable to assume that the vision, although apparent in the informants’ minds, has not been clearly defined. Therefore, it cannot really serve as a unifying force. A well articulated mission statement could afford all stakeholders a view of the whole picture. It could help to make concrete their belief system by actually putting into words their goals and expectations as well as the values that they uphold.
Although there appears to be a very strong sense of commitment to student achievement, translating the school’s purposes into a workable set of goals and benchmarks might facilitate the accomplishment of the school’s objectives and might also provide systems for coordinating the different initiatives so that there is congruency between purpose and action.

The Dual Language Program has been very instrumental in initiating a change in the culture of the school. The school has moved from a very individualistic, closed-door policy to a collaborative, open-door learning community. It has moved from a prejudiced, closed-mind philosophy to an embracing, accepting, and open-mind mentality.

It appears as though the program has caused many people to confront, examine, and reconcile their feelings about educational change and about their own prejudices and assumptions. Teachers are more receptive to getting and sharing ideas as well as accepting the notion that Spanish is not a second-class language, which has contributed to a more positive climate and has opened doors to an environment that is more conducive to learning for both teachers and students.

*Administrative Leadership*

The school administrators have the power inherent in their positions and as such, play a key role in making the school what it is. One of their main responsibilities is to serve as a support system and to provide the leadership that not only supports and maintains learning for students, but equally supports and maintains learning for teachers thereby creating the conditions in which teachers can do their best work and students can learn best (Schlechty, 2001). The job of the leader is to have the knowledge and the skills to create the kind of environment where teachers are provided with a forum for their
learning, their concerns, their problems, their ideas and their successes (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). Accordingly, this section explored the role of the principal, the professional growth and development of teachers, and the teachers’ sense of control and autonomy.

The Role of the Principal

In the research conducted by Brookover and Lezzotte (1979), they reported that one of the essential characteristics of effective schools is the leadership of the principal who helps to establish, influence, and maintain a positive learning climate. Thus, the role of the school leader is essential not only for the organization’s productivity but also the motivation and satisfaction of its members. An informant remarked:

Administrators should be aware that they set the tone of the school. Administrators have to be the people who model and they have to believe themselves. They have to be committed to the program. They have to do what they say. Walk the talk.

Hence, principals contribute to the climate of the school not only through their behaviors but also their interactions, and their means for handling conflicts and solving problems.

For the most part, administrators in this building are seen as receptive, supportive, motivating, encouraging, sensitive, very accessible, and very positive. Many stated that the principal communicates openly with the staff and faculty. She sets very high standards for herself and, in turn, expects all faculty to meet high instructional standards. They also have been able to inspire in their teachers and staff a sense of being wanted and of being appreciated, which has helped to create a family-like atmosphere that has affected the climate of the school in a very positive way. An informant put it very aptly:

They treat everyone with respect and professionalism... many of the decisions are made with the teachers in mind. They are compassionate and understanding
and worry about the welfare of the staff. They try to make everyone feel important and an intricate part of the school.

This feeling of being valued and validated is carried through with all the staff members.

Data collected revealed that the administrators have also contributed to a change in the culture of the school by becoming instructional leaders. Someone commented:

The climate and the culture of the school have changed dramatically. It's a more nurturing and learning environment. They have become more instructional leaders. The administrators have taken a major role in changing the culture of the school and thereby changing the climate to a more positive one than the one we had before. They have done it in a very positive way. The school is more directed as far as educational goals toward more positive goals. The school has made a lot of improvement. The expectations are higher for the achievement of the children. The expectations here were very low. It was a happy school with low expectations.

Their instructional leadership was evidenced in their indefatigable work with teachers on curriculum planning, theme-based instruction, age appropriate techniques, and most of all, in the investment they have made in the professional growth of their teachers, which confirmed findings somewhere else in this study.

Ironically, there are many things that happen in schools that have many dimensions at play. Even though the administrators are caring, giving, and sensitive to the needs of their staff, they have allowed other factors to come into play. It appeared as though the moral dimension, the one that dictates what is right and wrong, was there. However, the political dimension of the school was overpowering it. According to Bolman and Deal (1997) when the political frame is in operation there is competition for scarce resources. Scarcity in turn, leads to conflict, bargaining, and compromise.

After the director left the expectation was that the principal, as the leader of the school, should have continued to lead in the simultaneous implementation of the program and improvement of the school. Unfortunately, in a school that normally had four
administrators, with only two at that present time, they found themselves overburdened and overwhelmed by a myriad of problems stemming from the new program and the day-to-day running of the school; both demanding the principal’s leadership.

Confirming earlier findings, the director’s departure caused a lot of turmoil in both the teachers and the administrators, which had repercussions on the effective implementation of the program, teacher morale, and ultimately the climate of the school.

The teachers reported feeling a sense of abandonment while the administrators were momentarily paralyzed in shock, which resulted in a period of inactivity. This informant’s comments serve to illustrate this feeling, “They stood still for a while. It was like a cold front. A tub of cold water came down on them . . . At the last minute; the director announced she was leaving. My God! It was like cold water came down on them”. Consequently, her departure significantly affected the Dual Language Program at various levels. There were notable differences in the degree of support the teachers received, the degree of sustained training, the degree of proper implementation, and the degree of promotion of the program in general.

Degree of administrative support. Informants felt that the kindergarten teachers had been fortunate to have had the director’s guidance and support the entire year of implementation. The director was able to “win the staff over and give them a common purpose and vision as well as provide them with the tools needed to carry out their vision.” An informant explained:

We had a director who was fantastic. We had whole teams of advisory staff people. I mean constant staff development throughout the whole program. This year in some ways it was lacking because of having no director this entire year.
Another informant added that through her strong interpersonal skills, the director was able to bolster their confidence and made them feel that anything was possible and that she was right behind them to make sure it happened. Accordingly, she spent a lot of time with them reassuring them and clarifying their insecurities. Teachers, in turn, felt protected and properly “coached”.

In contrast, the first grade teachers were just getting ready to start implementation as the director left and therefore had to rely and vie for the support and leadership of the local school leaders. Unfortunately, the administrators were overwhelmed by the reality that, on one hand, they had to continue with the implementation of the Dual Language Program and on the other, they had to administer the building and put in place a whole school reform model. As a result, they had very little time to offer for the kind of nurturing that a program in its infancy required.

The perceived lack of the principal’s leadership and support for the program not only gave rise to a lot of conflict among the teachers who were beginning to implement the program, but also served as a catalyst in lowering teacher morale. An informant commented with some dismay, “She is not walking the talk” The general feeling was that the principal could have spent more time in the classrooms helping the first grade teachers as they were implementing the program. These comments illustrate these feelings as communicated by one informant:

The principal is very supportive. She has provided everything in terms of things. I think that she could have spent more time in the classrooms with those teachers helping them deal with that stuff. She spends so much time on administrative duties and on paper work and on budgets and reports. Also with the ESPA, they concentrate on the fourth grade classes. Those are her priorities.
A few informants reported that the administrators had not been as visible as they should have been because they generally spent the greater percentage of their time on the management of administrative responsibilities rather than on the leadership aspects of their jobs.

Therefore, the first grade teachers’ experience was completely different. Even though there had been a lot of preparation during the past two years, the feeling among these teachers was that “Everyone was just thrown in and given minimal instruction.” They reportedly felt totally unprepared to deal with the day-to-day operations of the program. With no one to assuage their frustration and insecurities, and reaffirm their strengths, they started doubting themselves as well as the theory they had learned and reacted hastily when problems arose.

They bargained for the model of the program to be changed. “The principal not wanting to further add to these teachers’ distress, compromised and allowed changes in the model.” Consequently, the model of the program was changed not once, but three times. Needless to say, these compromises added fuel to an already roaring fire. Teacher morale continued to plummet.

However, there cannot be an assumption that these teachers were totally unprepared. In fact, not only did the director spend a lot of time giving support to the kindergarten classes, teachers, and staff. She concordantly began working with the first grade staff as well. Through these efforts, “she was able to win them over to the dual language philosophy.” She had convinced them of their ability to carry the program through. She had laid the foundation by motivating them and massaging their confidence
and ego. Thus, when the director left, this group of teachers was very angry. "It was a slap on the face" one retorted and another one added, "we felt betrayed".

This group of teachers who had not been as committed from the inception and who had opted to stay in the first grade not because they truly believed in the program, but because they did not want to change, quickly regressed to their original apprehension about the program and its suitability for their students. These teachers received the knowledge and the information, but they did not have the support, nurturing, and understanding the kindergarten teachers received.

Degree of implementation. Principals are the persons responsible to guide, persist, and make sure that any educational program in their school is properly implemented, In Evans (1997) words, "principals are widely seen as indispensable to innovation" (p. 201). The feeling among some informants was that the principal, as head leader should have made it her primary focus the removal of the obstacles that prevented teachers from achieving the intended goals by providing not only the resources but also the support so that the implementation of the program would have been less painful for the first grade teachers.

Again, differences among the two grade levels as far as the proper implementation of the program were quite evident. The leadership of a director helped the kindergarten teachers implement the model of the program successfully and effectively. An informant explained, "For instance, last year on Spanish day students and teachers responded in Spanish. This is no longer true this year. At the beginning there was a clear difference between English day and Spanish day and it was very evident."
Separation of the two languages for instruction was zealously guarded. There was no code switching and everybody in the building knew when it was Spanish day or English day.

All the support, nurturing and preparation served as the cement that held the kindergarten teachers together and made them a cohesive group. Someone reported:

We know we have to work as a team, that we have to work together. We know that there are certain things we have to give up for the good of the whole. We may not agree 100% but if it helps the program we’re willing to do it. The program has been very good to us as a group.

The synergy that emanated from this group was not only refreshing but unmatched anywhere else in the building. They had a true sense of collective responsibility, “Everybody is responsible for everybody in this grade level.” Thus, in this group, the leadership of the director had been a tremendous motivator in their effort to implement the program as dictated by the model. “It has united us in a group and in a cause,” an informant explained.

Consistent implementation of the selected model led to a feeling of accomplishment and efficacy among the kindergarten teachers. One highlighted, “Students learned better and more last year. I’m afraid they have lost some of what they learned this year because of the inconsistencies in the implementation of the model.” This informant’s feelings were that because the students had the consistent exposure to instruction in the two languages, and also because the teachers appeared to be more focused and much more on track of what they were doing, the gains were much more evident last year than the present year.

Another one made comparisons as far as the climate of the school. She claimed that the climate was very positive the year before because the new program held so much
promise for their students and the provision of the necessary oversight to ensure the effective implementation at the kindergarten level, made it, in the perception of the informants, a success at that grade level.

In contrast, at the first grade level, there were many inconsistencies in the implementation of the model. These teachers did not guard the separation of the two languages for instruction as zealously as the kindergarten teachers. There were many reasons for this.

First, was the lack of leadership. "We had no one to go to when we ran into trouble," one remarked with some dismay. It appeared that when teachers met with the unavoidable set of problems encountered when embarking on any new enterprise, they felt they had to deal with them on their own. They had not yet been united as a cohesive group and therefore they were of little comfort to each other.

Second, as a reaction to their feelings of inadequacy, they requested that the model of the program be changed. Unfortunately, with the changes in model, the Spanish component was always the one that was being modified and compromised. One informant said with a lot of dismay and disappointment, "At certain points through this initial stage of implementation there was no instruction in Spanish."

Third, instruction of Spanish fell to the wayside because the teachers who had been selected to teach this component of the program were constantly being pulled to do other things. An informant explained with a certain degree of exasperation, "First they had to do the district’s mandated testing program. Then they did the bilingual testing. Now, they are working with summer school registration!"
Fourth, there was no distinct separation of the two languages for instruction. Only 2 teachers out of the 5 felt truly comfortable teaching Spanish all day. One was completely English dominant and therefore required the services of a Spanish support teacher. The other two, even though they were bilingual, they confessed that they were more comfortable teaching in English. An informant reported, "Teachers had been observed code switching and translating for students." The students, in turn, started using English exclusively in their interactions. As one informant put it, "Children, when they interact with each other? They speak English only. They don't see the need to stick to one language." In this process, the feeling was that students were forgetting the little Spanish they were taught the year before.

Yet, another big concern of some informants was the fact that with the neglect and carelessness of the Spanish component of the program, the students were not getting the message that Spanish was as important as English. "More consideration needs to be given to Spanish instruction." One said angrily because she felt that the students were being short changed. Informants were afraid that the message that was being imparted was that Spanish was not important and therefore expendable.

Thus, the first grade teachers' experience appeared to have been riddled by a lot of uncertainty and a lot of charged feelings and emotions. All this negative energy contributed to a sense of low morale not only among them, but also among the kindergarten teachers who at this point, were completely demoralized because they felt that all their hard work had been for naught.

It was amazing to realize how much people's behaviors are affected when they are faced with new experiences. "Here we had an experienced group of teachers who are
very good, caring, and effective, but they fell apart when they had to implement a program with little administrative support.” This informant’s statement is very powerful in that it summarizes the crucial role of the leader in the effective implementation of any program. The implication then is that leadership is one of the most important variables in a program’s success or failure.

*Degree of sustained training.* With so many teachers leaving the school, the principal was confronted with a whole new set of factors. New teachers needed training on dual language, which was not given to them. As a result, these teachers were not really attuned to what was happening in the kindergarten and first grade classes and consequently there was no unity of purpose. One informant stated, “The whole school has to be involved if there is going to be a school-wide commitment to dual language. Everyone should be on the same page. One cannot have one group of teachers who is knowledgeable and another one who is not.” Thus, many informants felt that the principal had not committed herself to removing the obstacles that could prevent teachers from meeting their objectives and achieving their goal of becoming a dual language school.

In fact, there was as question as to whether the administrators had internalized and accepted their role and responsibility as leaders to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of the program and thereby the realization of the vision of the school. The principal, as the leader, “should have taken the role in leading the entire school through the reform efforts.” This informant along with others felt that the principal should have been more involved with the program and not allowed the “poor first grade teachers” to flounder.
The first grade staff did not receive additional or as much training as the kindergarten staff. As evidenced somewhere else in this study, most of the training occurred before the program started implementation. With no consistent development as the program was being implemented, the first grade teachers felt insecure. “I did not feel prepared. I needed more training. There were specific problems coming up, which I thought I was unequipped to handle.” This informant’s comment highlighted the perceptions of some of these teachers.

In general, the school did not appear to be unified. One informant explained, “Teachers have a notion that it is a vision for the administrators or for the dual language teachers only. They don’t realize it’s for everybody. It has not been materialized in their hearts.” Thus, the feeling was that the principal had not been able to infuse the rest of the school with the “compelling vision” There was question as to whether some of the new teachers even knew that this was a dual language school.

Degree of promotion for the program. Schlechty (2001) said that school change is precipitated for many reasons. It this case, it was the result of what he calls a “compelling vision” that held promises for a better tomorrow for the student population of the school; the compelling vision of a true bilingual school where all students would be given the opportunity to become truly bilingual, biliteral, and bicultural.

A school’s vision is communicated not only by words but by actions as well. In this study, informants felt that the principal should have taken the leadership role in leading the entire school through the reform that needed to take place in order to realize their vision. However, the principal was too busy managing the building. And even though she expressed her desire to be more involved with the Dual Language Program,
her actions spoke louder than her words. An informant exclaimed with much disillusion, “I really think that we need to be honest. We need to be a little raw about things... some can talk the talk, but not walk the talk. It’s that simple and that complicated.” These informants’ feelings indicated that administrators have to be the people who through their actions model the commitment to the program and that there is a tendency in all of us to loose trust in those people who say one thing, but actually behave in another way.

The issue of trust was quite important for the informants. There was confusion in their sentiments because on one hand, they really liked the principal and thought that she had brought many good things to the school. As an informant commented:

There are a lot of positive things going on in this school. The climate has improved because of them. The school itself has improved along with the quality of teaching and the quality of work. The teaching is focused on developing life-long learners. I think that’s backed by the investment in materials and staff development and in their teachers.

These comments served to illustrate why the informants were torn apart.

On the other hand, they implied that the principal was sending mixed messages with regards to the program. These mixed messages, which manifested themselves in the different decisions, were engendering mistrust because throughout those decisions, the subliminal message was that English was more important.

For instance, the principal was ready to abandon strategic decisions –as when the model was changed- in favor of immediate accommodation to present interests. Also, with regards to the hiring of new teachers, an informant explained, “They had made a big mistake in their hiring policy. They hired eight new teachers and out of the eight, only one speaks Spanish fluently.” Whether it was a simple lack of foresight or a case of being
"passive aggressive" whereby her true intentions were questionable was another issue that surfaced. In general though, this informant put it very aptly:

I think they have to start looking at more bilingual teachers to make up the difference. They are going to need the support in Spanish if they want to make this a real dual language school for the long term and not just for the time being.

Thus, it appeared that there seemed to be a need for the principal to examine the big picture and the desired outcomes so that all her actions and decisions would be in concert with the school’s vision.

However, it is not enough for a school to have clear goals and expectations. There must be a clear communication of them to the entire constituency. Unfortunately, this did not appear to have taken place yet. It was almost like there were two schools running at the same time, the Dual Language School and the regular school. The regular school was not aware of what was happening in the Dual Language School and vice versa.

If there is going to be a school wide commitment to dual language, then there is a need for the whole school to be involved. The program needs the commitment of all teachers in order to make it work. However, as this informant put it, “The commitment is not there yet, for the program, in everybody’s heart. Everybody is groping with that.” Another one expressed the need for the program to be promoted and advertised more, not only in the school, but also in the community.

There should be more signs and more of everything. Teachers should stay with the language all day. The building should represent the values it stands for. I don’t think that if a visitor comes in this building, they get the feeling that this is a dual language school. Work displayed is predominantly in English. The school throughout should be filled with bulleting boards in both languages. Spanish and English should jump at you as soon as you come in. That way every one would realize that this place is different.
To this informant’s dismay the program is neither widely advertised nor properly promoted. She wanted advertisements in the local newspapers and in the local stores. She wanted every parent in the community to know that this was a dual language school. She wanted leaders to know that they have a lot of power and that their practices could lead to either alienation and hostility or high motivation on the part of all stakeholders.

Thus, a school’s vision becomes their beacon. The principal is the one who has to carefully monitor, guide, and facilitate progress towards the goals that promise its delivery. Without the support of the leader of the school, no change is attainable.

*Professional Growth and Development*

To be successful in any educational change effort, the structures and the instructional practices need to be changed as well. The professional growth and development of teachers is a powerful tool to change instructional practices and the thought process that ultimately lead to a change in the culture of the school, a culture that supports a climate for learning for both teachers and students (Rosenholtz, 1995).

A very interesting observation was the fact that an overwhelming majority of the informants felt that their professional growth and development was of utmost importance to the administrators. These informants’ comments serve to illustrate their perception.

They are firm believers of staff development. They have opened our eyes to a lot of good stuff and they are always trying to have us become better... the best we can be.

The administrators take that very seriously. They show this commitment by putting money in the budget for staff development, books, consultants, conferences, etc.

Opportunities abound. If they are not offered right here, we are directed where to go.
Teachers have had so much staff development. . . Before teachers did not have these opportunities. They didn't have the materials. They didn't have the direction that they have right now.

I would rate them very high in this area.

Learning is very high on the administrators' agenda. They are always seeking out new ideas, techniques, and techniques to share and encourage teachers to try in their classrooms.

Accordingly, informants reported numerous and varied opportunities for professional growth and development, which could be catalogued in these two broad categories: providing staff development and providing opportunities to learn from one another.

Providing staff development included: arranging in-house workshops; sending teachers to conferences; scheduling visitations to other schools; leading workshops for teachers; providing the services of consultants and staff developers; participating in study groups; arranging in-service course work, summer workshops, and summer retreats; distributing research articles to read and discuss.

While most undoubtedly believed in the value of staff development, some informants thought that it should be regarded as a "double-edged sword" because as the teachers were being pulled out to attend workshops, seminars or classes, the students were missing valuable instructional time due to the lack of continuity and appropriate substitute teachers.

Providing opportunities to learn from one another and form collegial relationships was also ranked very high among the administrators' priorities as a means of bolstering professional growth and development. Included in this category were: encouraging collegiality by allowing teachers to meet in groups and engage in dialogue about student
work and teaching and learning, scheduling common planning time for grade level meetings and collaboration during the school day, arranging for coverage of classes by hiring substitute teachers, planning instruction and curriculum together, problem solving in study groups, encouraging team work and collaboration by bringing colleagues and their expertise to do curriculum overviews and curriculum mapping, and facilitating study groups for new teachers.

Informants definitely believed that there was a tremendous “paradigm shift” in this area and that collegiality has been developing steadily. The general feeling was that a few years ago the only type of collaboration was about policy. In contrast, the last couple of years, with all the staff development, this had changed. Teachers were now talking about strategies, curriculum, and student work. Teachers were actually sharing lessons among colleagues.

Informants attributed the Dual Language Program for engendering collegiality.

An informant remarked:

Because of program, they have been given more opportunities to meet and discuss curricular issues. As result, they are more cooperative in terms of sharing materials and in terms of discussing their needs. We are becoming a lot more sincere than we used to be. We used to think of things, but not share them because of fear, I guess. Now, some of us are more open than others. Some of us are more outspoken, but everyone is willing to say what they’re thinking.

Another informant corroborated on this issue by saying:

Before the program teachers had a selfish privacy. They were more to themselves, very selfish, very afraid, and very jealous about someone going there and copying. Now, they talk to each other. They visit each other’s rooms. They share with one another. They ask questions and get ideas from each other.

Although there have been major strides made in the development of collegial relationships, some of these relationships are not yet widespread throughout the whole
faculty because some teachers associate and only meet with members of their own grade level. There is a lack of cross level meetings. Nevertheless, this informant’s comments summarize the perception of most informants:

The fact that they have been given the opportunity to collaborate as well as the fact that they had so much staff development has contributed to creating a better school climate. Whereas before teachers did not have these opportunities, they didn’t have the materials. They didn’t have the direction that they have right now . . . these things happen now.

There appeared to be enough data to substantiate that as a result of the Dual Language Program the administrators were provided with a tool not only to help them restructure the school, but also for providing the much needed professional development. This confirmed findings somewhere else in this study. In addition, the increased efforts in staff development along with the administrators’ leadership have fostered the formation of collegial relationships. Teachers are not only planning together, they are actually talking about their practice, consulting one another about best practices, observing each other’s work and teaching each other what they know about teaching and learning, which are the hallmarks of true collegiality.

*Teacher Control and Autonomy*

Leadership has to strike a balance between giving too much autonomy and controlling or keeping too tight a grip on the organization. In an organization when people have power over the work they do and are able to exercise self-management, they are generally more productive and morale increases (Rosenholtz, 1995). Some informants reported experiencing a definite sense of control and autonomy, which was not only widespread but also quite empowering.
An informant reported, "the school administrators place a high value on empowering teachers by allowing them to make choices, take risks, and above all, control the activity flow of what happens within their classrooms." The general feeling among some informants was that because the administrators accepted and valued their ideas, they trusted them enough to allow them to explore and experiment and exercise discretion in the autonomous implementation of group decisions.

Most informants considered the control and autonomy of the teachers to be a high leadership priority. Many reasons were cited as evidence for this perception. Among them was the leadership style the administrators practiced, which allowed them to do both: encourage staff to be in charge and empower teachers to do their job with a certain amount of freedom.

Another reason was the fact that the administrators are very receptive to change and innovation. They are willing to experiment with anything that might afford the teachers an increased sense of efficacy. Hence, an informant reported, "teachers are not only inspired to explore and pursue their interests, but also feel supported and acknowledged when they do." This has brought about increased levels of creativity and constructivism in the classrooms.

In contrast, it was the perception of a few informants that teacher control and autonomy are only experienced to a certain level and to a very limited extent. Their feeling was that a sense of control and autonomy are neither engendered by the leaders nor a function of their leadership. In fact, they reported a decreased sense of control and autonomy due to the constraints imposed by the district and not necessarily the school.
The failure of the school district to perform well on state mandated exams have resulted in an overloaded improvement agenda. Constraints such as whole school reform, mandated subjects, schedules, and numerous initiatives are facts that teachers, as well as administrators, have to face in the day-to-day operation of the school. Consequently, all these initiatives leave very little space for administrator control of the educational program and for teacher creativity or any other autonomous activity for that matter. Therefore, teachers have neither the power nor the autonomy to exercise professional freedom as far as choosing their own methods and techniques. Some added that their roles and responsibilities had been preset without respect to their individuality or personal style.

Thus, there seemed to be a conceptual understanding that there is professional freedom to maneuver within the confines of the parameters and constraints set by the district. The administrators have succeeded in affecting teachers’ daily routines by empowering them with choice and the freedom to explore, experiment, and venture into new areas that has allowed them to grow professionally. Their thirst for creativity and innovation has created a more positive environment. The new teachers especially have welcomed this heightened sense of freedom and they have responded with an increased level of creativity thereby affecting the intellectual life of the classroom and the learning climate of the school.

Summary

There are many conditions that affect the workplace and the work that teachers do. Therefore, the call for leadership has to be for creating and maintaining the supportive conditions that facilitates their work. School leaders are then obligated to ensure that
teachers are provided not only with the knowledge but also with the support needed to be successful.

Administrators contribute to the climate of the school through their behaviors and their actions. The administrators of this school share many qualities that have heralded many significant changes. They are firm believers that the professional growth and development of their staff is one of the main vehicles to promote and sustain meaningful and systemic change. Accordingly, they have invested generous amounts of time, energy, and money not only in providing staff development activities but also in facilitating and increasing the opportunities for staff to learn from one another thereby creating strong collegial and collaborative relationships. Teachers have been afforded ample opportunities to plan and work together.

Although there have been many strides with respect to the development of collegial relationships, the synergy that exists between the kindergarten teachers has not been replicated in the other grade levels. The kindergarten teachers have truly developed very strong bonds with each other as they were implementing the program. The motivation and synergy that characterizes their relationship has been an unmatched benefit of the program.

Going to visits, conferences, trips, and workshops together has brought many unexpected benefits. Whereas teachers who had worked side by side for many years never saw each other outside of the school setting. They were now given the opportunity to get to know one another as people in a different setting. This opened doors and windows of opportunity for enhanced communication among them.
As a result of the Dual Language Program the administrators were provided with a tool not only to help them restructure the school, but also for providing the much-needed professional development. Congruent with research, successful administrators find ways for teachers to have some ownership and control over the flow of events and the intellectual life of the classroom (Rosenholtz, 1995). Accordingly, there is evidence to support that work provides substantial freedom and individual discretion. Within the parameters set by the district, teachers are able to exercise their judgment and choice. Their ability to make decisions and choices as far as the curriculum and the materials and to control the activity flow and discourse of their classrooms has afforded teachers a sense of empowerment, which has served as a vehicle to increase morale.

The increased efforts have resulted in a change in the culture of the school that has significantly contributed to a climate that is more conducive to learning for both students and teachers.

Ironically, even though the administrators have expressed their desire to be more involved with the Dual Language Program and they emphatically profess their support for the program, they have not been able to put the level of commitment that an infant program requires. After the director left, the expectation, naturally, was the local administrators should have continued to lead in the simultaneous implementation of the program and improvement of the school. Unfortunately, in a school that normally had four administrators and with only two at the time of the study, they were overwhelmed by the myriad of problems stemming from the new program, whole school reform, and the day-to-day running of the school.
The administrators' job was too encompassing. Fewer non-educational responsibilities would have increased their capacity to help teachers. Unfortunately, their time was consumed in the overall management of the building. They had very little time to spare to the teachers who, in the absence of a director, were struggling to implement the program.

As a result, the teachers felt a sense of abandonment and resentment and there was a question in their minds as to whether the administrators had truly accepted the responsibility to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of the program and thereby the realization of the vision of the school. It seems that they were not really “walking the talk” because they had allowed management issues to take precedence over leadership and developmental issues and by doing so they were not living up to the expectations of their staff. In that sense, they were sacrificing the credibility and the trust of their staff, which added some negative undertones and contributed to a dip in the climate of the school that took a few months to recover.

*Parental Involvement*

Successful educational change efforts are usually the product of groups of people working together as a team and are usually enhanced when the families and the communities they serve support the same outcomes as the school. Evidence showed a strong connection between parental involvement in schools and children’s academic achievement (Henderson & Berla, 1994). By having parents involved in schools, schools not only encourage the development of positive relationships that contribute to a positive climate and are necessary for education to flourish, but also greatly reduce the apathy that
usually results when parents are kept at a distance. Hence, any reform enterprise
mandates the inclusion of parents in all their efforts.

Data gathered revealed that as the program planners solidified their plans for the
institution of the Dual Language Program, they planned a very strong parental component
as well. Part of the director’s job was to serve as a support for the administrators, parents,
and staff in general and one of her many duties was to ensure parental involvement.

Accordingly, there were increased efforts for parental involvement the first year
of the program’s implementation. Unfortunately, the second year, in the absence of a
director, these renewed attempts fell to the wayside. This informant’s comment illustrates
the perception of many informants, “When she left parental involvement decreased to a
great extent. Last year, there was much better communication with parents. Now, this
year, we do not see them. We hardly see them!” The partnerships that were created with
the parents are struggling to survive under the existing conditions.

It must be noted, at this point, that in a school that has been undergoing through
some major changes even before the Dual Language Program was introduced, the lack of
parental involvement was neither a recent phenomenon nor the result of an absentee
director. In fact, informants reported with a certain amount of dismay a marked decrease
in parental involvement in the last 4 to 5 years since the present administrators have been
in the building.

The informants cited many attributions for this decline. Among them and most
commonly cited was the fact that the principal is “American” and, therefore, she is seen
by parents as an outsider and not as someone from their own culture. This feeling was
aggravated by two other important factors. The principal does not speak Spanish and
many of the parents feel intimidated and unable to communicate directly with her and perhaps most importantly, the parents want a male Hispanic at the helm.

Informants reported that the previous principal was not only able to communicate with parents in their native tongue, but was also quite involved in the community because he lived in the neighborhood. “He was very friendly and personable and spent large amounts of time, energy, and money attracting parents to the school. He was very adept at attracting parents.” For example, all parental activities revolved around seasonal holidays. As a result, parents were not invited for “meetings”. They were invited for celebrations and parties. “I mean you mention parties and food and they were here. He knew how to draw them in. He always made sure to include the words party and food in his notices.” This informant reported that indeed all the meetings were well attended and while they were there, the principal took advantage that he had a captive audience to give them a “little speech” about the educational program and to enlist volunteers.

In contrast, the new principal tries to be very professional in all her endeavors to attract parents. Her efforts do not produce the desired results because parents interpret her professionalism as being condescending and demeaning. As one informant explained, “He knew how to talk on their level without making them feel that he was degrading or looking down on them.” With the new principal they felt that she was “talking down” at them and they did not like it. There clearly appeared to be a communication gap embedded in their respective cultures.

On one hand, parents felt intimidated by the principal and not able to relate to her on the same level as with the previous administrator. On the other hand, the new
principal, aware of these issues and in her effort to circumvent them has been 
overcompensating by being “too nice” and “too soft” with the parents.

Unfortunately, her efforts are perceived by the staff as having negative 
repercussions on the climate of the school because the parents are not being held 
accountable for their lack of involvement. Staff members, especially teachers, reported 
that morale has decreased because the administrators are too lenient with the parents and 
in this process too much power is taken away from the teachers.

Informants generally agreed that parental involvement should be consistent and 
that it should happen at different levels. For instance, one informant stated, “Parents 
should have a vote when decisions are made with regards to their children and the 
educational opportunities that are offered to them. Parents should work right along 
teachers to make sure these opportunities are given a fair chance.” Parents, however, are 
not always given these opportunities. They are rarely kept informed about curricular and 
programmatic issues.

Since the lack of parental involvement appeared to be a concern, informants were 
asked to list and explain other reasons for the lack of parental involvement. This inquiry 
evoked many sentiments about parental attitudes towards the school and parental support 
for the administrators, and the need for both special programs for the parents as well as 
increased communication efforts between the school and the parents.

*Attitudes and Support for the Administrators*

With a Latino population of approximately 90%, the majority of the parents speak 
Spanish while only a minority is truly proficient in English. These parents have very little 
knowledge and understanding of the American culture and the public school system. This
lack of understanding sometimes manifests itself in negative attitudes, which are interpreted as lack of support for the administrators and the school in general. Many informants equated the lack of parental involvement to a lack of support for the administrators, which they perceived it as being very evident.

In a school that had traditionally attracted large number of parents when the principal was Hispanic, it was only natural to attribute the decline of parental support for the administrators to the ethnic background of the Principal. However, nothing was that plain and simple. Closer examination of the data revealed that indeed many parents came to school but, as this informant explained, "They came because they were offered rewards in the form of prizes and envelopes, which contained money and were raffled off at the end of all meetings." Thus, it was assumed that they were there for the money. One informant explained, "They were not here to be parents." She added, that they did not always come to be involved in their children's education or to support the administrators. "They came because the principal liked to play with the parents and give them gifts." Thus, it appeared that they came primarily to socialize and therefore for the wrong reasons.

With the present administration, because there are no longer "parties" and parents feel intimidated by the new principal, they have stopped coming to school. Those that do come only come to school in situations when they have specific concerns that need to be addressed. Consequently, their attitude is "let's get this over with and they get angry when things do not turn the way they expected." This indicates that parents have not given themselves the opportunity to get to know the administrators under normal
circumstances. As a result, they really do not know the administrators and there are many misconceptions. An informant explained:

The Hispanic parents have not given the new principal a chance and have not allowed themselves the time and effort to get to know her. They have been prejudiced in a sense . . . Parents wanted a male Hispanic. They felt that if the principal weren’t a male Hispanic, that person wouldn’t be strong enough and their culture wouldn’t be valued.

Informants also reported that ironically with this administrator who is not Hispanic, their culture is being valued more than it was ever before. They speculated that perhaps a reason for this was the fact that the principal had work at it, whereas the other principal because he was Hispanic took it for granted.

Some informants stated that it only appeared as though the parents were not supportive of the administrators because they only came to school when they were called or to have their problems solved. Of course, in these instances, they usually focused on the negative and were always ready to blame the school for their children’s problems and lack of parenting rather than take responsibility for their lack of involvement. The feeling was that parents were so overwhelmed by their personal problems that they really did not know how to be supportive. Someone commented:

Parental attitudes toward the school go beyond the school. One has to look at society in general. It goes beyond the school community. An improved attitude has to come from the parents in general. It’s more of a social problem rather than a school problem.

In a world where violence, drugs, and crime are prevalent, parents naturally have many personal and social issues to conquer before they can focus on issues that have to deal with the education of their children. This issue provoked a lot of emotion and debate as far as who should be responsible for helping parents resolve their problems, which in their opinion were often beyond the scope of what any school was able or qualified to do.
Faculty members did recognize the importance of improving their skills to work more effectively with parents. They felt that by working in partnership with families, they would be helping to change parental attitudes toward the school and make a positive contribution to the climate of the school.

Special Programs for Parents

In all studies of effective schools, parental involvement is intimately linked to successful programs (Comer et al., 1996). School administrators strive for programs to get parents meaningfully involved and to bridge the gap that exists between the home and the school. To examine this component of parental involvement, informants were asked whether there were special programs for the parents and the nature of these programs.

Informants appeared to be in agreement that "very little" was currently being offered as far as special programs for the parents except for the usual Open House and Back to School Nights. "We are not doing that much for parents this year. We kind of let it slide." Closer examination of the data, as was evidenced somewhere else in this study, revealed that parental involvement had decreased tremendously in the last few years. Nevertheless, an informant stated, "The first year of implementation of the Dual Language Program there was a resurgence of parental involvement, which was limited to the kindergarten parents." In a school where parents had been so apathetic and reluctant to participate in any of the school activities, it was important to investigate the possible reasons for their renewed interest.

Data revealed that the first year of implementation there was an active parent outreach program, a parent academy, and a parent center. Through this center there were many special programs that were offered not only to inform and educate the parents, but
also as a motivational tool to encourage their active participation and involvement. Some of the special program offered were: monthly meetings, open houses, school nights, special assembly programs, committee meetings, school visits, partnerships with different community agencies, numerous workshops, ESL classes and other subjects such as: child development, facilitating language development in their children, parenting skills and life skills.

An informant further explained, “The goal of the parent center was to empower parents with knowledge and information and create an environment where parents felt welcomed and free to ask questions.” To facilitate this process everything was offered in both languages: English and Spanish. By doing this they were able to embrace those parents who were not comfortable enough to communicate with the principal and thus had created a divide between them.

Judging by the attendance of kindergarten parents, their efforts were very successful. “I mean, they practically had 100% attendance when they had training sessions and meetings for the Dual language Program.” Another barometer of their success were the many parent visits to the classrooms. “Some parents actually sat down to watch us teach. This had never happened before!” There was clearly a renewed parental interest and a change in attitude from their part. They visited school more often and some reportedly were very excited and eager to sit when classes were being conducted in Spanish.

Unfortunately, in the absence of a director, the parent outreach program was not active the second year of implementation. The only component that remained in force
was the Parent Academy, which was never considered too successful because “the same” 6 or 7 parents were active in this academy.

Informants had very mixed feelings about the Parent Academy. While some felt that the parents in the academy were very helpful because “they were constantly in school working with the teachers in their classrooms and with the aides in the cafeteria,” others insisted that they inspired a certain level of mistrust because they had formed their own little group and had become very exclusionary. As a result, parents started to pull back and to lose interest in the Parent Academy. The divide between the administrators and parents that had been created by the communication gap among them was once again erected. Parents once again retracted their involvement and participation. This added negative undertones to the climate of the school.

*Communication Between the School and the Parents*

Successful schools are the product of groups of people working together in support of the same goals. A partnership between schools and the families they serve requires an informed constituency. Thus, there are important reasons for building and maintaining good lines of communication between the school and the parents. By having parents informed schools are not only recognizing them as crucial members of the educational process, but also are validating and honoring them as parents.

In order for parents to support the same outcomes as the school, they must be kept informed not only about the myriad of activities and special programs that are typical in most schools, but also about all those crucial educational and instructional issues that directly affect the schooling of their children.
Informants assessed the communication between the school and the parents as not being very effective. It is important to note that these informants also believed that lack of communication had been a prevalent issue in this school. Even though the previous principal was very personable and appeared to have been successful in his attempts to involve and communicate with the parents, there was enough evidence to theorize that their involvement and communication efforts remained at the social level. As stated by someone:

When there were meetings parents came because they liked to talk to Mr. ______ and there was always something else to follow —cake, cookies, sandwiches, prizes. That was the big draw for parents to come in because they were going to get something for their time and for their children. They did not come to be involved in their children’s education.

Parents were not actually advised of the curricular shifts or the achievement of their children. Communication was confined to information about special programs and celebrations that were held especially for them. Parents, in turn, appeared to be content with this state of affairs and did not question the practices of the school.

Informants did not fault the school only for this state of affairs. One explained:

The responsibility falls on everybody. We cannot put it on the school or the administrators only. Everybody has to take responsibility for the lack of communication. Administrators, teachers, and parents should all make an effort. Parents should be coming in to find out.

They thought that communication was definitely a two way street. On one end of the spectrum, they firmly believed that parents should be held accountable and made to understand that it was their responsibility to become informed and learn about the issues related to the education of their children to the extent that they can question and make informed decisions when their input was required.
On the other end, they also believed that the school must be held accountable for informing parents on issues that impact directly on the education of students and by doing so empowering parents with the knowledge that would ultimately enable them to understand enough to be able to ask the right questions and make the right decisions. Thus, affording them an active role in the education of their children.

There were numerous communication efforts on the part of the school. They could be catalogued into two broad categories: ways of communicating and kinds of communication.

The different ways of communicating was evidenced in the various and numerous forms the school communicated with the parents. Some of the communication efforts included: notices, newsletters, memos, letters, advertisements in the community newspaper, flyers, etc.

There were two kinds of communication: (a) about school activities and special programs, and (b) about the vision and mission of the school, instructional practices, school procedures, curricular issues, program models, expectations, standards, assessments and test results.

Informants reported that unfortunately all communication efforts highlighted the first category. Parents were usually informed about upcoming events such as special assembly programs, meetings and general school activities. However, there was a marked disregard for the second and most crucial category. Parents were not really informed about the educational programs or curricular issues that affected their children. This informant’s comments serve to clarify this issue:

I don’t think they have been given the credit they are due as parents. Lack of communication has always been there. I don’t think that it was ever done before. I
don’t think we ever told the parents. It’s our responsibility and obligation to let them know.

Occasionally, this basic lack of communication influenced the behaviors of the parents and their attitudes toward school and the administrators, which were sometimes interpreted as negative and non-supportive. However, they were only the result of their frustration as they tried to understand and deal with their problems. For instance, notices for meetings and special programs went out the night before the event. As a result, very few parents attended any of these events. Their absence was, in turn, interpreted as lack of parental support.

Lack of communication also manifested itself in parents’ basic ignorance about school procedures. There are set rules and procedures for people visiting the building. “But since parents are not informed about that either, they brake them unknowingly. You can’t expect people to follow procedures if you don’t know what they are.” This informant explained that it is not the case that parents do not know the rules for coming in the building, but rather a case of not knowing the procedures for visiting the classrooms or asking for appointments to see teachers or administrators. Consequently, she said, “They get very frustrated and they demand to see teachers and administrators immediately because they are not aware that there are procedures.”

To further highlight the issue that parents were neither being consulted nor properly informed about their children’s educational program, informants reported that there were many issues that had arisen that parents should have been made aware of and were not. For instance, no one had informed them that the model of the program had been changed three times that year and that the Spanish component was affected by all those changes.
Thus, it appeared that the school was contributing to the lack of parental involvement by not raising parents’ level of consciousness to a level that would empower them to raise questions and voice concerns about what was taking place.

Summary

In order to turn a failing school around, the help of all the stakeholders is in order. Any reform enterprise has to include parents. For parental involvement to be meaningful, it should be consistent and it should happen at all levels. Parents should have a vote when decisions are made with regards to the educational program and the school activities that will ultimately affect the schooling of their children.

By encouraging and fostering meaningful parental involvement in the education of their children, the school is not only educating the parents, but also providing them with the necessary tools so that they can become active supporters of their children’s education. Unfortunately, at this school, the parents have neither been actively engaged nor properly informed about the crucial educational issues that are affecting the education that is being provided to the students.

It appears as though the school never really had meaningful parental involvement. There were many parents who did come and appeared to be actively engaged in the school’s efforts to educate the students. However, it is safe to assume that they came for the wrong reasons. They came to socialize and win prizes and not to really involve themselves with the educational issues of the school. As soon as the motivators were absent, their involvement decreased substantially.

The school was undergoing through some major changes even before the Dual Language Program was introduced. In a school where parental involvement has been
steadily decreasing, the introduction of the Dual Language Program served as an energizing catalyst that filled the air with a renewed interest and energy. Parents were lured by the newness of the program and the numerous initiatives to involve them. They started visiting classrooms, partaking in the various programs that were offered for them, and becoming truly involved in educational issues. Unfortunately, their renewed interest was short lived due to a lack of leadership. Without a leader to direct the program, efforts to involve them fell on the local administrators, essentially the principal, who has not been able to garner their support.

Parents again retracted their involvement and participation, which has been interpreted as lack of support for the school and the administrators. Some parents have not given themselves the opportunity to get to know the principal. They are prejudiced against her because they wanted a male Hispanic and they have allowed their prejudices to affect the relationship they have with the school.

Basic lack of information about educational issues has been prevalent. It is not as though there have not been numerous and various attempts to communicate with the parents, but the quality and the nature of the communication is superficial. Parents are informed about special activities and programs, but they are not informed about the vision and mission of the school, instructional practices, school procedures, curricular issues, program models, expectations, test results, etc. By not giving the parents all the facts, the school is contributing to their ignorance and lack of understanding and thereby encouraging negative attitudes.

The perceived lack of parental support and their negative attitudes towards the administrators and the school in general have affected the climate of the school. Teacher
morale has decreased because they do not feel supported by the administrators when they have issues with the parents. Teachers, want the administrators to take a stronger stance with the parents and hold them accountable for their lack of involvement.

*The School Environment*

Hoy and Miskel (2001) claimed that climate is the broad term used to refer to people’s perceptions of the school environment. The environment of a school is one of the major factors that influences the climate of the school. A clean, attractive appearance in not only welcoming but also provides the base that supports a positive environment that is conducive to learning.

Administrators who strive to create positive learning environments not only endeavor to foster a school climate with an atmosphere that communicates high expectations but also strive for a safe and orderly environment where positive relationships are allowed to thrive and prosper.

Accordingly, this section examined the school’s strive for clear goals and high expectations, the promotion of positive relationships and of a safe and orderly environment, and the general appearance of the school.

*Goals and Expectations*

Clear goals and high expectations along with a consensual understanding of the school purposes have been identified as key ingredients of successful schools because they serve as a compass that not only guides behavior but also directs and undergirds how the school functions in a day-to-day basis (Edmonds, 1979; Rutter et al., 1979). Thus, to be successful and to have some measure of its success, schools need goals and identifiable benchmarks towards which efforts are directed.
Data studied revealed that the school has a general set of goals and expectations that everyone knows and are striving to actualize. As indicated somewhere else in the study, informants were able to verbalize that the ultimate goal of the Dual Language Program was to offer the students of this school an equal opportunity to become bilingual, bicultural, and bilateral. The program had provided them with a shared purpose and, consequently, everybody was aware of what they needed to strive for.

When the program was introduced all the preparation, staff development, and the shared sense of purpose really served as a boost to the teachers’ morale, especially those teachers who had been in the school for so many years and felt that the students’ culture and language were not always honored and validated. “Those teachers were thrilled to have this program and they embraced it with their heart and soul.” They finally had a program that valued the language and the culture of the students.

As a result of the different programs in the school, the school had been forced, in a dynamic process that was continually at work, to reexamine and refine its goals and expectations. The goals had not always been clearly defined and stressed to the degree that they were being stressed at that moment. An informant explained:

The goals are being reinforced every day. It’s being hammered, constantly drilling; this is what we’re here for. That’s what we’re focusing on. So the goals are clearer. Before they were just mentioned and that was it. Teachers used to go to their classrooms and close their doors and not discuss anything with anybody else. I don’t think they had it so clear and they were not asking either. They probably wanted the students to do well but there were other issues. . . They were not clear about goals.

It appeared as though before goals were mentioned only at the beginning of the year or at a staff meeting. As a result, teachers were embarked on a journey with no
definite destination. "They probably wanted the students to do well, but they really never knew where they were going."

Even though informants were clear about the overarching goals of the Dual Language Program, closer examination of the data showed that lack of strategic planning, as evidenced somewhere else in the study, had naturally resulted in a lack of operational goals and identifiable benchmarks for the program. In their absence there was very little to guide and inform programmatic decisions in the day-to-day operations. One result of the uncertainty was the fact that the model of the program was changed three times the year of implementation in the first grade. The program planners lacked the foresight and did not plan for the years ahead. Instead they relied on broad yearly plans, which were never solidified for this grade level because the director left.

As far as high expectations, it was reported that the school in general had very high expectation for all students, which were attributed to the administrators. The administrators, mainly the principal, were held as icons of high expectations. These informants’ powerful comments exemplified how they felt about the principal with regards to high expectations.

- "She wants your best. You have to try everything you can to help the students. No excuses are accepted."

- "She expects the best from herself. I think she wants that from everyone else."

- "She has opened our eyes to a lot of good stuff and is always trying to have us become better . . . the best we can be."

- "She gives a lot and in turn, she expects a lot."

- "She wants the school to be tops not just in terms of scores and achievement, but also I think her highest goal is for kids to feel comfortable, to enjoy coming to school, and for parents and teachers to feel the same."
• “We are to reach for the stars. The sky is the limit.”

• “The principal has a lot of faith in us. She expects a lot from us.”

However, in some instances, the expectations were so high that they were not realistic and therefore counterproductive. An informant explained that teachers in their exuberance to “reach for the stars,” were being remiss because they were forgetting that teaching was incremental and consequently there was a need to teach the basic steps that would eventually afford students a solid base in which to anchor future learning.

Indicators of teachers trying to rise up to the expectations were exhibited in their willingness to try and experience new things and in their creativity, which had helped to produce, as one informant put it, “some of the student work we have never seen before.” In addition, teachers’ sensitivity to students’ needs had catered to individualized instruction whereby there was a conscious effort to make sure all students were included in higher-level work. An informant further explained:

Everyone has become really knowledgeable in terms of developmentally appropriate practice. They are a lot more focused on what the children need and where a child should be. Everyone has become more aware of brain research and where and how the children learn and what’s best for children. In that sense, in our teaching the school has changed a lot.

Unfortunately some teachers still held to low expectations in their classrooms for different reasons. In some cases, teachers were just not pushing as hard as they should by not extending the students to higher levels of cognition. In other instances, teachers usually started the year with high expectations, but as the year wore and they were confronted with different situations, their expectations went down dramatically. And in other cases, some teachers were just negative on their outlook of the school and the children. Those teachers usually cited a litany of problems from the social ills of the
community to the students’ poor family backgrounds, to the lack of personal control and discipline to justify their low expectations.

Nevertheless, there was a marked difference as far as high expectations when making comparisons to previous years. One summarized this perception by saying, “It was a happy school with low expectations.” The school obviously had enjoyed a better social climate than an academic climate. The Dual Language Program had served as an additional boost to the academic climate because it provided a shared goal and purpose as well the resources for professional growth and materials.

Consequently, teachers have been empowered with the knowledge and skills, which has allowed them to see things with more clarity. Everyone has become more knowledgeable in terms of developmentally appropriate practices and of brain research. Everyone is more knowledgeable of how children learn and what is best for children. Accordingly, teachers are more focused and in general savvier about the educational process. Thus, the Dual Language Program was cited as being an effective vehicle in changing the way teachers view their concerns and the expectations they have for their students, which has contributed to a more positive learning climate for the students as well as their teachers.

*Promotion of Positive Relationships*

There are many good reasons for promoting positive relationships at every level of the school community. Hoy et al., (1991) indicated that the organizational climate is influenced not only by the personalities of its members but also the nature of their relationships. Schlechty (2001) talked about the ability to influence others to do things by virtue of personal relationships.
Positive relationships lay the base for other types of relationships. The ripple effects are long lasting and have repercussions on everything else. Therefore, schools must strive to create a climate that promotes an atmosphere where positive relationships thrive. Data collected for this study revealed that the promotion of positive relationships occurred basically at three levels: between teachers and staff, between students, and between teachers and students.

*Relationships among teachers and staff.* Since climate is determined by the behaviors of the collective group (Hensen & Childs, 1998), efforts to promote positive relationships among teachers and staff are important.

One of the means the school used to promote positive relationships among the staff was through a constant endeavor to provide an environment where attention to people and validation were commonplace. There were many celebrations and school activities through which the administrators recognized and honored non-instructional as well as instructional staff.

Recognition of teachers was not something new to this school. As an informant explained:

Teacher recognition week was always big in this building. But non-instructional staff was never recognized. It's only since the new administrators came in that everyone in this building is honored... It makes me feel good because the people that I work with are honored... They are valuing what we're doing.

Although the school had a history of honoring the teaching staff, honoring non-instructional staff was quite a novelty in this school. This interest in all staff members had helped to bring them closer together and to work collaboratively in each other's behalf, thus raising staff morale and the climate of the school.
The principal was very instrumental in the promotion of positive relationships. Her actions were always tied to the larger picture. For instance, it had been the practice of the school to assign assembly programs by grade level. In an effort to promote more interaction among teachers of different grade levels, she eclectically mixed them together and had them work on special projects or assembly programs. This resulted in a true learning experience for the teachers in the sense that they not only were given the opportunity to work with people they normally would have not worked with, but also got the opportunity to work with students in different grade levels. This provided them with a broader range and level of interaction.

The development of collegial relationships and the various professional development activities have been other contributing factors in promoting positive relationships between teachers. The Dual Language Program has also been an important catalyst for the promotion of all professional and social relationships in the building. An informant put it this way:

Teachers are together now because the Dual Language Program brought them together. Before they were separate... now with the Dual Language Program we have to work together. We have to share. We have a common cause.

Another one corroborated:

The promotion of collaborative and collegial relationships has definitely resulted in a promotion of positive interaction between teachers. Teachers who might have never associated with each other have come together and are relating in a very congenial as well as collegial way.

Indeed, teachers in the program have formed such a bond that they served as inspiration to other teachers in the building. As a result, other collegial/congenial relationships have sprouted, especially among the new teachers.
Unfortunately there were a couple of factors that impeded the development of positive relationships. The structure of the building could be a factor that helped to foster separation and alienation among teachers. For instance, the kindergarten classrooms were completely separated from the first grade classrooms. In fact, they were at different ends of opposite hallways. Second grade classes were on the second floor. Third grade classes on the third floor and so on. With this type of set up, conceivably teachers never had to cross each other unless it was purposely planned.

Another factor was the lack of a teachers’ room to accommodate them during lunch. As a result, teachers were almost forced to eat alone in their classrooms. An informant reported with a certain tone of disdain, “We are like robots; sign in, sign out, go out. There is no time or place to really share in terms of interpersonal relationships.” Another informant corroborated that teachers had so much work that there was virtually no time for personal conversation. Therefore, they never really got to know one another.

Although the structure of the building prevented teachers from socializing in school, there were other opportunities where teachers were brought together and thus given a chance to cultivate relationships with each other. Attending conferences as a group had afforded them with the occasion to get to know one another in a different environment. Frequent celebration outside the building offered them a means to socialize and “unwind”. Wynne (1980) found that school climate was positively associated with the amount of socialization among faculty. Accordingly, the climate of this school improved as a result of the various opportunities to celebrate.

*Relationships between students.* The promotion of positive relationships between students is of paramount importance in any school that wants to foster a school
environment where students want to come and be active participants of the educational process. Poor relationships among students disrupt the learning process (Comer et al., 1996).

The school has been experiencing a decline of student self-control and discipline for the past few years. Therefore, the perception was that “not enough” was being done to promote positive relationships between students and that this was one of the biggest challenges that the school as a community had to work on collectively. Programs that encouraged the proper management of student behavior along with strategies that encouraged good behavior backed by an environment to reinforce that behavior were deemed necessary.

In an effort to address some of the disciplinary issues, the district had introduced Conflict Resolution and Character Education.

The Conflict Resolution Program was designed to teach children how to get along and how to work out their conflicts through the use of words. Thus, turning conflicts into problem-solving opportunities and learning experiences. Unfortunately, the practices endorsed in the Conflict Resolution Program were not consistently practiced or endorsed and therefore the behaviors had not been internalized and become part of the students’ repertoire of techniques to solve problems.

The Character Education Program reinforces the tenets that the school stands for: respect, trust, openness, and caring. To reinforce these values, posters and banners had been posted throughout the school and in the classrooms. Additionally, these values were also repeated every single day as part of the morning announcements. Some teachers brought the reinforcement of these values to a higher level by actually developing lessons
where their objective was to teach how students should talk and treat one another. An informant explained this process:

They actually model the behaviors! This is what it looks like to get along. This is what it sounds like to talk nicely. This is what it means to be nice. They actually practice these behaviors! And those teachers who do this, have no discipline problems.

Another informant added that no other program had done more to promote positive relationships between students than the Dual Language Program. The program had not only served to increase the self-esteem of both groups of students, the Spanish speaking as well as the English speaking students, but also had promoted some very close relationships between them. An informant remarked, “The children are learning to have compassion for one another,” which was evidenced when the students experienced that their peers could not respond in whichever language was being used at the moment. “They are not laughing of giggling, but whispering in their ear and trying to help them.” Teachers had witnessed both groups of students trying to help each other.

Another informant observed that they were helping each other and by doing so their character was also being built along with their spirituality. She said, “That’s why there is fulfillment of the spirit because when these children go on to the next grade, there’s a bond. There’s a friendship. There’s a partnership. We can do it together.” Other informants commented that students in the program were learning to be more tolerant of students who did not speak their own language and thereby of different cultures. One added, “There isn’t that fighting anymore. We’re really learning to work with each other, support each other, and they understand each other better.”

Teachers in the program had, in turn, taken the opportunity to integrate character education in all their lessons. A teacher elaborated on this issues by saying:
Right now, what we are trying to promote through the Dual Language Program is
tolerance of different languages and tolerance of different cultures. And that’s
where we’re going full steam with the Character Education Program. And the
teachers have incorporated it within the curriculum. So, when they did this
curriculum mapping, we mapped out the content and now we are filtering in the
character ed through the books, through the literature books that we are using,
through the trade books and we are trying to fit in how to piece it in. So that
character ed is not a separate subject by itself, but it’s integrated within the
curriculum so that we are constantly talking about. So all day long we are
constantly talking how to treat each other.

In addition, the kindergarten classes usually had little plays and various activities
in their classrooms and they invited others to come and see. A result of this practice was
that the atmosphere that had been created in that corner of the building was such that
everybody was curious and wanted to know what was happening. An informant described
these feelings very aptly:

The building knows that something special is going on in that corner. The
students come by and say ‘I want to speak Spanish too. I want to learn Spanish.’
Children want to go there. It’s like this domain that everybody wants to touch and
get the feel of it because it’s a good, positive thing. And the kids pick it up so
quickly and they know that something special is going on there and they want to
tap into it.

Thus, positive relationships were being fostered. Students in the program were
learning to be more compassionate with one another. They were learning to be more
tolerant of peers who did not speak their language and thereby of children of different
cultures.

*Relationships between the staff and the students.* Poor quality relationships
between staff and students interfere with the learning process (Comer et al., 1996).
Therefore, it is important to pay close attention to this dimension of the climate of the
school.
Although there were some issues that needed to be addressed, especially with the non-instructional staff, the general climate of the school was one that encourages positive relationships between teachers and students.

The type of programs that had helped to foster positive relationships between teachers and students have been those where different grade levels have gotten together to work in different projects. An informant explained, "With these programs you get to work with other teachers and with other teachers' students and the children get to know you and you get to know their talents and where their talents are." By working in groups or with teachers they would not have otherwise been allowed to, students were exposed to a wide range of interest, personalities, and talents.

Other activities that helped to foster positive relationships included school-wide projects whereby all students where encouraged to contribute in some manner. One example of such an activity was one where all classes got together to create a big bulletin board. Students were to put something that showed what they liked about the school. "They had poems, maps, collages, pictures, quilts, sketches, etc. You name it, we had it."

Another activity asked all classes create a banner in English and in Spanish that reflected the values of the school. One class had other classes come together and join hands to work in this project. They traced their hands around the banners so that it looked as they were holding hands. Thus, symbolically helping each other.

In another project, classes were invited to send students to read in the loudspeaker original student writing or published poetry and stories that reinforced the value of the week. An outgrowth of this project was the creation of a literary newsletter and of a new school song.
Even though all these positive activities were taking place, the promotion of positive relationships between staff and students were in need of refinement. An informant exclaimed with a certain amount of dismay, “I do think that we need some sensitivity training because a few teachers and staff members don’t know how to treat the children in a proper manner”. Some staff members were yelling and screaming at the students as a way of communicating their displeasure of student misbehavior. Unfortunately, these teachers and staff members had failed to see the connection between their behavior and the behavior of the students. They have not realized that they are the ones who set the tone in the school and who should be modeling positive interactions for the students.

Informants were eager to clarify that “teachers were not as guilty of this”. They added that this type of behavior was more prevalent with the non-instructional staff. An informant tried to explain, “The staff that has not been trained in pedagogical concepts or in child development are definitely the ones that have a tendency to treat the students like second class citizens”. Fortunately, this type of behavior was not widespread. It was exhibited mostly in the cafeteria and in the playground where most of the discipline problems originated.

The atmosphere of the cafeteria and playground added very negative undertones to the climate of the school. This was an area that the school needed to concentrate its efforts in order to ensure a better environment for the students.

Safety and Order

Schools do not only have the responsibility to engage the students’ minds, but also must create positive environments that are safe and orderly and free from physical
harm thereby setting the stage for a purposeful climate that allows teachers to teach and students to learn, a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning. Murphy et al., (1985) stated, “effective schools maintain a safe and orderly environment for learning” (p. 368).

The provision of a safe environment is an issue and a challenge for all schools, especially inner city schools, which are situated in neighborhoods where crime and violence are often prevalent. The school under study is an inner city school and as such it has some concerns about general safety. As part of the district’s attempts to create safe environments all schools have been provided with full time security guards whose primary job is to ensure the safety of all school personnel and students. Accordingly, this school has three full time security guards. One is always stationed at the main entrance of the building.

District policy dictates that all visitors must be required to sign in the security guard’s ledger and report to the main office before they are allowed to go anywhere in the building or to visit with anybody. This accounted for a general feeling of security and safety. An informant explained it this way:

There have been very, very few incidents of anyone being attacked in this school in all the years I’ve been here. I mean I could point them out. I think that it’s as safe as it can be in the city. I have never felt threatened at all. I have never been threatened by the parents or by any child. I feel very safe. I would come in at 7 o’clock and I would leave when I had to. Never have I felt that it’s not safe.

The environment, for the most part, was safe. Teachers as well as students felt safe and secure inside the building. The only place students experienced a sense of insecurity and fear for their safety was in the playground. “Some kids don’t want to go outside because they are afraid to get hurt because there is a lot of fighting. That’s the
only place they don't like.” As was noted in the previous section, the behavior of the students in the playground was a concern that was affecting the students’ sense of security and therefore the climate of the school.

Even though the presence of the security guards was very comforting and reassuring and people generally felt safe inside the building during school hours, there had been a couple of incidents that had occurred previous years that had shaken their sense of security because their safety was endangered by intruders who broke in the school with the sole purpose of being destructive and disruptive.

As a result of incidents of this kind, the school had been forced to be more vigilant by imposing stricter rules on all visitors including parents. No one was allowed to go to the classrooms or anywhere in the building without having been to the main office first. This procedure had proven to be somewhat unsettling to the parents who sometimes came to school and angrily demanded to see teachers or administrators on the spot.

Unfortunately, as evidenced somewhere else in this study, parents were generally aware of the rules for coming in the building. They knew they had to sign in with the security guard. However, they were lacking a general understanding of the procedures to follow when they wanted to see a teacher or an administrator.

The school had made some attempts to inform parents through letters that had been sent home with a listing of the teachers’ preparation periods and times when they were available to see them. Nevertheless, parents were still frustrated and displeased at their inability to see teachers upon request. An informant said:

Whereas the school should have an open door policy, parents should not be allowed to come in at any time they want. I know parents need to be encouraged
to come to school . . . Parents need to understand that they are interrupting the educational process of their own children and other children.

Another informant added with some exasperation. "They would come in and stand in front of the class and be very loud and disruptive. They came in with an attitude."

With these increased efforts, teachers as well as students, felt a lot safer than in previous years. However, the structure of the building was such that anyone could easily sign in, go up the stairs, and go anywhere they wanted without being noticed. For instance, a couple of middle school students had come in to vandalize the building. In the process they had destroyed many things in the classrooms. "I don't think that anyone was terribly surprised by it," one informant exclaimed.

Nonetheless, all these incidents had served to awaken a more vigilant eye in everyone. All adults are acutely aware of any one who might not look familiar and do not hesitate to sound the alarm. As a result of all these concerted efforts, the students and staff feel relatively safe. The climate is purposeful and free of threat of physical harm.

The provision of an orderly environment is another challenge that all schools must meet. Schools are responsible for creating environments that exude a sense of routine and order whereby students are encouraged not only to behave in responsible ways but also to develop the necessary skills that would ultimately help them become productive members of society.

Informants reported that the school had a definite sense of routine and order. As an informant put it:

If you walk around the building, children are in different activities and different centers, moving in the hallway to the library or to the gym . . . overall when you
go in the building you get a feeling that the building is very organized. There are schedules and definite routines ... the majority of the time they are on task.

The general feeling was that the principal, as part of her high expectations for every one, had set the pace by ensuring that teachers engage students in meaningful activities as soon as they entered their classrooms.

There were various activities that were consistently upheld as examples of the different ways that the school promotes and supports that sense of routine and order. Among the most widely named were: the general procedures such as the usual morning announcements where not only the up-coming events and news and special recognitions to staff and students were commonplace, but also where the school rules were reinforced every single day; the no interruptions policy whereby teachers were not surprised with unannounced visitors and public announcements were restricted to the morning or end of the day announcements; and the assembly programs whereby teachers and students of different grade levels were given the opportunity to work together and were then publicly recognized for their efforts. The sum total of all these activities had yielded in both students and staff a sense of pride, of belongingness, and most importantly a sense of being a valued member of the school community.

Even though the value of these activities was widely recognized, there were some concerns because they usually afforded with an opportunity to disrupt the normal routine of the school. For instance, some of the special activities were not scheduled ahead of time. In this area, there was a lack of structure, which some teachers found it somewhat unsettling and frustrating. In addition, some of the school procedures were “held together loosely” and naturally they needed to be reinforced because they were affecting the behavior of the students and thereby the climate of the school.
Some of the procedures that were in dire need of revision and attention were the general procedures for assembly programs and most essentially those for going to the cafeteria and playground and coming back from lunch. The lack of properly enforced and clear procedures was creating a disorderly environment in the cafeteria and in the playground, which was giving rise to numerous discipline problems affecting the climate of the school in a negative manner.

There was no question in anybody’s mind that good discipline was a prerequisite for good education to occur and thus for an environment that is conducive to learning. Most informants indicated that the teachers and the administrators took discipline very seriously. An informant commented:

They try to get the children to see what they’ve done and come with a solution together. They are trying to teach these children how to behave in the proper ways, how to be good citizens, not just inside but outside the building too.

Thus, the process of building self-discipline and responsibility for that discipline in students was one of the challenges that the school under study was facing.

Unfortunately, the sense of routine and order that was previously discussed was confined to the classrooms. An informant explained this way, “In the classrooms? Yes, there is routine and order. In the school in general? It could be a lot better.” This informant felt that the school was lucky in a sense because the teachers kept order in the classrooms. However, she stressed the fact here were general procedures in place, but unfortunately not everyone followed them. These comments serve to illustrate her perception:

Some teachers have excellent discipline. Others expect an outside source to solve their problems . . . for the most part, every teacher in the building is able to demonstrate very effective classroom management where we brake down is in areas like lunchtime and when there are substitute teachers.
Unfortunately, even teachers who were usually very good at enforcing rules and procedures in their classrooms, once they left the classrooms, they did not enforce them as consistently or as strongly as they should have had. Consequently, student misbehavior in those areas was a major problem.

Disciplinary issues were not generic to this school. In fact, informants reported that this was one of the most common complaints in the district. Student discipline was progressively deteriorating and teachers found it extremely hard and frustrating to continue dealing with the myriad of issues those students brought to the classrooms.

The number as well as the degree and nature of the discipline problems had multiplied in the past few years. Many faulted the district for not supporting the administrators in helping them enforce district policies. Others faulted society in general and the parents. Overall, informants naturally could not pin point one specific reason, but rather a combination of factors. These informants' comments illustrated their feelings.

So many changes, so many new teachers, the special ed classes. Everything together, all at once, I think had a lot to do with it.

The principals that were here were very strong disciplinarians. The principal now, even though many have a lot of respect for her because she has really improved the quality of teaching and has provided the teachers with so many opportunities to grow professionally, this is the one area she is lacking.

Students bring with them heavy emotional baggage. Many children are on medication . . . result of many crack babies and HIV positive children . . . Children are not being raised by their parents.

Very young single mothers.

Students don’t have a clear understanding of what the expectations are. If we take the time to teach them how to follow the rules, then that must be enforced. That line must be followed everyday rain or shine. If you don’t enforce them consistently . . . that means that sometimes you can do whatever you want.
Cultural clashes between teachers and students. I think that sometimes the students are not feeling comfortable here... I think that a lot of the problems have come from not really understanding the different culture of the students. This community has been Hispanic for too many years now. It’s about time we learned more about the Hispanic culture. That’s why I like this program. I believe it’s helping us learn more about the Hispanic culture.

Teachers take very good care of them in the classrooms, but when they are outside, all hell brakes loose. They just teach them in the classrooms. They don’t show them how to behave outside so that they can have a calm atmosphere.

The administrators understood the culture of the children and the culture of the parents.

Lack of organization and planning. Too many wonderful ideas and programs that are not well planned out. Spurt of the moment kind of thing.

In looking for ways of improving student behavior, there was a need to look at the appropriateness of the environment that the school had created for them. For instance, the cafeteria was not a welcoming place. It was drab, plain, and not decorated. The students were routinely yelled at and punished for not behaving properly. Lack of appropriate routines had led to many misunderstandings and a lot of misbehavior on the part of students.

The playground offered nothing constructive or meaningful for the students. There were no organized activities or games. As a result, students ran wild and into each other precipitating many fights. Students, in turn, were in need of programs to help them deal not only with their ensued anger and frustration, but also to help them learn how to play.

In a community where many of the children live in apartments and crime and violence were commonplace, children were not allowed to go outside because it was too dangerous. “They are not playing outside anymore. They never get a chance to play with
other children. They don't know how to because they never do it.” Thus, in an impoverished environment where many of the students live in a one or two-room apartment and have no access to a park or playground, there usually is no opportunity for children to socialize, and to play and learn the rules of fair play. As a result, students come to school unprepared to socialize with other children and then it becomes part of the schools’ responsibility to address these issues.

Even though there was recognition of the fact that some kind of social behavioral program was in dire need, not all were in agreement as to what type of program. The faculty especially appeared to be torn and separated by this issue. On one end of the spectrum, there was a large group who were more stoic and wanted stricter rules. Their basic philosophy was that “children should be seen but not heard”. On the other end, there were those who liked a more humanistic approach. “You have to understand and know where they are coming from,” an informant emphasized. They believed that the whole child should be taken into consideration.

In a school that traditionally had dealt with discipline problems in a punitive manner, some felt that programs that emphasized positive reinforcement were necessary. The principal, in an effort to change this practice had tried to send teachers to different trainings that highlighted positive ways of dealing with discipline problems. Nonetheless, the perception generally was that the discipline had gotten worse because the principal was “too soft and a bleeding heart.”

It was quite interesting to note that some informants’ perception was that a male figure in the administrative team was necessary. One exclaimed, “We need a male figure. I think the children for some reason respect the male figure more and a lot of them don’t
have a male figure at home." Another corroborated by saying, "It's just the presence of a man. I don't know why, but it works wonders with kids. Just seeing the authority figure of a man makes a big difference." A male figurehead was seen as being necessary to keep student misbehavior under control.

In general, school procedures need to be fine-tuned and enforcement of these procedures has to be consistently followed through by the teachers. Programs that encourage the proper management of student misbehavior along with strategies that promote good behavior backed by an environment to reinforce that behavior are deemed necessary.

Appearance of the School

The appearance of a school is the first thing that people notice as soon as they enter the building. A clean, attractive appearance is not only welcoming but also that base that supports an environment conducive for teaching and learning. An informant put it very aptly:

I know is not the building that educates the students, but let me tell you, it does affect the child when you go to a classroom that has a rocking chair, a rug, a center. The environment has so much to do with the education, as much as the teacher.

Therefore, it follows that educators need to provide students not only with the tools to learn, but also with the proper environment because it is very crucial to learning.

Informants appeared happy and pleased with the general appearance of the school. Although the school is old, dirty, in a state of disrepair, and structurally not as bright as it should be, informants still described it with a certain degree of pride. They explained that what made it possible to overcome these obstacles and what helped to brighten up the environment was the students' work in the hallways and in the classrooms. The school
gave the appearance of a lot of tradition and history. People for the most part, did not
notice how old or how dirty the school was because the hallways were decorated
beautifully. An informant put it this way:

Teachers do a good patch-up job. They cover with decorations and children’s
work all little cracks and bumps on the walls. The displays of the children’s work
do not allow people to focus on the dirty floors or the cracked windows because
the eyes are distracted and feasting on all the beautiful displays.

This informant’s comment was reflective of many others who also felt that the
environment was, for the most part, print-rich with an abundance of student work and
murals that are colorful and that contributed to the general appearance of the school. This
informant’s comments highlight the feelings of many others, “I’m really impressed with
the work that teachers have put up. This is new in this school. Years ago, they did not
have as much student work.” Another one remarked about a beautiful mural in display in
the auditorium, “The mural is going to stay there for years to come. Hopefully, the
children of the children we have now will be able to enjoy that masterpiece.” The amount
of pride that exuded was notable. She further expressed that she would like to archive the
outstanding student work, so that future generations would be able to appreciate the
history of the school and have a sense of the school’s accomplishments through this
work.

The perception was that since the principal insisted on student work it had
become more prevalent throughout the school. Student work was evident everywhere: in
the hallways, in the auditorium, and in the classrooms. Also, there were indications that
the caliber of the work was higher than it was before, writing products evidenced work on
the writing process, and the connectedness of all these displays to the curriculum was
more visible.
Although they had much more on display then, than they had previous years, not all the work was student generated and the quality was not consistent through the grades. Undoubtedly there were pockets of excellence, but they were not generalized. Also paradoxically, the work of the kindergarten and first grade teachers was “outstanding” for the most part. But the work of the third and fourth grade teachers was mediocre and therefore left a lot to be desired.

Nevertheless, expectations were high and the stress was on quality student made work, which was evident all over the building. “It is not only the quantity of student work that has been brought to a higher level but also the quality. Thus, the feeling was that the caliber of the work was generally higher than it had been in previous years.

In a school where the common practice had been to decorate the bulletin boards with store bought materials, the use of authentic student work that was reflective of what was taking place in the classrooms was somewhat novel. This informant’s comments serve to illustrate this point, “You don’t have to go in the classrooms to see what’s happening. All you have to do is walk the hallways and you know there’s school creativity, so much writing going on. There are colorful pictures, but there is great writing going along.” Indeed there were essays, poems, plays, and stories someone else corroborated.

For the most part informants were pleased with the appearance of the school. They felt that the school made a nice and impressive appearance. An informant exclaimed, “I think we do a magnificent job of covering our walls with things that improve the appearance of the school. It is a very friendly school, very inviting, very child centered.” Unfortunately, amidst all this positive feelings, there were some feelings
of disappointment because the school did not portrait the appearance of a dual language school. An informant explained this feeling very eloquently:

The feeling should be that yes, this is becoming a dual language school with a more friendly and warm environment. I truly believe that if this is a dual language school, that’s what must be evident in everything we do. Being in a dual language school is special and that should be evident every single day throughout the school not only in the dual language classrooms. Everything coming out of the office should be in both languages. If this is a dual language school, all your programs, all your actions must cry out dual language. Signs, banners, titles, etc. everything should be in the two languages. The students should know this is a dual language school and everybody is going to learn two languages.

To portrait the image that was sought, a big message board welcoming everybody into a dual language school was deemed not only necessary, but also crucial for promoting the program in the community. “A big sign in both languages should have been posted so that everyone walking by the building would have immediately known that this was a special school. All intercommunication messages as well as those going outside the building and into the community should be in both languages.”

There was also a need for the classrooms to portrait the image of a dual language school. The kindergarten classroom and some of first grade classrooms did, but this was not evident in the rest of the school. There was an obvious separation between the dual language classrooms and the rest. It was almost as if two schools were operating in the building.

Classrooms in general were described as attractive, well laid out, and inviting. All the classrooms were set up to encourage cooperative learning styles with rugs that were used as tools for class meetings and to bring the classes together. They were very student centered, colorful and welcoming with a lot of current student work decorating the walls.
An added benefit to the improved appearance was a boost in the climate of the school. Teachers as well as students took pride in their work and all the things they had done to improve the school's appearance had served to raise teacher morale and student sense of pride in their work. This has all contributed to a climate that is warm, welcoming in an environment where "everything is bright, colorful, and beautiful. Everything is just perfect. The atmosphere is so calm, so inviting."

Summary

A lot of direction has taken place as far as the establishment of clear goals and high expectations. A lot of preparation about what children should know, what they should be learning, and how it should be taught has resulted in much higher expectations than they had ever had. This is evidenced by the high quality of the student work that is being produced. The school is more directed as far as educational goals and the expectations are higher for the achievement of all students.

When the program was introduced the preparation, staff development, and the shared sense of purpose really served as a boost to teacher morale; especially the morale of those teachers who felt that the students' language and culture was not always honored and validated.

The promise of a program that viewed the native language of the students as a resource that needed to cultivated and harvested was a novel experience at this school. Those teachers who had long witnessed the Spanish language being relegated to second-class status were thrilled to have this program. And thus were united by a common sense of purpose. It helped to change the way teachers viewed their concerns and the way they attacked their problems.
There did not appear to be a consensual understanding of the day-to-day operational goals. The lack of operational goals led to a lot of misunderstandings and confusion when the director left, which led to many regrettable mistakes that could have been prevented had they had in place a strategic plan that delineated the model, the staffing needs, and the specific objectives and benchmarks with which to assess their progress. In its absence, the implementation at the first grade level was done on a trial by error basis, which eroded teacher morale and spirit and therefore affected the entire school environment in a very negative way.

Nevertheless, the teachers in general are more focused and more savvy about the educational process. In that sense, the Dual Language Program has proven to have been a vehicle in helping to change the way teachers view their concerns and the expectations they have for their students. It has helped to promote positive relationships among teachers and among students.

Teachers in the program, especially the kindergarten teachers, have formed such a bond that they have served as an inspiration to the other teachers in the building. As a result other collegial and congenial relationships have sprouted among the new teachers specially.

Students in the program have learned to be more compassionate with one another because they were all confronted with the challenge of learning a new language. In addition, the students have become more tolerant of students who do not speak their language and thereby of children of different cultures.

The principal has been successful in promoting positive relationships among the staff. However, there seems to be a need to concentrate on building positive relationships
among students. There are disciplinary concerns that need to be addressed in the hallways, cafeteria, and the playground. The general school procedures are in need of attention and enforcement as well as the proper scheduling of special activities.

Although the school is old, dirty, and in state of disrepair, the environment is print rich with an abundance of student work, which is reflective of the kind of activities that are taking place in the classrooms. The displays of the children’s work are so prominent that they serve to distract people’s attention so that people rather than focusing on the dirty floors or the cracked windows, they focus on all the beautiful displays.

This improved appearance of the school is a boost to the climate. Teachers as well as students take pride in their work and all the things they have done to improve the appearance of the school has served to raise teacher morale and student sense of pride in their work. For the most part, the climate is orderly, purposeful, and many measures are taken to ensure that there is no threat of physical harm; a climate that is more conducive to teaching and learning prevails in the school.

*Organizational Climate*

The climate of a school is in many instances like the weather. It can easily shift in any direction depending on the conditions and the direction in which the whims of change are blowing. Although highly subjective, sometimes abstract and hard to describe, the climate of a school can serve as a barometer of the feelings and attitudes that reflect on how everyone feels about the school. This section examines the conditions that affect the climate of the school as well as the informants’ feelings and attitudes about the school and ultimately the climate of the school.
Conditions that Affect the Climate of the School

There are many conditions that affect the climate of a school in positive as well as negative ways. Some of these conditions are very visible and concrete while others are a little more ephemeral and abstract. But both are intrinsically connected in that they have an effect on the way people feel and work, which ultimately affects the kind and the quality of the work they do. Dissatisfaction with school conditions has been shown to have a negative effect on student achievement (Sackney, 1988).

In an effort to study the influence of the working conditions on the climate of the school, informants were asked to list and explain the conditions that most affected the climate of the school. Some of the most prevalent conditions are summarized here.

By far the number one issue was the lack of cleanliness in the building. Cleanliness, or lack there of, appeared to be an issue and a working condition that was having a tremendous effect on the climate of the school because it was not only eroding teacher morale but also, some informants feared, it was affecting the health of some asthmatic students, especially those with special allergies to mold, dust, and roaches.

In addition, this issue was consuming a lot of the administrators' time and energy as they were trying to work with the custodial staff and evaluate their performance. Informants explained with exasperation that the evaluative process was lengthy and time consuming and thus leaving very little recourse for the administrators to address this problem. Administrators had called Central Office and the Head Custodian's Office to no avail. "Things get better temporarily and undoubtedly they always get back to the same old thing," an informant added with a tint of cynicism.
There was a lot of disillusion, frustration, and even anger that had been incited by this issue. It was clearly dividing the staff whereby some faulted Central Office for not empowering the principal so that she could get rid of the custodians who were refusing to work. Others felt that there needed to be a concerted effort to help keep the building clean. One informant exclaimed in exasperation and anger:

"It's everybody's job. It appears that people are looking as somebody else's problem. It's everybody's building, everybody's home. Therefore, it's everybody's job. We're supposed to be here for the children. We should all work together. Every body should chip in and make it more of their own problem."

Her feelings were that if everybody as a community made a commitment to work together to keep the building clean, it would alleviate a lot of the discontent that was floating around and the conditions of the building would naturally improve.

The building itself, both its structure and maintenance were cited as having great influence on the climate of the school. Structurally, informants explained that the building was not only old and antiquated, but that it also had not been designed to support the kind of educational programs that were needed in this century. For example, the electrical wiring was outdated and therefore inadequate to support all the technological components that they wanted to implement.

The classrooms were either too big or too small with the majority falling in the latter category. Teachers in the larger rooms were often reluctant to change grades or move with their classes just because they did not want to move out of their big rooms. A certain amount of "status" was attributed to having large classrooms and thus they were hesitant to change even when the change could have been beneficial to both teachers and students.
As far as maintenance, the building was in such state of disrepair that it was practically falling apart. They have had problems with the roof for over ten years and as a result there were leaks in 9 classrooms and in the computer lab. This seemed to be taking a very heavy toll on the teachers affected by the leaks. One informant commented, “It affects teacher morale. Teachers get very discouraged. They create beautiful learning environments and they know when they hear rain at night, they know they are going to come here in the morning to drippy stains and things falling off the walls.” The worry and despair were obvious in this informant’s remarks.

Excessive heat was another concern. In the winter, the classrooms were too hot and stifling because the heating system was so old and antiquated that it was impossible to control and was simply not effective. In addition, there were so many broken windows that were permanently shut and therefore prevented any possibility of cross ventilation. This was bothersome in the latter months of the spring when the building was particularly hot.

As evidenced somewhere else in this study, the environment was a definite condition that many informants felt had a very positive influence on the climate. They felt that the environment that had been created was such that they were able to overcome all the other structural and maintenance problems. “It’s a wonderful place to work and educate children,” an informant exclaimed with a lot of exuberance. Her feelings were that the academic and social climates were so positive that all the other conditions were not as important. Another informant listed, “The environment coupled with good administrators, good teachers, and the best security guards” as the reasons for the positive attributes of the climate.
It was especially interesting to note how many informants named one of the
security guards as being the one who single handedly affected the climate of the school.
These informants' highly charged emotional comments exemplified how they felt about
this security guard.

When I open the door and he smiles and greets me in the morning, I forget all my little problems.

He is a true gentleman. The way he greets us everyday. As soon as I open the
door I see his welcoming smile. I know it's going to be a good day.

We all have problems, but as soon as I pass by him, he makes me forget them.

It's very comforting to see his warm, welcoming smile. The parents and the
students love him.

I love it. When I open the door and the security guard smiles and welcomes me in
the building; that makes my day. It really is a very welcoming building.

You know as soon as you open the door there's this wonderful greeting. And he
welcomes everyone very respectfully and joyfully. So I continue through the door . . . and even if there's something I don't like or if something bad has happened to me. I forget it for the moment.

He tells me is going to be a great day and I believe him.

It appears that this security guard with his charismatic personality and welcoming
demeanor has been able to set a very positive feeling tone for anyone visiting the
building. Since he is the first person people see as they open the door, his welcoming
smile greets everybody. "I hear from other people who come in to visit, they can pick up
a genuine niceness about the school that might not exist anywhere else." He has been
attributed as the main contributor for the very positive impression visitors get about this
building.

Another factor affecting the climate of the school was scheduling. This term was
used in very general terms like scheduling of special events, workshops and meetings,
and of substitute teachers. Of particular importance was the scheduling of workshops and meetings not only because it interrupted the normal flow and routine of the building but also had repercussions on the substitute teachers.

There were many concerns about the amount of instructional time being lost while they were attending workshops and meetings. An informant explained:

The children miss not only on the academics, but also in the routines and order of things... When I come back from a workshop, I find everything out of place. The students misbehave more because their routine has been upset and they don’t know what to expect anymore. It takes a couple of days to put them back on track. So while we’re doing this, they are losing time, valuable instructional time is being lost.

To add insult to injury, when they scheduled the substitute teachers, they often overlooked the fact that the dual language classrooms required bilingual substitutes. As a result, the students always missed the Spanish component when the teachers were absent or attending workshops. This was particularly bothersome to the dual language teachers who felt that the Spanish component of the program had already suffered because of the changes in the first grade.

In these instances, those gnawing thoughts about whether there was a true commitment for the program surfaced again and again. This served as fuel to re-ignite the feelings of uncertainty in those stakeholders who interpreted this as yet another opportunity not to promote and support the program and consequently, added negative undertones to the climate of the school.

There were specific concerns about the “status” of the Spanish component and thereby the Spanish language. The message that was being communicated was that Spanish was not that important and therefore expendable. In a program that purports to promote proficiency in both the majority and the minority languages and to use the
minority language as a resource, the obvious neglect in ensuring that both languages were given equal importance and therefore equal status was big point of contention that was eroding the morale of the dual language teachers.

Lack of services for students that have special needs was, unfortunately, an issue that was engendering a sense of hopelessness and helplessness because the process by which the students are identified as in need of special services is too long and cumbersome. As a result, many of these children were left in the regular classrooms where they disrupted the entire class. Their special needs were not being met in that type of setting and everyone was affected by this situation. Teachers, especially, expressed a lot of frustration in trying to deal with this issue because they felt unequipped to give the appropriate attention these children required.

Lack of services for parents who had medical, social, and psychological problems were very bewildering and unsettling for the informants. On one end of the spectrum, there was recognition that these problems were well beyond the scope of what any school had the capacity to offer. On the other end, the problems were so prevalent that if the schools did not take a stance in trying to help these parents, they were hindering their chances of really giving meaningful help to their students.

"Theft of service" appeared to be one of the most controversial and emotionally loaded issues that was having a significant amount of negative influence on the climate of the school. Theft of service, as of stealing the services of someone who has a job to do, but is being pulled to do another job. Therefore, taking away from the students the services that they are entitled to get. One informant put it this way:

I think that if we are going to have a literacy, computer, ESL, or any other component, but the teachers are pulled to do paper work, which I know is very
important, or they could not find anyone else, or they are testing for three weeks. . . this is so old . . . where someone was given a week and all of the sudden is a month. We are abusing certain things and again we’re getting away from the focus. You see, if you are hired to be a literacy teacher, then that’s what you should be doing. Everything else should be secondary. This is a big factor that is eroding the climate of the school.

Another one corroborated:

Some teachers take three months to assess the students and they haven’t serviced the students in three months . . . right now they are doing summer school registration . . . remember we were talking about excellence . . . we just don’t negotiate. And those are the things we’re dancing around . . . we’re not addressing the problem. We are not looking at these pieces, which are very important because they don’t only affect the children, they affect the teachers also. And it’s killing the spirit because you see it as unfairness. It’s counter productive anyway you cut it.

Part of the difficulty could be traced to the negative perception that classroom teachers had of other specialists (ESL and other pull out teachers). Their attitude affected their willingness to view specialists as professional who could assist them in the tasks of improving the services provided for the students. There was the underlying implication that if the specialists really cared about helping students, they would not cancel classes so readily to do what was viewed as clerical tasks.

In this school, as well as in other schools of the district, there was a prevailing attitude among classrooms teachers that ESL and other pull out teachers were not working up to full capacity and therefore had an easy job. Adding to this perception was the fact that classes were cancelled for weeks and in some instances months at a time.

They explained that classes at the beginning of the year did not normally start until the middle of November because the new students had to be assessed. However, deep feelings of resentment had been engendered by this practice because everyone knew
that it did not take over two months to assess new students but no one did anything about getting these teachers to do the job that they were hired to do.

Towards the end of the year, citywide testing started as early as March. Again, specialists’ classes were cancelled and services rendered to students were almost non-existent during these last months of the school year. This was unacceptable to the classroom teachers who questioned the integrity of the specialists and was thus eroding their personal relationships. In addition, their anger extended to the administrators and Central Office personnel who did not do anything to resolve this issue that was prevalent not only in this school but throughout the district.

However, the anger was directed more directly at the specialist teachers because once classes were cancelled for whatever reason, they took advantage of the situation and neglected their teaching duties for weeks and months at a time. This issue was causing a lot of animosity among teachers and was extremely toxic to the climate of the school.

As stated somewhere else in this study, lack of proper promotion for the program was very demoralizing for the dual language teachers and other stakeholders who truly believed in the program. The general feeling was that the program should be promoted more extensively within the school and in the community as well, all teachers should have been informed and trained in dual language education, and the program should be more evident not just in the dual language classrooms but throughout the whole school. Absence of attention to this matter has aroused negative feelings in the teachers who were beginning to doubt the authenticity of the administrators as far as their commitment to the program. Negative attitudes are rooting and causing climatic conditions to deteriorate.
Attitudes about the School

There are vast differences in the way humans take-in, process, and ultimately interpret their surroundings. Their interpretations, in turn, shape their feelings and attitudes. Individual feelings and attitudes are pieces that although appear to be personally inherent and thus independent, they are nonetheless intricately connected because they contribute vital pieces to the larger puzzle, hence affording a more complete picture.

In order to find out the informants’ perspectives about the school and in an effort to get a wider view of its landscape, informants were prompted to describe how they felt about their school.

This final part of the research was quite revealing and uplifting in the sense that not one single informant expressed either a dislike for the school or a desire to transfer to another school. Many informants’ first words were “I love this school”. Their exuberance, optimism, and expression as they described their school were such that a certain degree of disbelief was aroused. It then arose the need to investigate whether those feelings were real or maybe just superficial harmony.

The question came up as to whether determining what was really going on required a more sophisticated lens. A lens that would not only afford a wider view but also one that would reveal the minute details of the picture and allow the flexibility to see things from different angles.

Thus, informants were asked to describe in detail the school and what they liked the most and the least about their school. It was quite interesting to note that they described their school with smiles on their faces and a certain degree of pride. Responses,
could be categorized in three basic areas: (a) feelings about the school in general, (b) reasons the school is good for teachers, and (c) reasons the school is good for students.

*Feelings about the school in general.* The school was described as very closely knit with a family like environment where feelings of respect for teachers, students, and parents always prevailed. It was “a wonderful place to work” because generally people were very friendly and welcoming, which all contributed to the family-like atmosphere that was always present even when they were confronted by problems and challenges. “Like any family you take the good with the bad” but definitely most agreed that there was more good than bad.

Among the good things were a variety of feelings described by the informants such as:

- “a feeling of togetherness”
- “a feeling that you can depend on someone”
- “a feeling that someone will understand you if there is ever a need to talk to somebody”
- “a feeling that if you are not present, you would be missed”
- “a feeling of pride and warmth”
- “a family like feeling where people care and value each other”

And many other feelings that some found it hard to describe but nonetheless were real to them.

Consistent with the family theme another informant said, “It’s a school with a very warm atmosphere and a family feel to it. A place where people usually feel comfortable, welcomed, and at ease.” A family, another explained, where most of its
members cared and worked very hard to make it even better than it already was. And as in all families there were a couple members who were not on the same page as the rest. But in general, everyone was committed to the success of the school. One informant summarized these feelings by saying, “I love this school. It’s a good school. It has its ups and downs, but we all are a committed group of people.” Another one added, “I love it here. I don’t ever think I would like to teach anywhere else and that says a lot about this school.”

Another informant described the school in this manner:

The school is a large, old building with a big heart. An old building that houses new teaching methods with many positive programs. A school that encourages many projects and activities that cultivates the children’s as well as the teachers’ individuality and creativity, and most importantly a school that houses a dual language program. A program that not only fosters tolerance and love for other peoples’ languages and cultures, but also is working miracles on the students’ self-esteem.

An informant exclaimed, “a wonderful place to work and a good place to share your craft and your skills. I would encourage my own children to teach here. I really think very highly of this school.” Another one corroborated, “A school that’s changing for the better. A school that needs a lot of work and some services that go beyond the scope of the school.” Nevertheless, the school was perceived as a good place to teach and to learn.

*Reasons the school is good for teachers.* The informants’ attitudes toward their school are summarized herein. They felt that the school was a place where teachers never stopped learning. The administrators were like “cheerleaders” who were always cheering them onto new experiences and offered an environment where teachers were encouraged
to experiment without fear of failure because mistakes were viewed as learning opportunities.

Within the confines of the district's policies and mandates, teachers had the freedom to choose the strategies and methods they wanted to use. In the process, they were encouraged to cultivate their individual strengths and the strengths of their students.

Collegial relationships whereby teachers worked with each other and shared ideas and materials had already flourished with the kindergarten teachers thanks to the Dual Language Program and were already other very promising prospects in the other grade levels. In all, there were many positive things happening, a lot of professional development that would ultimately help to improve and support all teachers.

Reasons the school is good for students. The school was generally described as a great place for children because "people not only care about them but also treat them with respect and love." The staff cared about the students' difficulties and was always eager to support and validate their strengths. Students, in turn, one informant reported, "have a general happy tone. They are glad to be here. They feel welcomed and valued by the staff. They are not torn down and belittled. They like being here."

The school through the Dual Language Program was being afforded the capacity to instill in their students a sense of pride and increased self-esteem along with a deep awareness of each other. This confirms findings somewhere else in this study, that the students have already began to exhibit an increase level of self-esteem and a heightened sense of compassion through their shared experiences about learning a second language and being able to help one another.
Even though there was recognition of the fact that procedures about discipline in the hallways, cafeteria, and playground had to be addressed, the observation was that the school was doing a very good job of taking care of its students and that it provided a safe and orderly environment. One informant summarized this way:

The school is for the well being of the children. It’s very family, child-oriented school. Teachers are here to help our students. It’s a school that wants all the children to achieve and everybody is trying to do the best for the kids. It has a wonderful literacy program and it is soon to become a model school in the dual language area.

Thus, the Dual Language Program was cited as a very positive force that will not only teach their students to get along with each other, but also prepare them to compete in a world that was demanding more skills and the knowledge of at least two languages.

*The Climate of the School*

The climate of the school, as evidenced in the previous section, is influenced by many conditions. There are many factors that affect the workplace and therefore the work that teachers do and students produce (Rosenholtz, 1995). Therefore, schools must strive to create and maintain all those supportive conditions that help to sustain a climate that facilitates and encourages teachers and students to do their best work.

Many words described the climate of this school. Among them were: supportive, welcoming, collaborative, friendly, ambivalent, sunny, cloudy, giving, genuine, nurturing, communal, fragile, negative, positive, good, bad, foul, competitive, exciting, and energetic.

For the most part the climate was described as being good and positive. To support this view was the idea that the people who work in a place and their behavior usually determine the climate. Accordingly, people in this school were cooperative,
collaborative, friendly, and giving. Therefore, the climate naturally personified the qualities of the people inside the school.

Another major indicator of the positive climate of the school was the fact that as a result of the educational change process, the school has been successful in overcoming the isolation of teachers. This is important because professional isolation not only leads to limited access to new ideas and better solutions to problems but also drives stress inward where it tends to erode teacher spirit and morale to the detriment of both teachers and students.

As evidenced in another part of this study, through the resources provided by the Dual Language Program, the program served as a catalyst that put in motion a change in the belief system of the school thereby changing the culture of the school. The school had a closed-door policy and had a very individualistic culture whereby teachers stayed in their classrooms. An informant explained:

They stayed in their little circle of friends and were reluctant to associate with others except at a very superficial level. Because of the program, teachers were then more receptive to the idea of sharing materials as well as ideas.

The doors to the classrooms had literally been opened to welcome the new culture.

This type of open-door policy has encouraged the development of true collegial/congenial relationships where peers are viewed not only as friends but also as resources. This sense of community has been instrumental in helping them to deal with adverse conditions and has helped them to forge ahead even when the director left and were faced with the many difficulties and disappointments that are inherent in the dynamic process of school change.
Overcoming the isolation of teachers had brought with it an added benefit. The students were also displaying more collaboration and cooperation in their relationships. One informant explained:

I think when teachers are isolated the children don’t do well. The students are also isolated. They become somewhat unfriendly towards other groups . . . if teachers are happy and working together, the students are more likely to exhibit the same behaviors and attitudes that are modeled by their teachers. They are more likely to seek somebody else’s help when they need it.

Thus, because students had good models, they were able to learn by example. In addition, the principal in her efforts to promote positive relationships among teachers had allowed them to work eclectically with each other. This brought another reward. Students were given the opportunity to work and associate with students in other classrooms as well as with those in other grade levels. As a result, they had also developed a heightened sense of cooperation and healthy competition.

Another indicator of the climate of the school was the impression visitors had of the school. Visitors were always impressed by its climate. “They usually find the school to be very warm, friendly, welcoming, and very supportive.” They reported that a genuine niceness permeates throughout the building, which impresses them very much.

Although many descriptions of the climate were on the positive end of the spectrum, there were some that leaned toward the negative end. For instance, that year (2000-2001) had been particularly hard for all the stakeholders. As a result of the director’s resignation and Whole School Reform, they had been forced to implement the program on their own. They had endured many problems that evoked negative attitudes. However, feelings were mixed in the sense that many commendable and energizing things were happening. Nonetheless, the school always appeared to be in a state of
transition and as such it created a lot of ambivalence and uncertainty, which added negative undertones to the climate of the school.

There was recognition of the fact that some of the negative factors were beyond the scope of the school. For instance, Whole School Reform had been imposed on all the schools in the district by the State Department of Education. This placed a lot of strain and competition for scarce resources. The administrators’ attention had to be divided between the Dual Language Program, Whole School Reform and the pressures imposed by the Core Curriculum Content Standards along with high stakes mandated state assessments. Unfortunately, the latter took precedence over the program, which resulted in feelings of disillusion and despair because they had to confront with the idea that the program was not uppermost in the principal’s agenda.

There were some circumstances, at that point, when the climate had turned “bad” and even “foul”. In the process of change, early difficulties are almost guaranteed because complexity and surprises are natural outgrowths of change. The experiences the teachers had to endure that year had been indescribably difficult and hard on them not only because they did not have the support of a leader, but also because there were too many changes that went against the philosophy of the program.

The first year of the program, the school had enjoyed a very positive climate. These comments illustrate these feelings:

There was a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of hope, and a lot of contagious energy. All the wonderful collegial relationships, all the staff development, all the parental involvement had been a definite catalyst in energizing the climate. Everything was up beat. The climate soared. Every body knew that something special was going on.
The first grade teachers were also ready in the sense that they had the preparation, staff development, and the belief that they were embarking on a trip where they were going to be guided. The director had bolstered their enthusiasm and motivation. Unfortunately, they were shocked by the director's resignation. All of a sudden this group of teachers felt abandoned. They had no one to go to as the problems undoubtedly arose. They had no leader. Like and orchestra without a conductor, they continued to implement the program with a lot of dissonance.

The local administrators were overburdened and too busy administering the building. As stated earlier along with the Dual Language Program, there was a whole school reform model - Accelerated Schools, the Core Curriculum Content Standards and high stakes mandated state assessments demanding their attention and leadership. Consequently, they were not able to offer the kind of support and guidance that a program in its infancy required. As a result, arguments and disagreement ensued, which only added more fuel to an already roaring fire. Feelings of disillusion and discouragement reigned among them. They could not reach a consensus as far as the model most appropriate for them. With all these arguments the model was changed three times.

With all these changes the kindergarten teachers started loosing hope as well. This informant’s comments are indicative of the degree of emotion that these teachers felt. She said:

The climate had gone down to a sadness... a feeling of not being able to accomplish what we were all gun ho in the summer and at the end of last year. We were like orphaned children without a mom.
They felt that their baby was not being nurtured and cared for properly and therefore it was going to die.

Another informant indicated that the climate was very negative at that point. She said, “A feeling of disillusionment and bereavement, and loss permeated.” Teachers reported feeling abandoned while administrators were paralyzed. The first grade teachers were not yet cohesively organized and were therefore of little comfort to each other. They were confronted with the fact that they had to shoulder classroom burdens by themselves.

The kindergarten teachers who had formed a very cohesive group were able to rally in each other’s support and took the leadership role in continuing with the implementation of the program. However, because of their own uncertainty, they were unable to rally in support of their first grade peers.

Rosenholtz (1995) talked about the uncertainty teachers face as they go about their work. This uncertainty, which is commonplace, is usually multiplied as a result of a change process that not only requires alternative skills, procedures, and methods but also a complete restructuring. Under conditions of uncertainty, difficulties with anxiety and fear of the unknown are intrinsic to all change processes.

Fortunately, with the beginning of the New Year, in January, things began to settle. The climate started to rise up again as they slowly recuperated and adjusted to the loss of their director.

The climate appeared to be on the rise again and even began to soar with the announcement in May that a new director had been hired. As the study was concluding, the new director was holding meetings with all staff members. There were mandatory meetings during the day as well as voluntary meetings after school. One of these
meetings was scheduled until 6 p.m. Surprisingly, 95% of the instructional staff attended that meeting.

The fact that so many were in attendance at a voluntary meeting indicated that there was a renewed interest in the program. An informant summarized the state of the school at that moment:

I think that’s going to dispel some of the uncertainty. She is going to meet and give the same information to everybody. The climate is positive. It’s a school that’s in transition, a school with a lot of positive things. Things are more positive now because a new director was appointed and there is going to be a partnership towards improving the climate of the whole school.

It appeared that informants were filled with anticipation and hope. They hoped that their new director would be able to accomplish the goals of the program to its fullest extent. Their expectation filled them with a renewed sense of energy and meaning. Once again, the spark of hope had been lit and they were determined to make sure it kept on glowing.

Summary

Like the weather the climate of the school has shifted in different directions depending on the conditions and the situations in which the members of the school operate. There are many conditions that affect the climate of the school in both positive and negative ways. However, the negative physical conditions, such as the lack of cleanliness and maintenance, although bothersome to a great extent, were not as influential in keeping the climate down. Informants were able to accept the situation and rise above it to make the best of the environment for themselves and the students. The result was a beautiful school environment, which was a source of pride and served as an inspiration.
It seemed as though the negative conditions rested right underneath the surface and were always ready to resurface whenever a new condition was added to the picture. The whims of change, always in almost predictable ways affected the climatic conditions negatively. There were under currents and even a certain degree of apathy and indifference when it came to dealing with certain specific issues like discipline, lack of cleanliness, and lack of parental involvement, but overall, the members of this school appeared to sincerely “love” their school and they would not rather be anywhere else or teach in any other school.

Informants in this study appeared to be inspired rather than defeated by the multiple setbacks they had endured that year. They were hopeful, positive, and optimistic about the up coming year. They anxiously anticipated the arrival of their new director and were extremely optimistic that with her arrival things would definitely improve for the program. They were hopeful that their dream of having a dual language school would materialize in the near future. There was no question in their mind that the Dual Language Program served as an important catalyst in creating a positive climate that is conducive to learning for teachers and students.
CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

This study is about an inner city school in a large, urban district that is answering a call for change through a complete restructuring of the existing transitional bilingual education program to a maintenance, dual language program. Specifically, this study analyzed the program as an agent for school change and reorganization and its impact on the climate of the school. Thus, this account is not an evaluation of the Dual Language Program, but rather an assessment of the program’s impact on the organizational climate. Therefore, it focuses on selected topics that influenced this dimension of the school.

Findings from this research represent one school’s experiences during the first three years of program planning and implementation. This chapter is comprised of a summary of the investigation, the conclusions that were derived from the analyzed data, and the implications and recommendations that were drawn from the findings.

Summary

In education, particularly bilingual education, the choice of educational programs has been heavily influenced not only by research about programs that are effective but also by politics, economics, and often times by what the wisdom of the day dictates. When educators discuss the appropriateness of different educational programs to teach language minority students, the pendulum swings back and forth between programs that primarily emphasize the acquisition of English as soon as possible and are thus transitional in nature, to maintenance programs that integrate both English and another
language with the goal of full bilingualism for both language majority and language minority students.

The intent of this study was to analyze, interpret, understand, and describe the experiences and perspectives of different stakeholders regarding the implementation of the Dual Language Program and its impact on the climate of the school.

An overview of the study was presented in Chapter I to enable the reader to gain a clear understanding of the purpose and significance of the study. A description of the school, school enrollment figures, demographics, and organizational structure were also given to afford background information related to the school and the program. The listing of the limitations of the study along with the definition of terms and organization of the study were presented to avoid ambiguity.

Chapter II presented a comprehensive review of the literature in the fields of dual language programs and school climate.

Chapter III described the research design, participant selection, data collection procedures, and data analysis. Because of the descriptive nature of the study, qualitative research methods were utilized to collect the data. The primary sources of the data were the formal, semi-structured, ethnographic interviews that were tape-recorded and later transcribed verbatim, analyzed and interpreted. Nineteen informants were interviewed: nine teachers, four support staff, two teacher aides, two administrators, and two parent representatives.

As the data gathered major themes began to emerge that described the most important patterns and elements of the topics that were being studied. A cross-case
analysis of the data exposed the commonalities and differences in the experiences of the informants.

Chapter IV presented the final collection of the data. The transcribed interviews were segregated around broad themes that directly related to the climate of the school. The conclusions, implications, and recommendations were based on these results.

Conclusions

There were several reasons why the relationship between the climate of the school and the dual language program were selected for review and analysis.

With the institution of a program that has as its goals not only language and academic dimensions but also affective dimensions, it was only natural to study those aspects that contributed to both domains. Studies have identified dual language programs as one of the most effective type of bilingual programs for developing proficiency in English and in the target language (Christian, 1994). In addition, in a program that purports to provide a sound basis for academic excellence for language minority and language majority students, there is evidence that suggests the potential instructional importance of teaching all students in a dual language setting.

Although many other factors contribute to the climate of the school, The study was concentrated on those that were of particular importance to this study such as: the change and implementation processes, the leadership of the administrators, the culture of the school, the role of the parents, the environment of the school and the organizational climate. Thus, the following conclusions were drawn from the analyzed data.
The Change Process

Nothing occurs in a vacuum and organizational change is not different. Internalizing new educational enterprises is a dynamic process that occurs in the context of many variables that concurrently come into play (Hargreaves et al., 2001).

Change in general can be unsettling and produce feelings of anxiety, fear, and uncertainty. Thus, the proper implementation of any program calls for a period of planning and preparation that serve not only to ready all stakeholders but also to assuage some of these feelings.

The informants recalled a certain feeling of excitement when the school was awarded grant money to institute a dual language program. Some of them were naturally apprehensive and curious at the same time. Planning activities started one year before the program started implementation at the kindergarten level.

There was a program director that headed an Advisory Committee in charge of strategic planning and parental involvement. The committee was very influential in informing and involving various stakeholders, who took an active role in all decision-making activities. This contributed to a heightened sense of parental support for the program, which helped to boost the energy and climate of the school.

The development of collaborative relationships among the stakeholders was a very positive outgrowth of the program implementation activities. Unfortunately, the director left as the program was going to start implementation at the first grade level. Her departure caused a major setback to the preparation of the first grade teachers and to the parental component. As a result, only the kindergarten teachers and their families were properly prepared.
The first grade teachers were totally unprepared for their students' initial lag in achievement level. Proper exposure to the research on this issue might have helped to ease the concerns these teachers had. Cloud et al. (2000) stressed the point that bilingually schooled children at times, even under the best conditions, may initially lag behind their monolingually schooled counterparts in some literacy based skills. However, after three or four years they begin to catch up, by six or seven years, they equal and commonly surpass their monilingual counterparts.

Even though the lack of the director's leadership weakened the partnerships that had been established the year before, some of the bonds that were created were strong enough to survive after her departure. These relationships have inspired a sense of collective optimism and have energized them to continue forging on even in the absence of a director. Working together has raised morale and teachers' sense of efficacy, which has contributed to a healthier school climate.

*The Implementation Process*

In studying the implementation process, the differences between the two grade levels where the program was being implemented became very evident.

The kindergarten teachers that were selected were bilingual and had asked to be part of the program because they truly believed that the Dual Language Program was the best choice for the school. They showed their commitment by their active engagement and participation in virtually all the preparation activities and opportunities that were offered. Consequently, the model that was selected was successfully implemented to its fullest extent. There were no changes or revisions and instruction in Spanish was consistent as prescribed by the model. They also enjoyed the guidance of a very
supportive director who encouraged and empowered them in every step of the way resulting in a sense of security and accomplishment that contributed to a very energized environment and positive school climate.

In contrast, the first grade teachers opted to teach in the program for the wrong reasons. They did not have a true buy-in and commitment to the program. As a result, they only participated in the activities that were mandated to attend and were thus ill equipped to teach students in a dual language setting. In addition, only three of these teachers were bilingual. Therefore, accommodations to the model were necessary. This precipitated many of the changes that ultimately undermined their efforts and feelings of efficacy. Unfortunately, in the midst of all the changes and in the absence of a director, instruction in Spanish was not consistent as prescribed by the model. The assumption then is that the critical attributes of the program had neither been thoroughly understood nor internalized by this group of teachers.

The biggest hurdle the first grade teachers encountered was having to implement the program without the support or leadership of a director. Hargreaves et al. (2001) stated that successful attempts at whole school change are influenced by lack of continuity in school leadership. In this case, the leadership of the program’s director was one of the most positive and crucial forces that propelled the program. Her absence created a tremendous void that caused serious damage to the first grade program. The director did not only guide and led the kindergarten teachers, but she also bolstered their self-esteem and confidence. She made them feel that everything was possible. When she was not there for the first grade teachers “they literally fell apart.” Consequently, these
changes did not only create confusion, but also bred an air of disillusion in those who really believed in the program and felt that, at that level, the program was falling apart.

The transfer of so many teachers also affected the climate of the school. Some of the teachers who transferred did not leave on good accord. Some of them made their negative feelings against Hispanics evident for the first time, which in turn, evoked many feelings of anger and betrayal and set in motion a grieving and healing process that resulted in a stronger sense of commitment to the success of the program.

It appears that when the proper support services and preparation were provided, the by-products were an increased sense of commitment and buy-in. On the other hand, when the program supports were not present, teachers were ready to abandon strategic decision in favor of immediate accommodation to present interests. Administrators not wanting to further alienate the first grade teachers went along with the changes in program model. Changes were made to the detriment of the program and staff morale, which had negative repercussions on the climate of the school.

*The Culture of the School*

The literature on the change process states that change efforts could not be successful unless one takes a close look at the driving forces and the culture that sustain all school efforts. One of the most important tasks is developing and communicating a vision based on shared purposes and values. (Senge, 1990; Deal & Peterson, 1999). Thus, the vision and commitment to student achievement provide the cultural support needed.

Although a mission statement has not been drafted, all informants shared the ideology and vision of the program and their commitment to the achievement of the
students. However, teachers’ energies and sense of commitment is not always directed and channeled toward their vision of becoming a truly bilingual school.

Among the factors that stand in the way of realizing their vision are feelings of instability due to a lack of strategic planning, teacher attrition, and other initiatives that the district has imposed on the school and have nothing to do with dual language. The myriad of initiatives serves to confuse and distract the work of the teachers and administrators. As a result, the school does not appear to have a consensual understanding of the school’s purpose and how they should function on a day-to-day basis.

The Dual Language Program has acted as a very strong catalyst in changing the culture of the school. The program has caused people to reexamine their beliefs and has definitely put in motion a change in the belief system of the school. The program has helped raise people’s level of commitment and “professional consciousness” along with their excitement and enthusiasm for teaching. In this process, the culture has undergone a tremendous metamorphosis.

The school has shifted from a very individualistic, isolated, closed-door policy to a more collaborative, collegial, open door learning community. For too long teacher isolation had kept teachers inside their closed classrooms doors. Isolation had become a defense mechanism that served to protect them from the scrutiny and perhaps criticism of others. Opening classroom doors has literally broken down these barriers.

Those collaborative relationships, especially among the teachers, have helped to foster a very positive learning climate for both the teachers and the students. Teachers are more receptive to getting, giving, and sharing ideas. They are more willing to allow
others to visit their classrooms. They are more open to constructive feedback from other teachers and are generally more willing to listen to comments about their teaching and alternative instructional practices.

With the transfer of so many teachers, an unexpected benefit that no one could have foreseen occurred. The entire chemistry of the school was altered. The new teachers brought with them a sense of adventure and risk taking. They not only had the energy but also the pedagogy. They have helped to form learning communities where exploration, experimentation, and risk-taking are prevalent.

It appears as though the program has caused many people to confront, examine, and reconcile their feelings about educational change and about their own prejudices and assumptions. There has also been a tremendous shift in people’s attitudes towards Hispanics and thereby the Spanish language. Teachers are more receptive to giving and sharing ideas as well as accepting the notion that Spanish is not a second-class language. This has all contributed to a more positive climate and has opened the doors to an environment that is more conducive to learning for both teachers and students.

Administrative Leadership

Administrative leadership has been perceived as perhaps one of the most influential factors in school and programmatic effectiveness as well as educational reform. The effectiveness of bilingual programs has been perceived as being very sensitive to the principal’s leadership. Carter & Chatfield (1988) indicated that administrative leadership is the most influential school factor in the academic achievement of bilingual students.
The administrators of this school share many qualities that have heralded many significant changes. They are firm believers that the professional growth and development of their staff is one of the main vehicles to promote and sustain meaningful and systemic change. Accordingly, they have invested generous amounts of time, energy, and money not only in providing staff development activities but also in facilitating and increasing the opportunities for staff to learn from one another thereby creating strong collegial and collaborative relationships. Teachers have been afforded ample opportunities to plan and work together.

Although there have been many strides with respect to the development of collegial relationships in as much as teachers are more willing to engage in dialogue about student work and teaching and learning, share ideas, materials, and strategies, the synergy that exists between the kindergarten teachers has not been replicated in the other grade levels. The kindergarten teachers have truly developed very strong bonds with each other as they were implementing the program. The motivation and synergy that characterizes their relationship has been an unmatched benefit of the program.

The administrators’ leadership style is such that allows change and innovation to flourish. Within the parameters set by the district, they have empowered teachers to do their job with a lot of discretionary autonomy. They have succeeded in affecting teachers’ daily routine by affording them with the choice and the freedom to explore, experiment, and venture into new arenas that has allowed them to grow professionally and has bolstered their morale.

As a result of the Dual Language Program the administrators were provided with a tool not only to help them restructure the school, but also for providing the much-
needed professional development. The increased efforts have resulted in a change in the culture of the school that has significantly contributed to a climate that is more conducive to learning for both students and teachers.

Ironically, even though the administrators profess their support for the Dual Language Program, they have not been able to put the level of commitment that an infant program requires. After the director left, the expectation, naturally, was that the local administrators should have continued to lead in the simultaneous implementation of the program and improvement of the school. Unfortunately, in a school that normally had four administrators and with only two at the time of the study, they were overwhelmed by the myriad of problems stemming from the new program, whole school reform, the pressures imposed by state standards that brought along mandated high stakes assessments, and the day-to-day running of the school.

Their time was consumed by these various responsibilities and in the overall management of the building. The perception was that the administrators’ job was too encompassing and that perhaps fewer non-educational responsibilities might have increased their capacity to help teachers who in the absence of a director were struggling to implement a new program.

As a result, the teachers felt a sense of abandonment and resentment and there was a question in their minds as to whether the administrators had truly accepted the responsibility to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of the program and thereby the realization of the vision of the school.

It seems that they were not really “walking the talk” because they had allowed management issues to take precedence over leadership and developmental issues and by
doing so they were not living up to the expectations of their staff. In that sense, they were sacrificing the credibility and the trust of their staff, which added some negative undertones and contributed to a dip in the climate of the school that took a few months to recover.

*Parental Involvement*

Parents have not been actively engaged nor properly informed about the crucial educational issues that are affecting the education that is being provided to the students. In a school that has been undergoing through some major changes even before the Dual Language Program was introduced, the lack of parental involvement was neither a recent phenomenon nor the result of an absentee director. In fact, the school has suffered a marked decrease in parental involvement in the last four or five years since the present administrators have been in the building.

In a school that had traditionally attracted large number of parents when the principal was Hispanic, it was only natural to attribute the decline of parental involvement as lack of support for the non-Hispanic principal. The parents were used to the previous principal who was Hispanic, spoke their language, lived in the neighborhood, and was able to communicate with them at their level and, therefore, was considered one of them. The new principal was “American” and did not speak Spanish and with a school population of almost 90% Hispanic, many parents considered her an outsider and not as someone from their own culture and so there was a communication gap embedded in their respective cultures, which has contributed to their lack of involvement.
It appears as though the school never really had meaningful parental involvement. There were many parents who did come and appeared to be actively engaged in the school’s efforts to educate the students, but they did not always come to be involved in their children’s education or to support the administrators. They came primarily to socialize and because they were offered rewards in the form of prizes and envelopes that contained money and were raffled off at the end of all meetings. As soon as these motivators were absent, their involvement decreased substantially.

At the moment, those parents who do come only come in situations when they have specific concerns that need to be addressed. Under these circumstances, of course, they usually focus on the negative and are always ready to blame the school for their children’s problems and lack of parenting rather than take responsibility for their lack of involvement. They appear impatient, want their problems taken care of immediately, and display negative attitudes, which in turn, are interpreted as lack of support for the administrators.

The lack of effective and meaningful communication between the school and the parents has been another issue that the school has been battling for many years. Even though the previous principal was very personable and appeared to have been successful in his attempts to involve and communicate with the parents, their involvement and communication efforts remained at the superficial level. Parents were not really involved when decisions were made about the educational opportunities and the educational programs offered to their children.

Unfortunately, efforts to keep lines of communication with the parents open are still concentrated on the school activities and special programs. Parents are usually
informed about up-coming events such as special meetings, assembly programs, and general school activities. However, there is a marked disregard for informing them about the vision and mission of the school, instructional practices, school procedures, curricular issues, program models, realistic expectations, standards, assessments, and test results.

Parents are neither consulted nor properly informed about their children’s educational program. There have been many issues that have arisen that parents should have been made aware of and were not. For instance, no one told them that the model of the program had been changed three times that year and that the Spanish component was affected by all these changes.

It is therefore safe to assume that the school is contributing to the lack of parental involvement by not raising parents’ level of consciousness to a level that would enable them to raise questions and voice concerns about what is taking place, thereby contributing to their ignorance and lack of understanding.

Nonetheless, parental involvement during the first year of implementation proved that the introduction of the Dual Language Program served as an energizing catalyst that filled the air with a renewed sense of interest and energy. Parents were lured by the newness of the program and the numerous initiatives to involve them. They started visiting classrooms, partaking in the various programs, and becoming truly involved in educational issues. Unfortunately, their renewed interest was short lived due to a lack of leadership. Without a leader to direct the program, efforts to involve them fell on the local administrators, essentially the principal who has not been successful in her efforts to garner their support and participation.
Parents once again retracted their involvement and participation, which has been interpreted as lack of support for the school and the administrators. The perceived lack of parental support and their negative attitudes toward the administrators have affected the climate of the school. Teacher morale has decreased because they don’t feel supported by the administrators when they have issues with the parents. Teachers want the administrators to take a stronger stance with the parents and hold them accountable for their lack of involvement.

*The School Environment*

The Dual Language Program has been a critical force that has provided the staff with unity of purpose and a common goal. When the program was introduced the preparation, staff development, and the shared sense of purpose really served as a boost to teacher morale, especially the morale of those teachers who felt that the students’ language and culture were not always honored and validated.

The promise of a program that viewed the native language of the students as a resource that needed to be cultivated and harvested was a novel experience at this school. Those teachers who had long witnessed the Spanish language being relegated to second-class status were thrilled to have this program. And thus were united by a common sense of purpose, which helped to change not only the way teachers viewed their concerns but also the way they attacked their problems.

Although all the informants were able to verbalize that the ultimate goal of the Dual Language Program was to offer all students at this school an equal opportunity to became bilingual, bicultural, and bilateral, there did not appear to be a consensual understanding of the day-to-day operational goals. The lack of operational goals led to a
lot of misunderstandings and confusion when the director left, which led to many regrettable mistakes that could have been prevented had they had in place a strategic plan that delineated the model, the staffing needs, and the specific objectives and benchmarks with which to assess their progress. In its absence, the implementation at the first grade level was done on a trial by error basis, which eroded teacher morale and spirit and therefore affected the entire school environment in a very negative way.

Nevertheless, whereas before the school was described as "a happy school with low expectations," a lot of direction has taken place as far as the establishment of clear goals and high expectations. A lot of preparation about what children should know, what they should be learning, and how it should be taught has resulted in a school that is more directed as far as educational goals and in much higher expectations for the achievement of all students.

The teachers in general are more focused and savvier about the educational process. In that sense, the Dual Language Program has proven to have been a vehicle in helping to change the way teachers view their concerns and the expectations they have for their students. It has helped to promote positive relationships among teachers and among students.

Teachers in the program, especially the kindergarten teachers, have formed such a bond that they have served as an inspiration to the other teachers in the building. As a result other collegial and congenial relationships have sprouted among the new teachers specially.

Students in the program have learned to be more compassionate with one another because they were all confronted with the challenge of learning a new language. In
addition, the students have become more tolerant of students who do not speak their language and thereby of children of different cultures.

The principal has been successful in promoting positive relationships among the staff. However, there seems to be a need to concentrate on building positive relationships among students. This is perhaps one the biggest challenges that the school has to work on collectively since it impinges on student discipline and student discipline appeared to be high on everyone’s list of concerns.

Teachers for the most part are very good at keeping student discipline under control in their classrooms. Nevertheless, there are disciplinary concerns that need to be addressed in the hallways, cafeteria, and the playground. The general school procedures are in need of attention and enforcement as well as the proper scheduling of special activities. Because special activities are sometimes not scheduled with proper notice they disrupt the normal routine and order of the school. Lack of appropriate routines has led to many misunderstandings on the part of the adults and a lot of misbehavior on the part of the students.

Although the school is old, dirty, and in state of disrepair, the environment is print rich with an abundance of student work, which is reflective of the kind of activities that are taking place in the classrooms. “The displays of the children’s work are so prominent that they serve to distract people’s attention so that people rather than focusing on the dirty floors or the cracked windows, they focus on all the beautiful displays.”

This improved appearance of the school is a boost to the climate. Teachers as well as students take pride in their work. All the things they have done to improve the appearance of the school have served to raise teacher morale and student sense of pride in
their work. For the most part, the climate is orderly, purposeful, and many measures are taken to ensure no threat of physical harm. These measures have helped to perpetuate a climate that is more conducive to teaching and learning.

*Organizational Climate*

There are many conditions that affect the workplace and thereby the work that teachers do. Therefore, schools have to strive for creating and maintaining supportive conditions to facilitate their work (Hargreaves et al., 2001). The concept of school climate is embedded in ambiguity and therefore it should not be thought of as a steady, unwavering force or a finished accomplishment, but rather as a dynamic process that is sensitive to many variables, which serve to affect it in positive as well as negative ways. While some of these conditions are visible and concrete, others are a little more ephemeral and abstract. However, both are intrinsically connected because they affect the way people work and feel as well as the kind and the quality of the work they do.

The climate of this school has undergone through some major changes. Like the weather it has shifted in opposite directions reflecting the many positive initiatives as well as the many challenges that they have endured as part of school change and educational reform.

Dissatisfaction with the lack of cleanliness and maintenance of the building was by far one of the major issues that worried the informants. They were concerned for their health and the health of their students. This was taking a toll on the morale of the informants, especially the teachers who felt that they were creating beautiful learning environments that were being destroyed by leaky roofs and chipping paint. However, these negative physical conditions, although bothersome to a great extent, were not as
influential in keeping the climate down. Informants were able to accept the situation and rise above it to make a better environment for themselves and the students. The result was a learning environment that was a source of pride and served as an inspiration.

The whims of change, in almost predictable ways, affected the climatic conditions negatively. The school always appeared to be in a state of transition and as such it created a lot of ambivalence and uncertainty. There were negative undercurrents and a certain degree of apathy and indifference when it came to dealing with certain issues like discipline and parental involvement. It seemed as though these negative conditions rested right underneath the surface and were always ready to resurface whenever a new condition was added to the picture. Nevertheless overall, informants in this study emphatically expressed their love for their school and their desire not to teach anywhere else but at this school. The school environment, good administrators and better teachers were given as the main reasons why the school offered an environment with a climate that was better for students and teachers.

In a continuum from negative to positive, the school climate was slowly veering to the positive end. Through the resources provided the Dual Language Program the administrators were afforded with a vehicle to provide the much needed services and professional development. In that sense, the program served as a catalyst that put in motion a change in the belief system of the school. The school shifted from an individualistic, closed-door policy to a more collaborative, collegial, open-door community. This sense of community has been instrumental in helping informants deal with adverse conditions and has helped them to forge ahead even when the director left and were faced with many difficulties and disappointments.
As a result of all the challenges posed by the change process, informants endured many problems and setbacks that evoked negative attitudes. However, feelings were mixed in the sense that there was widespread recognition of the fact that many commendable and energizing things were happening. “People’s level of commitment has been raised along with their excitement and enthusiasm for teaching.” The school is guided by a vision or philosophy that is centered on student learning and that is being enacted through structural changes that allow teachers to meet in order to plan and discuss curriculum and instruction. Teachers have access to new ideas and alternative instructional practices through on-going staff development.

There has been a lot of preparation about what children should know, what they should be learning, and how it should be taught, which has resulted in a school that is more directed as far as educational goals and expectations. Expectations are higher for the achievement of all students and teachers in general are more focused and more savvy about the educational process. Teachers are more open to constructive feedback and more willing to consider alternative instructional practices.

The program has also been a boost to teacher morale, especially the morale of those teachers who felt that the students’ language and culture were not always honored and validated. The promise of a program that viewed the native language of the students as a resource that needed to be cultivated and used was a novel experience at this school. Those teachers who had long witnessed the Spanish language being relegated to second-class status were thrilled to have this program.

In addition, students in the program have learned to be more compassionate with one another because they are all confronted with the challenge of learning a new
language. They are more willing to help each other and have thus become more tolerant of students who do not speak their language and thereby of children of different cultures.

Even though the climatic pendulum of the school has swung by some increments towards the positive end and by some positive modicum in the total picture of what a positive school climate requires, there are other factors like building maintenance, student discipline and parental involvement that need to be addressed before anyone can proclaim a positive school climate.

Informants in this study appeared to be inspired rather than defeated by the multiple setbacks they had endured that year. They were encouraged by the appointment of a new director. They anxiously anticipated her arrival and were extremely optimistic that with her arrival things would definitely improve for the program. The spark of hope had once again been lit and they were hopeful that their dream of having a dual language school would materialize. There was no question in their mind that the Dual Language Program served as an important catalyst in creating a more positive climate and in opening doors to an environment that is more conducive to learning for both teachers and students.

*Implications and Recommendations*

Implications and recommendations were developed from the results generated through the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered for the study and the review of the literature. They were developed along the main purpose of the study, which was to examine the impact the institution of a new program had on the climate of the school.

The climate of the school is significant in as much as it influences teacher practice, student learning, and the social organization of the school. According to
Rosenholtz (1995), we are just beginning to understand how the social organization of a school impinges upon teacher productivity and thereby student achievement. The implication is that if we can accurately identify the factors that influence the climate in a positive way, then perhaps we can also suggest ways to improve such climate and create more effective schools.

The central lesson to be drawn from this study is that the climate of a school is not a steady force that can be counted on but rather a fluid stream that changes and vacillates. And whatever impact a program has on the climate of the school impinges upon everything and it is significantly affected by many variables.

Educational change is a very complex process for which there are no simple formulas and there are no guarantees. The results of the study indicate that it is much easier to offer a program and sell it as a panacea, a cure all, than to concentrate all the efforts in what is required to make the program succeed. Thus, there is a need for understanding the key concepts in the dynamic process of change along with a commitment for action.

Given the complexities between and within schools, it is not easy to come up with policy prescriptions. Nevertheless, there are some important implications for school districts and local schools.

First, the school and district administrators, staff and parents have to take the time to seriously analyze the compelling issues that are at play and that are affecting the climate of reform. Once unveiled, these core issues need to be addressed in order for their reform attempts to bear the desired results. The reorganization needs to be formal and
comprehensive. If it isn’t the school will remain vulnerable to changes in leadership and staff as when they lost their director.

Second, policy makers are obligated to set policies establish standards, and monitor performance. However, they need to understand the conditions that drive schools to more or less efficient ends. Policies should specify broad parameters so that local adaptations and variations are possible. For instance, as in the case of Whole School Reform, the parameters should have been broad enough to make it possible for the Dual Language Program to be the reform model. Unfortunately, the school was forced to layer another model – Accelerated Schools – onto Dual Language. The confusion, anger, frustration ensued affected the proper implementation of both programs.

Third, “Nothing is more important and more elusive than the role of leadership in educational reform” (Fullan, 1997 p. 85). Given the numerous and diverse responsibilities of school administrators, they are usually forced to be involved in the simultaneous implementation of too many initiatives and mandates. Trying to implement a variety of mandated initiatives incapacitates principals regardless of their skill level (Evans, 1997). Thus, policy makers need to put into perspective the importance of these mandates and initiatives, particularly those that do not directly affect student learning and achievement before they are imposed upon school administrators.

Fourth, as Fullan (1997) so aptly stated, “The main problem in public education is not resistance to change but the presence of too many innovations mandated or adopted uncritically or superficially on an ad hoc fragmented basis” (p. 37). The district has to consider all the programs and initiatives that are imposed on the schools. All the programs that are brought in are very good. However, they are not always well planned
out and allowed the proper time to take hold and ripen. Consequently, administrators and teachers are not allowed the proper preparation and time to absorb and reroute.

In addition, at the school level there are some issues that necessitate further exploration and clarification as they could be contributing factors to the success or failure of the educational change intended. While these recommendations are about a specific program, educators may still be able to learn and generalize as well as get some insight into the potential benefits and drawbacks that originate from struggling through the different stages of the implementation of a new program and the dynamic complexities of school change and educational reform.

As the school struggled with the process of change, it became clear that the reform effort needed to be undertaken as a formal reorganization of the entire school. It could and should not be perceived as a project or an informal arrangement. The reform effort should embrace and integrate everything they do. Instead there were disparate areas of concentration at different grade levels.

Literature on the change process states that one of the leader's most important tasks is developing and communicating a vision based on shared beliefs and values (Senge, 1990; Deal & Peterson, 1994). Informants in this study had a common vision. However, they did not seem to utilize shared purposes and values to eliminate discrepancies between what is and what ought to be. There appears to be two separate schools: the regular school and the dual language school. If there is going to be unity of purpose, everyone needs to be on the same page and marching to the beat of the same drum. Administrators' actions and decisions need to be in concert with the school's
vision. There needs to be system for coordinating the different initiatives and mandates so that there is congruency between purpose and action.

Preparation and training of all school personnel are necessary. The entire teaching staff should be informed and involved. The program should not be seen as a separate and isolated part of the school. The program should be conceptually as well as physically evident throughout the school.

The placement of the staff should be one of the major considerations in a program that purports to develop bilingualism. Teachers should be truly bilingual and make a commitment to teach in the language that they are mandated to teach. Constantly switching to English is not only detrimental to the children’s ability to acquire the other language but it also has repercussions on the status that is attributed to each language. They need to establish teacher employment guidelines to ensure personnel that are well trained and able to teach in both languages.

The micro level realities of class level implementation and curricular issues have not been given the adequate attention. In the absence of a properly drafted and complete strategic plan, many misguided efforts stood in the way of teachers who were trying to implement the program not only without the support of a director but also without a curriculum. A well-drafted strategic plan with long term as well as short-term goals, curricular specifications, objectives, benchmarks, staffing needs, assessment and evaluation procedures should be in place before the program continues implementation in other grade levels. Such plan may have prevented some of the mistakes and struggles the first grade teachers found.
Teachers and other school personnel need to move beyond their own communities of fellow colleagues. The change efforts have to move outside of the school wall to include the larger community. Although all the literature on Effective Schools consider parental involvement as one of the major factors for the success of any enterprise the school embarks on, there is a need to truly examine the nature of the involvement and the role of the school system as far as helping parents deal with their personal issues and problems. Should schools be agencies that help parents with their drug, medical, and psychological problems? And if they are, who is responsible and qualified to provide these services?

The disciplinary issues have to be confronted with a behavioral program that underlines specific procedures that are consistently enforced by everyone in the building at all times. There needs to be some research about which type of program is best for urban children.

Although there have been tremendous strides in changing the culture of the school that has contributed to an environment that supports a climate that is more conducive to teaching and learning, these gains will not be sustained unless all stakeholders are genuinely involved in the reform process and in the maintenance of the new culture and climate of the school (Deal & Peterson, 1999).

Those within and outside the school need to work together to bring to fruition the goals, the objectives, and the vision of creating a school that is bilingual, bicultural, and bilateral. The concept of the Dual Language Program is unquestionably valuable. However, under current school structures and management practices very marginal results are possible because a unified approach and coherent model were not being delivered to the extent that was originally conceived by the program planners. Above all,
there needs to be unquestionable support for the program through every action and every decision.

_Directions for Further Research_

Further exploration and clarification of the factors contributing to successful educational change is needed.

An additional study should be conducted to validate the conclusions that were based on this study as too much cannot be claimed from a case study of one school. Thus, caution must be used in generalizing the findings to other schools that are attempting to implement new programs.

It is recommended that a longitudinal study that measures and compares student achievement over a long period of time is necessary to validate the existing research that implementing these programs will improve student academic success.

Research is needed to study which processes and conditions make this approach especially effective.
References


Hensen & Childs (1998), Creating a school where people like to be. *Educational Leadership, 56*(1), 14-17.


Appendix A

District Superintendent Consent Letter

Dear Superintendent,

I would like to request your assistance and permission in conducting my doctoral dissertation research at one of the schools in the district. I am a student at Seton Hall University in the College of Education and Human Services and this study will be part of my dissertation.

I intend to study the impact of the Dual Language Program on the school’s climate. I would like to investigate the perceptions and attitudes from the point of view of the administrators, teachers, parents, and other staff members. The research seeks to determine if the Dual Language Program has been an agent for changing the climate of the school. The data gathered will help to support recommendations for the establishment of additional dual language programs.

The type of research conducted will be primarily qualitative requiring personal interviews with a sampling of administrators, teachers, parents, and staff. All data that is obtained in connection with this study is strictly confidential. The open-ended interviews will be recorded anonymously. Participation will be completely voluntary and participants may wish to discontinue anytime without any penalty or consequences. Interviews will be held after school hours in the school premises.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review of Human Subjects research. The RIB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subjects’ privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number is (973) 275-2974.

Please consider my request to conduct this research. Thank you in advance for your support and anticipated approval.

Sincerely,

__________________________
Nancy Nevarez-Lutzke

Approval granted,

__________________________
District Superintendent

Date

Kindly, mail the signed consent form in the attached self-addressed envelope. A copy of the signed consent form will be mailed to you.
Appendix B

School Principal Consent Letter

Dear Principal,

I would like to request your assistance and permission in conducting my doctoral dissertation research at your school. I am a student at Seton Hall University in the College of Education and Human Services and this study will be part of my dissertation.

I intend to study the impact of the Dual Language Program on the climate of the school. I would like to investigate the perceptions and attitudes from the point of view of the administrators, teachers, parents, and other staff members. The research seeks to determine if the Dual Language Program has been an agent for changing the climate of the school. The data gathered will help to support recommendations for the establishment of additional dual language programs.

The type of research conducted will be primarily qualitative requiring personal interviews with a sampling of administrators, teachers, parents, and staff. All data that is obtained in connection with this study is strictly confidential. The open-ended interviews will be recorded anonymously. Participation will be completely voluntary and participants may wish to discontinue anytime without prejudice. Interviews will be held after school hours.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review of Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subjects' privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number is (973) 275-2974.

Please consider my request to conduct this research at your school. Thank you in advance for your support and anticipated approval.

Sincerely,

______
Nancy Nevarez-Lutzke

Approval granted,

______
Principal

______
Date

Kindly, mail the signed consent form in the attached self-addressed envelope. A copy of the signed consent form will be mailed to you.
Appendix C

Interview Consent Form

To: Administrator/Teacher/Staff Member
From: Nancy Nevarez Lutzke
Subject: Ethnographic Interviews

I am conducting a study to determine the impact of the Dual Language Program on the climate of the school. I am presently a student at Seton Hall University and this study will be part of my dissertation.

I am inviting you to consider participating in this study. If you agree, I will conduct a series of three, tape-recorded interviews lasting approximately 45 minutes each. The interviews will be conducted after school hours in the school premises at a time that is convenient to you. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate, or may discontinue participation at any time without any penalty or consequences. If you have any questions I can be reached at _______.

All data that is obtained in connection with this study is strictly confidential. All information will be recorded anonymously by the use of a coding system that assigns random letters to all participants. Any data that can be identified with you will be deleted at the end of the study.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the office is (973) 275-2974.

I have read the material above and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity realizing that I may withdraw without prejudices at any time.

_____________________________  _______________________
Subject                          Date

Kindly, mail the signed consent form in the attached self-addressed envelope. A copy of the signed consent form will be mailed to you.