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# Translanguaging and Bilingual Learners: A Study of How Translanguaging Promotes Literacy Skills in Bilingual Students

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Translanguaging and Bilingual Learners:  
A Study of How Translanguaging Promotes Literacy Skills in Bilingual Students

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### Abstract

This study was conducted in order to research the impact that the use of translanguaging strategies has on bilingual learners and discovered whether or not these strategies supports their English language development. Data was collected during lessons taught, interviews with students and teachers, questionnaire feedback, and participation in a collegial circle. Findings revealed that translanguaging did promote the growth of students' English language development. Findings also showed that teachers use various translanguaging strategies in their classrooms, but only some are confident about the positive effects of these strategies. Implications from this study indicated that teachers need to be formally trained in using translanguaging, and supported in their use of these strategies in alignment with current language policies and programs.

### **Translanguaging and Bilingual Learners:**

#### **A Study of How Translanguaging Promotes Literacy Skills in Bilingual Students**

In today's society, meeting someone who is bilingual or multilingual is a common occurrence. The United States is home to people who represent various cultural backgrounds, and who speak a variety of languages. Although our nation is linguistically diverse, when families arrive, they are faced with the task of learning English rapidly in order to be successful. Learning a second language is a complex process. Research has shown that ELLs take about 5-7 years to acquire overall proficiency in English (Hakuta, Goto, & Witt, 2000). Families may move to this country from other countries for numerous reasons. Regardless of the purpose for relocation, these families who move here are often faced with the challenge of learning English if they have not already. Moreover, their children, if school-aged, will subsequently be enrolled in schools where the primary language of instruction is English. If the children who are new to this country enroll in their neighborhood schools are lucky, bilingual programs will be available to them that will allow them to continue or begin literacy education in their first language, while gradually learning English as their new language (Valentino & Reardon, 2015). Though this situation is ideal, it is not often the reality for children of immigrant families.

There are various reasons students who learn English as a new language in the United States might face obstacles. First of all, the idea of setting foot into a classroom where you are surrounded by peers may be extremely daunting for a child who has never spoken English in their life. Therefore learning English can have a psychological effect on students (Suarez-Orozco Et. al, 2010). Secondly, it is also probable that this hypothetical child may never have attended formal schooling in their country, and therefore are unsure about the culture that comes with

academic settings. These students are referred to as Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) (DeCapua & Marshall, 2009). Also, if being intimidated by peers speaking the dominant discourse isn't enough, the work that they are expected to complete is the same as their peers. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandate was passed in 2001 (Menken, 2010). According to NCLB, all students are required to make "yearly progress", and should have all tested as "proficient" by the year 2014 (Menken, 2010). As a part of this mandate, all English language learners must take the same assessments as their native English –speaking peers, as well as an English language proficiency exam (Menken, 2010). The teachers of ELLs are under pressure to meet standards and prepare students for these tests. Depending on some of these disrupting factors, the child has the potential to sink or swim in their new academic setting. Unfortunately, there are many potential situations that will cause strife in the life of an English language learner as acquire a new language.

It is essential for educators to be aware of the challenges that a student new to the country learning English might face. In the school year of 2011-2012 there were 4,472,563 ELLs in the United States (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2015). When students from other countries enter our school system, they are expected to acquire the English language. Some students may be learning English as a second language, or English may very well be their third or fourth language in their linguistic repertoire. Although there are many languages and cultures that are represented in the United States, many students on their journey find that they are faced with language oppression, otherwise referred to as "linguicism" (Schniedewind & Davidson, 2006). Students who experience linguicism may feel as if they are outcasts and unaccepted in their society. They might feel that they must reject their native language in hopes of being accepted in their new surroundings. Students who experience linguicism may be made

fun of because of their accent, ignored because people don't know how to communicate with them, and may experience emotional trauma due to their "inability" to meet standards. Educators must be aware of these challenges, and make efforts in their practice that will enhance students' literacy experiences while they adjust to a new setting. The first step in responding to students' who are new to this country and may be placed in one's classroom is being aware of the obstacles that English language learners face in the classroom.

While the number of English language learners in classrooms continues to increase annually, researchers have been working diligently to study the best methods to support students in their literacy skills development. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, in the 2012-2013 school-year there were 4.4 million ELL students enrolled in public schools (NCES, 2015). Teachers are therefore faced with the task of teaching students grade-level content, while simultaneously developing their literacy skills. It is with this daunting task that a teacher might ask themselves, "what is the best way to help my English Language Learners?" It is important for all educators, administrators, and those making curricular decisions, to base their decisions on research and in the best interest of the student. A strategy that is becoming more widely discussed is called translanguaging. According to Otheguy, García, and Reid (2015), "Translanguaging is the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages," (p. 281). Using translanguaging in the classroom would mean that bilingual children are encouraged to use all of their linguistic abilities in a classroom setting, regardless of language that is prescribed (which is predominantly English) in order to make meaning with the content being learned. Using a strategy such as translanguaging would allow a teacher to value the presence of a learner's culture and language abilities. According to

Hornberger and Link (2012), this view of using translanguaging as a strategy also brings to light the notion that the learner's brain not compartmentalized, and that bilingual and multilingual speakers are not the sum of their linguistic parts. In using students' bilingual and multilingual abilities as a resource throughout their new language acquisition and first language development, it stands to reason that using a strategy such as translanguaging in the classroom would be an effective teaching strategy to develop their overall literacy skills.

The exploration of the use of translanguaging in the classroom is important. If students who speak languages other than English continue to face obstacles throughout their schooling, we as educators are doing them a disservice. Although administrators and teachers alone cannot completely stop the marginalization of English language learners, they together by employing specific strategies to support diverse learners have the ability to embrace their cultures and enhance their educational experiences by using what they, the students, bring to the table. If strategies are not in place that support the success of English language learners, the system will continue to marginalize these students and they will continue to be viewed as "disabled" in our society.

Research was conducted in order to answer the question, how does the use of translanguaging support bilingual learners' overall English language development? In order to conduct this research, a focus group of students was created in a bilingual kindergarten classroom. These students participated in lessons where specific translanguaging strategies were employed. Interviews were conducted with the students from the focus group as well as selected teachers in the school. In addition, a survey about translanguaging was distributed to collect data for this study. Lastly, research was conducted at a collegial circle that focused on the use of translanguaging studies in the classroom. The findings from this research indicate that

translanguaging is in fact an effective practice in developing students' English language proficiency. Findings also show that some teachers are effectively using translanguaging, though not all teachers are comfortable with using translanguaging strategies or are only beginning to attempt to create space for dynamic discourses in their classrooms. This research also found that policy had in fact played a role in teachers' practice, and their teaching has changed since a new program has allowed them the ability to use translanguaging in their classroom. Overall, translanguaging embraces a child's first language and encourages a child to fluidly switch between each language to effectively negotiate meaning, and this approach to teaching allows students to be successful in their English language development. Translanguaging also helps affirm students' identities as bilingual learners. It is important teachers become well versed and trained on how to use translanguaging strategies in order to feel comfortable and see the positive effects in their own classroom, and find how this practice can fit with current language policies and programs that are in place. In this study I used the culture as a disability theory to frame my research. My findings and implications highlight ways in which educators can use translanguaging for best practices and position a student as "able" rather than "disabled" in the classroom.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The acquisition of literacy in one's lifetime enables humans as social participants to do far more than simply read and write. According to Gee, "Literacy is the control of secondary discourse," (Gee, 1989 p. 23). In order to understand the idea of literacy as a control of discourse however, one must first understand the word discourse. Gee describes discourse as a means of using language that is considered socially acceptable. Gee (1989) notes there are two types of

discourses: primary and secondary. Primary discourse takes place when we use language to communicate with people who we are comfortable with; such as our friends and family. Secondary discourse is utilized when we use specific language for communication. This type of discourse often occurs in professional and academic settings, such as schools. In understanding the term discourse, one can conclude that Gee's definition of literacy means that one who is literate is able to use their knowledge of language and social settings in order to communicate with various groups of people. There are many factors that play a role in one's literacy acquisition, especially when the learner is one who is acquiring multiple languages. These learners must develop their second language in first their primary discourse, and then the secondary discourse they will use in their professional or academic settings.

In analyzing the process of language instruction for bilingual and multilingual students, one can use the theory of culture as a disability to understand the systematic marginalization that occurs for English Language Learners. According to McDermott and Veranne (1995), "Culture is an organization of hopes and dreams about how the world should be," (p. 337). In essence, an established culture by nature reinforces or creates environments where those deemed "able" are able to succeed and thrive. The culture then inadvertently disables those in which the environments are not conducive to their success. In understanding the culture as a disability theoretical approach as it relates to English Language Learners, one can claim that the culture of language in the United States makes one "able" if you can to speak English, and engage in social interactions that use English as the language of communication. Those who speak and communicate in languages other than English due to a lack of English language proficiency are viewed as "disabled". This becomes especially problematic when students enter academic settings with varying amounts of knowledge in their first languages, yet are put at a disadvantage

because they do not speak in, or have the tools yet to communicate in the dominant discourse, which is English. It would stand to reason that the most effective way to support English language learners as they enter a new country is to use utilize the abilities they have in their first language (L1). If educators and policy-makers focus on what a student brings to the table, their L1 and culture, as they culturally acclimate and acquire their second language (L2), then students have the chance to be successful in their education. The approach that translanguaging has to offer is that it embraces bilingual learners in their entirety. Bilingual learners' first language is valued and is tapped into as a resource in order to allow them to be successful in learning new content. Translanguaging views the learner as a whole. It takes into consideration the culture of a learner by embracing the language that he or she brings with them. If educators were to implement this approach to teaching, they would be valuing all learners and their language as highly important. If educators ignore the linguistic abilities that come with a bilingual and multilingual learner, they are then part of the process of that child's systematic marginalization. The goal of using translanguaging is to encompass a learner's entire linguistic repertoire, and allow the student to fluctuate between his or her language as they negotiate meaning in various settings. This strategy recognizes the culturally relevant presence of bilingualism in second language learners, and would therefore allow these students to be viewed as able if they in fact experience success due to the strategic use of translanguaging. The goal of the use of translanguaging in classrooms is that it will benefit bilingual and multilingual learners, and make them "abled", rather than "disabled" members of society.

### **Research Question**

In my research, I aim to explore the outcomes of the use of translanguaging in the classroom. As educators look to use this approach in their classrooms, it is important to ask, how does the use of translanguaging strategies develop a child's English language proficiency?

### **Literature Review**

Prior to conducting research, a literature review was completed in order to analyze and synthesize the most recent work in the area of translanguaging. Throughout the literature review, there were three prominent themes that emerged. The first theme that arose often in the literature was the discussion how policy mandates influence, or do not influence teachers' practice in the classrooms. Teachers' ideologies either align or misalign with today's language policy, and was found to be reflected in their teaching practice. Secondly, a theme that emerged was students' language and their identities. Students' identities are made up of who they are, where they come from, and what they value. Students who participated in studies demonstrated the conflict or affirmation language can have on one's identity. Lastly, translanguaging as a strategy is discussed as the understanding of bilingualism and bilingual education begins to shift. Examples of strategies and philosophies about translanguaging are given. Implications from the literature reviewed suggest that the use of translanguaging in the classroom has the ability to position students as abled, rather than disabled, and has the potential to support bilingual and multilingual learners academically, linguistically, culturally, and socially.

### **Language Policy Influences Programs and Practice**

State policy influences the decisions that are made about language programs in schools. Depending on where a student is enrolled in school, different types of language programs may be available. Dual Language is fast-growing option as a language program (Palmer & Henderson, 2016). There are many versions of dual language programs. Valentino and Reardon (2015) highlight four main language programs for English learners (ELs). The four programs they discuss are “English Immersion (EI), Transitional Bilingual (TB), Developmental Bilingual (DB), and Dual Immersion,” (p.1). Valenetino and Reardon describe an EI program where English-only instruction takes place. They note that a TB program is when only ELs are placed into a program where there home language is used to support content knowledge, with the ultimate goal of transitioning them to English by second or third grade. A DB program is similar to a TB program in that it uses the students’ primary language for instruction, however the duration of the program and home language support lasts longer than a TB program, and may extend to fifth or sixth grade (Valentino & Reardon, 2015). Lastly, Valentino and Reardon describe a DI program as one that incorporates the home language and English similarly as the TB and DB programs, with the exception that DI programs also include native English speakers learning Spanish. Garcia, Flores and Chu (2011) highlight the fact that developmental bilingual programs are seemingly non-existent at the secondary level. The fact that these programs are not prominent at the secondary level would leave one to believe that policy does not see the emphasis on biliteracy in the upper grades. Heineke (2015) gives an overview of the implementation of Proposition 203, and the effect it had on language practice in Arizona. He observes teacher conversations reflected a deficit model of thinking, in that the students were

automatically positioned as lacking. The verbiage “don’t” allows one to understand this deficit model of thinking when evaluating their transcripts. Ultimately a student’s program placement and type depends on the state and the policy in which the district adheres to.

Teachers are the connection between policy and practice. According to Salazar (2008), “Even as teachers strive to create humanizing spaces in their classrooms, they are often pulled to conform to rigid language policies that strip students of their dignity,” (p.353). Educators’ practice has the ability to be influenced by the policies in place. Those who teach in dual language programs have the potential to face certain language restrictions due to program protocols. In dual language programs, there are specific time allocations for the use of language (i.e. 50% of the day is in Spanish and 50% of the day is in English) (Garcia, Flores & Chu, 2011). It is expected that teachers follow the mandates in order to support the dual language program. According to Palmer et al (2014), “Dual language teachers are encouraged to build students’ bilingualism through separately focusing on the so-called standard registers of each language,” (p.758). This designation of language time allotment puts constraints on teachers who would like to implement dynamic practices. Duran and Palmer (2014) conducted a study of discursive practices within a first grade bilingual classroom. They observed active discussions in both English and Spanish, what they referred to as a “pluralist discourse”. Even though the policy mandated the language separation time, Duran and Palmer noticed that the teacher would honor and validate responses in either language that the students chose. When interviewing the teacher about her ideologies of the dual language program and her practices, they found that she favored the “pluralist rather than the assimilationist ideologies,” (p.381). This teacher’s view on education is one example of how a teacher chooses to conduct her instruction due to her views of best practices, regardless of the state mandate of time allotment for the two languages. Similarly,

Johnson (2012) also completes a study where he finds that the teachers interpret state policy based on their ideologies. He found that proposition 203 in Arizona created an unbalanced and unfair plan for effective instruction within a school. Proposition 203 was voted on and passed in the year 2000 (Johnson, 2012). Johnson explains how Proposition 203 claimed that bilingual programs were stopping English language learners from learning English, and pushed for a one-year English immersion ESL program before entering grade-level classes taught completely in English. He found that teachers in the school where he conducted his study a teacher who was interviewed did not adhere strictly to the English-only policy. He noted that she used “peerlingual” strategies that involved students using their native language as a resource to access content, which was not the intent of Proposition 203. Johnson states, “Here, we see how the disconnect between the state and policy and classroom context resulted in a micro-level appropriation of innovation”, (2012, p.71). This example of practice shows how a teacher took policy into her own hands. In the case of a study of placement in one-way dual language, two-way dual language, and ESL programs, Palmer and Henderson (2016) found that teacher input was not part of the process, and therefore reflected in teachers’ lack of interest in investing in the program wholeheartedly. Palmer and Henderson (2016) rightfully impress the idea that “They [teachers] must be deeply committed to the program and to the success of all children at the school” (p.28). The notion that teachers are unable to completely invest in programs also demonstrates where a disconnect can take place without teacher buy-in to implement a program with fidelity. Duran and Palmer (2014) also discuss how policy influences practice. In an interview of a teacher during their study, they find that the teacher believed, “different models of education convey messages to children about themselves and their languages, and positioned herself squarely on the side of pluralist rather than assimilation ideologies,” (p.381). Therefore,

she valued the diverse nature of her students' linguistic repertoires. They observed how this teacher incorporated "pluralist discourse" even though the policy mandates language separation. Doolan, Palmer, and Henderson (2015) also examine how ideologies either "aligned or misalign" to current practice. They found that teachers' ideologies sometimes conflicted. For example, they highlight a teacher's response about their language ideology that states, "I think it's important that we all learn and communicate in multiple languages, but I also think learning English is important in this country," (p.7). This example demonstrates how a teacher is conflicted in their support for bilingual as well as monolingual practice. Having conflicting ideology about language has the potential to influence practice. Stephens and Johnson (2015) find that there is a disconnect between policy and practice, specifically when utilizing the Sheltered Instruction method to teach English language learners. This method is a commonly known way to support English language learners' language acquisition through content. When teachers felt that Sheltered Instruction strategies that were targeted specifically for English language learners, and were not appropriate for all of their students, they did not use them, even though they were expected to (Stephens & Johnson, 2015). This practice of taking what they know works best for English language learners, and choosing not to use strategies neglects potential growth that second language learners could potentially make. Heineke (2015) also touches on the influence of policy on teachers, and how this transforms practice. In his facilitation of a study group, he found that teachers were silenced due to the presence of a teacher who was meant to enforce and monitor rigid policy mandates in a school. Martinez, Hikida, and Duran (2015) contend that rigid language policy marginalizes students. They observe how exceptional teachers appreciated bilingualism, yet their teaching practices at times still reflected adherence to a rigid language policy that promoted linguistic purism. Similar to this disconnect between ideologies about

bilingual education and best practices for ELL students, Salazar(2008) finds that though ESL teachers claim to be in support of bilingual education and embracing of biculturalism, their practice indicates otherwise. He found in one of the ESL teacher's classrooms, 100% of the students spoke Spanish as their first language, the teacher was able to communicate in Spanish, yet Salazaar in his observational data collection heard the teacher enforce English with such phrases as "ahhh, ahhh, ahhh, in English," (p.348), or when a student tried to use Spanish to explain a meaning in English, the teacher commented, "Anna no! Go back to your seat. That's not going to help her learn English!" (p.348). Another teacher in this study emphasized his personal interest of developing students' biliteracy due to his life experiences, however this same teacher drafted a memo to the school that recommended a year of intensive English instruction, followed by complete immersion into mainstream classrooms (Salazar, 2008). The examples demonstrate teachers who express ideologies that would embrace, celebrate, and build on the culture that students bring school with them in order to help them to learn and succeed yet are completely contradicted in their practice. It is this type of practice that propels the systematic marginalization of English language learners. Consequently, these studies all demonstrate the influence, or lack of, that policy has on teachers and their ability to decide practice in their classrooms.

Student instruction is in the hands of teachers daily. Johnson (2012) describes a school that uses proficient bilingual students to help students who are still developing their English language to translate for their peers. Johnson refers to this practice as "peerlingual education," he notes that "Peerlingual education refers to all instances where language-minority students rely on bilingual peers to translate and/or teach classroom material – either at the request of an educator or as an individual call for assistance," (p. 69). Johnson goes on to describe a school in which his

study was conducted utilized this strategy, yet the neither the school nor teachers were particularly strategic about it. He notes that these students who are acting as peerlingual tutors are not trained by the teachers themselves; they are expected to observe the teachers, take note of the strategies the teachers use, and then turn to their peers who need assistance and explain (translate) the content after they have grasped what is being taught. Putting the burden of being tutors on students takes the teaching away from the teacher and puts it into the hands of a student without any intentionality or strategy being applied. Although this may be seen as a negative, Martin-Beltran (2014) describes how a teacher positions students as abled when she calls them “language ambassadors” and they assist their peers in completing a writing assignment. The outcomes of each strategies used with English language learners in the classroom ultimately depends on the teacher, and their purpose for using such strategies.

Policies do not always support bilingualism. Makalela (2015) agrees that monolingual practices are limiting for those students who have another language as a resource. Makalela notes that policies that are aimed toward the dominant language culture, English, ultimately limit bilingual and multilingual learners. Therefore, these students are unable to use their first language as a resource, and are pushed to conform to the dominant culture. Wright (2004) studied the long-term effects of program decision made for Cambodian refugees when they arrived to Southern California schools. Through interviews, he was able to find that these students struggled with their language proficiency, for which he attributes to the district’s failure to adequately implement an appropriate language program regardless of state policy. Salazar (2008) found that even though teachers wanted to create “humanizing spaces” for their students by embracing their language and culture, they still seemed to practice according to rigid policy that is geared monolingualism. The policy in the school where he conducted his study had the

following objectives for their ESL program: “(1) to develop ESL students’ competency in English, (2) to support students’ content knowledge in English, and (3) to help students use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways,” (p. 346). These objectives read loud and clear that the school is focused on assimilating students who are have yet conform to the school’s dominant culture. Salazar argues that teachers must make it clear that they embrace the child as an entirety. This is contradictory to what he found when he read the ESL program objective, and when he interviews teachers and district officials. In Alpine High School (pseudonym), Salazar describes the placement of classrooms as the following:

The first floor of AHS was home to foreign language classrooms, an alternative education program, and the ESL program. According to Franquiz (2001) Latina/o students at Alpine High referred to the second floor as the “smart place”, while the first floor was referred to as “little Mexico” and “the ghetto”. (p.344)

The comments that are cited are those in which marginalize students who are not considered part of the dominant discourse or of the school’s culture. The lack of acceptance and integration of these classrooms further solidifies the lack of support for bilingualism, and sees monolingualism as the “smart” culture. When Wright (2004) studies the English language immersion that occurred for Cambodian students when a bilingual program could have potentially supported their biliteracy, it is clear the district’s stance on the value of bilingualism. When someone values bilingualism, or multilingualism, they embrace and recognize linguistic differences. In the world of education, instruction is influenced by administrators’ and teachers’ value of linguistic diversity. This district described here had enough students to provide a bilingual program, however it instead provided ESL support through a model that in the long –term turned out to be ineffective for these students as they ultimately lost proficiency in their first language, and never

fully reached a proficient level in their second language (Wright, 2004). These cases are examples of how schools have the ability to ignore the presence of bilingual and multilingual cultures within their walls, and ultimately disable these culturally and linguistically diverse students by neglecting best practices, which in these cases would be bilingual education, with the goal of full English immersion.

There are different types of bilingualism. Lambert (1974) developed the concept of two models of bilingualism; additive bilingualism and subtractive bilingualism. The concept that he developed describes how a person's two languages work together to give or take away from one's language proficiencies. Garcia and Sylvan (2011) discuss what these models mean for bilingual students. They describe additive bilingualism as adding a child's second language (L2) to their first language (L1); and this produces a bilingual child. They continue to explain that subtractive bilingualism is when a child's L1 is slowly subtracted from their linguistic repertoire as they add their L2. Garcia and Sylvan explain this subtractive bilingualism as "The child's bilingualism is moving away from the 'ultimate attainment' of bilingualism. Instead it is moving backward toward the 'ultimate attainment' of monolingualism," (p.387). Garcia and Sylvan go on to describe the concept of dynamic bilingualism. They explain that dynamic bilingualism is not linear, as the concept of additive and subtractive bilingualism would suggest. Garcia and Sylvan claim that dynamic bilingualism is a complex practice that is interrelated. They note that "dynamic bilingualism refers to the development of different language practices to varying degrees in order to interact with increasingly multilingual communities in the global world," (p.388). Thus one can understand dynamic bilingualism as developing multiple languages and utilizing them for various purposes. Martin-Beltran (2014) also notes that the use of a dynamic theoretical framework of bilingualism "recognizes the interrelatedness of language practices and

the coexistence of multiple linguistic identities within a complex linguistic ecology,” (p. 211).

These shared viewpoints establish a shift in thinking about bilingualism, and will ultimately begin to shape education for linguistically diverse learners.

English-only programs which result in ELL submersion due to monolingual ideologies are not seen as best practice for developing English Language Learners’ literacy skills (Straubhaar, 2013; Wright, 2004). When students are forced to sink or swim in an educational setting, one can hypothesize that their academic progress will not be as great as it would with adequate support. Straubhaar (2013) finds that out of the 14 students that he interviewed during their participation in an English Language immersion program, all of them attested to just trying to “get by” in their content classes without developing their speaking skills in English. He found that “students felt a social pressure from other Spanish speakers not to speak English in class,” (p.102). This example demonstrates the ineffectiveness of an English-only immersion program. In Wright (2004)’s study of Cambodian students placed in an English-only immersion program resulted in a loss of skills in their primary language, and a lack of mastery in their second language. Wright describes the feelings of the newcomer English language learners in an English immersion setting:

Many had difficulty initially just understanding what was being said in class. Bo describing his first year, laughed and said, ‘I just sat there.’ Ken remembers being very bored in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade because he simply could not understand what was being said. Mony described her frustration of wanting to participate in class discussions, but was afraid she might say something wrong, or that the other students would laugh at her English. Ken never raised his hand for the same reason. Even if the teacher called on him, he would not respond. (p.14)

This excerpt exemplifies students wanting to learn and be a part of their classroom culture, but feeling uncomfortable and anxious because of their immersion in English classrooms, thus these learners are silenced, and submersion has negative effect on their education. These studies concur with the notion that monolingual practices are not best practices for developing English language learner's literacy skills.

Teachers do not feel fully prepared to implement programs instructing bilingual students (Heineke, 2015). Teachers may feel unsure about how to implement the curriculum they are teaching for a variety of reasons. Heineke (2015) conducts an interview in a study group where teachers revealed their lack of preparedness and understanding of the dual language program that they were being asked to implement. Heineke also reveals in this study that teachers were intimidated to have conversation about practice that was not part of state mandate. He was able to shift the conversation in his study once the faculty member in charge enforcing the mandate revealed her position on using children's first language as a resource. This "approval" can be seen as coming from the top-down, and opened a door for best practices rather than mandates (Heineke, 2015). This example of how administration influenced teachers demonstrates the power that policy has to silence teachers and ultimately affect students as a result. Smith (2010) studies a school's use of culturally relevant practices, and though he found that the school afforded the students multiple cultural experiences to use their bilingualism, flaws in these experiences were noted. He suggests that schools should search for trained community resources, and carefully plan the implementation. This example of a need for strategic program implementation again highlights the importance of preparing teachers to implement programs with intentionality. Stephens and Johnson (2015) also conducted a study in order to gain insight of the interpretation of language policy and practice in Washington State. They found that in a

school that implemented an ESL program with strategies for mainstream classroom teachers to use, many teachers did not see the value in using strategies geared towards ELLs in their whole group teaching. The strategies that they refer to in their research are called SI (sheltered instruction) where every lesson has a content goal and a language objective. Stephens and Johnson found that these SI strategies were linked to a formal training program which many teachers did not feel comfortable with their level of training, or did not see the relevance. They found that the lack of clarity about the program caused some teachers to not use the strategies. They also found that though the school attempted to provide program training for teachers that would focus on best practices for teaching ELL students, there was not enough clarity or teacher buy in for the program to be successful. Therefore the teachers in this study interpreted the language policy as best practice for all students (Stephens & Johnson, 2015). This study also exemplifies how teachers feel unprepared to implement state or district managed programs, resulting in practice that is not strategic for ELL students.

Teachers have the power to position students. In their case study of two teachers and their practice in contrast to policy, Palmer et al. (2014) find that teachers have the power to position students as capable bilinguals. The author observes a teacher during her practice, and notices that even though the school has a strict policy for language allocation, this teacher is flexible when students shift language. After observing this behavior in an interaction with a student, Palmer et al. note, “Ms. J’s acceptance of Josue’s home language while he was telling a sensitive personal story modeled for her students a willingness to welcome diversity and an openness to engaging in important ideas, however they are expressed [English or Spanish]” (p.765). In this example, Ms. J embraces the fact that Josue speaks two languages, and allows him to speak freely about important ideas instead of shutting him down, and restricting him to a monolingual thinking.

Lee, Hill-Bonnet and Raley (2011) find that language brokering has the ability to position students. They note that this study of students found that language brokering could position them as able, or disabled, depending on how dependent they became on using language brokering for assistance. They suggest that teachers should take note of the potential power that language brokering has in positioning students as abled or disabled. In another study, Griffith, Silva, and Weinburgh (2014) found that language brokering was a powerful tool for their learning, and allowed them to become “linguisticians” and have conversations about language. This experience positioned the students as able, and in control of their learning, and their ability to have conversations about language with multilingual learners. Martin-Beltran (2014) describes how a teacher positions students as abled when she identifies them as language experts. The students described as “ambassadors” use their native language to help their peers with a writing assignment in English. This use of students as “ambassadors” is an example of how a teacher can position a student as able due to their bilingualism. Salazar (2008) discusses the monolingual ideology that is represented in the school. In one of the classrooms that he observed, students were given a participation grade based on a rubric. He notes, “Students would be given a zero on participation, if, as stated in the rubric, ‘I refuse to speak English to the teacher or with other students. I only speak my native language,’” (p.348). This example of zero tolerance for students’ native language demonstrates that the teacher positions them as disabled if they use the language they are familiar with, and in this position students have the potential to be silenced. The students in these examples are put in positions of ability or disability as a result of their teachers’ ideologies and interpretation of best practices for students.

### **Language Can Influence Identity**

People maintain their identity due to their cultures and languages that make them who they are. Sayer (2010) investigates how the use of translanguaging can affect a students' identity. He highlights the notion that:

The argument against using code-switching and vernacular is a political one influenced by attitudes and ideologies of language; however clearly educational decisions should be informed by a linguistic and pedagogical examination of what actually helps students learn language and content. (p.79)

Here, Sayer is arguing that students use code-switching to better understand content. Palmer et al (2014) define code-switching as “shifting between two languages within or between utterances,” (p.759). This practice draws upon a student's identity as an English language learner with a first language that they use to navigate newly learned content. If educators do not support students and value the language and literacy skills that they bring with them when they enter the classroom, then we immediately take a piece of their identity when trying to replace it with something new, rather than embracing and utilizing the valuable cultural and linguistic gifts that students bring to the table. Sayer (2010) finds that using translanguaging allowed space in the classroom for discussions that allowed them to negotiate meaning and affirmed their identities as bilingual learners. These students then have access to both of their languages in order to be successful in their understanding. Lee, Hill-Bonnet, and Raley (2011) highlight the notion that identity shapes learning. They discuss the power of language brokering, and the ability to able and disable students. Tse (1996) defines language brokering as, “interpreting and translating

between culturally and linguistically different people mediating interactions in a variety of situations,” (p.226). Bilingual students often act as language brokers, as they are constantly negotiating meaning in two languages. Lee, Hill-Bonnet, and Raley note that, “language-brokering events create interactional and interpersonal spaces where knowledge is shared and identities get formed and negotiated,” (p.323). They suggest that:

Teachers need to be aware of unintended consequences of language brokering on L2 learners’ academic identities and to strategically construct opportunities for different students to take up the role of brokers because these repeated positionings have the potential to lead to restricted opportunities for brokers to display and take up an “able” student identity. (p.323)

Therefore it will be beneficial for teachers to be intentional in their use of language brokering in the classroom. In Wright (2004)’s study of Cambodian refugees and their schooling, he found that the students’ Khmer language was not fully developed, and if students had an interest in developing their native language they had to reach out on their own to community resources. He also points out that the students he interviewed noted they felt that their dominant language was English, even though they simultaneously felt they had not mastered English. This finding demonstrates students who are stuck between two languages, which can affect the way in which one views their identity as a student and as a participant in society. One participant in his study notes how she struggles with her self-identity when she commented, “In 9<sup>th</sup> grade I was sick of myself, I was sick of who I am. This girl who’s like, a nobody,” (p.16). Another student in this study relates to this dilemma with identity due to his language when he does not admit to being able to read and write in his native language because he is ashamed of where he came from, and felt the pressure of the dominant culture of society to assimilate. This loss of identity caused this

particular student not to read and write demonstrating the effect that identity has on learning (Wright, 2004). This student demonstrates the negative impact that language perception can have on identity if students' culture is not valued or accepted by the dominant culture. Duran and Palmer (2014) also support the notion that language connects to identity. They state that:

Students make choices about their language use based not only on communicative efficiency but also in response to the relative prestige and value of different variants in their environment. Their choices about language reflect not only whom they are but also whom they wish to be. (p.369)

Students can choose who they want to be, and create their identities. Choosing the languages that they use is one choice that contributes to their identity. In a study conducted by Martin-Beltran (2014), she observed the interactions between students who were negotiating meanings in Spanish to produce writing in English. The author notes how in this study students were positioned as language experts when they were helping each other. She specifically indicates a student who was shy, and perceived as struggling. She describes the following student:

Juanita was bilingual student who was born in the United States and raised in a bilingual home. She had exited ESOL services in late elementary school when she was also identified for special education services. She was in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, taking Spanish 3, and was placed in a remedial English course. Although her teachers described her as a struggling student who rarely participated in class, we found that she blossomed in the Language Ambassadors program where she recognized her own expertise. In her interview, Juanita shared that this was the first time she “got to be a teacher” for other students. She identified herself as a bilingual expert and explained that Language Ambassadors ‘taught me to be an expert in my own language.’ (p.223)

These studies demonstrate how language and identity are connected and play a role in students' education.

Language allows us to communicate in various social situations. Martin-Beltran (2014) found that students who were encouraged to use each other as resources, and used "linguistic dexterity" (p.215) in their translanguaging practice. This strategy encourages students to socially engage with one another while simultaneously negotiating meaning in their first language, and produce work in the target language, English. Martin-Beltran also note that students during these social interactions showed that evidence of using metalinguistic awareness as they discussed syntactical features of English (2014). Students in this social situation are able to discuss how and for what purposes language is used. Griffith, Silva, and Weinburgh (2014) also demonstrate how language is a social practice when they conduct a study at a summer program where students are asked to interview their parents about the language that they use in various situations. The students in this study interviewed their parents, and then analyzed the data that was found which allowed them to engage in multiple conversations. The authors indicated their belief that, "As individuals who learn to navigate complex communication skills within even more complex situations, these language brokers acquire important skills," (p.349). These findings highlight the importance of teaching that using language is a social act, and there are different ways in which people interact with one another using language.

Families have the potential to foster language learning motivation. Barnes and Fedele (1997) highlight in their study of bilingual families in South Africa that attitudes toward bilingualism were seen as positive. Through questionnaires, Barnes and Fedele elicited feelings about bilingualism. They note that:

To bring children up as bilinguals in a bilingual home was seen as giving the children a tremendous advantage. To be bilingual was seen as a source of empowerment, creating job opportunities, improving communication in general and opening doors to other cultures, a necessity in a multilingual society. (p.218-219)

These questionnaires give insight into the families' beliefs about being bilingual. Lewis et al. (2015) highlight research on how literacy practice at home can influence literacy skills in Dual Language Learners. The authors focused their study on literacy practice with mothers since it was identified in their research that mothers have a great influence on a child's literacy development. They found that when exposed to Spanish at home, students have a greater likelihood of maintaining their Spanish literacy skills. These findings continue to demonstrate the connection between home literacies and academic literacy development, and the influence family can have in a child's education. Block (2012) studies the relationships among families of Dual Language program students and finds that their relationships with community and family grew stronger. While conducting interviews with parents of students who were English language learners (ELL) in a dual immersion program, he found that most parents saw positive effects of the dual immersion program on their child's communication with their family. While one parent of an ELL student in a mainstream program did not see the same results. The interviewee explains (translated), "He can't communicate much with the family because he does not speak much Spanish. He speaks more English than Spanish because he has done every year of school English," (p.249). This explanation is the result of a Spanish speaking student experiencing what has been referred to in earlier sections as subtractive bilingualism, and in this context is seen as a negative effect of an English immersion program. Block also mentions that some parents noted their child has experienced embarrassment in a situation where they could not communicate with

family due to their inability to speak Spanish. This example demonstrates the value that language has to families. Griffith, Silva, and Weinburgh (2014) conducted a study that allowed students to employ inquiry as means for interviewing their families about their language use. In their study, students were able to learn how their parents used their language, while simultaneously developing a “meta-language” used in order to discuss how and why people use certain language in different situations. This study allowed students to gain insight not only the cultural wealth that their parents had, but it allowed them to observe their parents’ bilingualism. In observing their parents as bilinguals, students’ identities are affirmed and their overall language learning is influenced.

Valuing students’ funds of knowledge is a component of student success. Moll et al. (1992) define “funds of knowledge” as “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household function or individual well-being” (p.133). Therefore a child’s funds of knowledge and identity are intermixed. In relation to a child’s funds of knowledge, Straubhaar (2013) discusses culture capital. Cultural capital plays a large role in a student’s identity. Marsh (2006) defines culture capital as the “store of experience and knowledge individuals acquire throughout life influenced by family background and sociocultural experiences,” (p.164). Therefore one can understand that students coming from various backgrounds, may have different forms of culture capital that contribute to their identity. Straubhaar (2013) notes how ELL students are a non-dominant group in today’s society whose culture capital is not valued. In his review of research in a Bourdieuan framework, he highlights the fact that cultural norms of the dominant society group are imposed, such as standardized testing, that automatically views English Language Learners as deficit learners who lack the society’s dominant language. In the dominant culture, English is culture capital, and these ELL

students demonstrate their lack of wealth, and ultimate culture as a disability, because of the way they are positioned by those in power. In his interviews, Straubhaar (2013) found that students indicated feeling comfortable when they were able to meet other students with similar religion and culture. This sense of ease that the students note demonstrates the important role that culture plays as students begin to shape their identities. Valuing students' family is another way to embrace the culture they come to school with. Taking interest in students' families is a way to embrace and understand the funds of knowledge that students bring with them. Griffith, Silva, and Weingburh (2014) saw the positive effects of involving parents in an inquiry study about language. They also found that:

By taking the time to learn about students' families, educators are apt to recognize the culture capital of parents who are doctors, lawyers, and engineers but ignore the skills and contributions of parents who are not in the position of power or prestige. Simply shifting from a deficit model to one that acknowledges the assets and of the child and the family opens opportunities for using language brokering as a tool for learning about the students as individuals. (p.350)

Understanding the impact that identity can have on students' connection to their life and academics, it is important for educators to consider the role that families play in the lives of their bilingual students.

Students enter the classroom with culture, identity, and skills. Griffith, Silva and Weinburgh (2014) found that students' funds of knowledge were valued and appreciated when students were able to see their parents as having culture capital. When a student can see their parent's culture capital, and understand the value that they have, their identity formation is affirmed. Duran and Palmer (2014) argue that:

To support bilingual children, schools can and should create some explicitly open times and spaces; celebrate notice and name the times when students are translanguaging; and in general encourage them to bring all their linguistic resources to bear in a given situation. (p.385)

This encouragement can help to develop the skills and knowledge that children already have when they enter a classroom. Palmer et al. (2014) argue that when bilingual students are labeled by their language abilities, their entire linguistic repertoires are not accounted for. The teachers that were observed during this study were seen mirroring student language, in doing this they are ultimately sending a message to students that their language choices are valued, accepted, and encouraged (Palmer et al., 2014). The example seen in this study again affirms the notion that teachers must embrace the diverse characteristics of students in their classroom, including the languages that those students feel most comfortable using. Similarly, Straubhaar (2013) asserts that “aspirational capital” is a tool to support Spanish – speaking students in a school to assist them academically. In his study, he found that teachers valued students’ first language (Spanish) and “allowed” the use translanguaging in their classrooms. This acceptance opened the door for students to negotiate meaning and succeed in “getting by” at school. However, what this study also points out is that although teachers embraced their linguistic diversity, students were reluctant to develop their oral language in English due to a social stigma. A student participant in this study comments:

If you want to talk in English, you can, but all of your friends speak Spanish, so it’s more normal to speak Spanish. They let us talk if we keep our voices down, since many don’t understand what we’re doing, and we can help pass on the material to others. It would be

better if we all spoke English, but we don't know it, and we already know Spanish.

(p.101)

This example demonstrates how students are given permission to use their home language, yet they are still silenced at the same time as they keep their Spanish to whisper in class, and are reluctant to develop their oral language in English. Straubhaar (2013) mentions that many of the students who participated in this study felt social pressure to not speak in English. In speaking only in Spanish, yet submitting work in English for grades, these students are using their cultural capital and skills to academically succeed, while maintaining their identity and saving face in class with their peers regardless of the linguistic capital gains it may afford them to practice their English. Ultimately a student's culture, identity and skills influence their literacy as well as socioemotional growth in their educational experience.

### **Translanguaging as a Strategy**

The idea of translanguaging changes the way in which bilingualism is viewed. Garcia and Sylvan (2011) discuss the concept of translanguaging as a way to challenge western thought of monolingualism. This challenges the notion there is only one language that matters, and that is the dominant, and superior language of the nation. Garcia, Flores, and Chu (2011) note:

For Garcia, translanguaging is an approach to bilingualism that is centered not on languages but on the observable communicative practice of bilinguals. Although translanguaging may include code-switching (i.e., the alternation of languages within discourse), it also comprises other forms of hybrid language they are systematically engaged in sense-making. (p.5)

Translanguaging therefore focuses on communication, and making meaning using in various situations, and allows for the use of multiple languages in these communicative interactions.

Translanguaging is a practiced that can be considered part of dynamic bilingualism (Garcia & Sylvan, 2011). They discuss their stance on the shift in thinking about bilingual education:

Schools that are truly organized to respect the singular pluralities in multilingual classrooms have to let go, then, of some of the principals that even bilingual education has long held dear. No longer is it possible to isolate languages or limit instruction to two or even three languages; it is important to create a context in which educators pay close attention to how a student and his or language practices are in motion – that is, to focus on how the students are engaged in meaningful activities. (p.390)

This quote exemplifies the essence of education surrounding not political agendas, or national ideologies, but each and every student as an individual. This stance concurs with Wright (2004) who believes that we must work from the student – up to in designing our practices. This thinking puts student in the center, and translanguaging as a means of being flexible. Teachers are beginning to see the usefulness of translanguaging in their classrooms regardless of state mandates (Duran & Palmer, 2014). Teaching in the best interest of students occurs when mandates are ignored in order to promote best practices. When two teachers opt to allow students to use dynamic discourse and open a new space that is not separated, yet combined and fluidly shifting, they are allowing the practice of translanguaging to take place (Duran & Palmer, 2014). Students can then negotiate their learning in the language that they feel comfortable. In his exploration of TexMex vernacular and classroom discourse, Sayer (2012) notes that “the use of translanguaging as a theoretical lens for examining bilingual language practices in a classroom invites us to go beyond previous classroom code-switching work that created typologies of

features, functions, and linguistic codes,” (p.84). This understanding further contributes to the notion that translanguaging is a newer practice that is shifting thought about prescribed bilingual education.

Translanguaging is a practice that incorporates a learner’s entire linguistic repertoire. Worthy et al. (2013) note strategies a teacher used in order to create learning spaces for her students by using translanguaging. They note that, “Monica scaffolded - and students employed – comprehension, vocabulary, and metalinguistic strategies including prediction ,synthesizing, making connections, using background knowledge and experiences, drawing conclusions, and identifying cognates, as the collaboratively negotiated meaning about a complex text,” (p.324). All of these steps taken were strategic in helping students to make meaning of content they were learning. Canagarajah (2011) also uses translanguaging as a strategy to support a Saudi Arabian student in her writing. Using translanguaging opened up an opportunity for discourse about writing, and ultimately allowed the student use both English and her native language, Arabic, to support her themes in writing. This type of freedom allows for a thoughtful, and more developed writing. Canagarajah discusses how translanguaging as a strategy can be developed by learning from the student. He states, “It is important we develop our pedagogies ground up, from the practices we see multilingual students adopting. As my dialogical pedagogy demonstrates, it is possible to work toward the development of student’s translanguaging proficiency while studying from them,” (p.415). Canagarajah goes on to identify writing strategies such as recontextualization, voice, interactional, and textualization to support multilingual writers. These strategies are all intentional for learners using multiple languages as they produce writing. Lopez (2010) found that students who obtained proficiency in their first language were able to transfer their phonological awareness skills to their second language. This finding suggests that learning

skills in their first language will be beneficial as they begin to learn a second language (Lopez, 2010). This finding also has implications for translanguaging as it promotes fluidity between both the first and second language, relying on proficiency in one of the languages. Palmer et al. (2014) also find strategies in which they refer to as powerful translanguaging practice. These strategies that they found were modeling dynamic bilingualism through their own language practices, positioning children as “competent bilinguals”, and pointing out similarities and differences between English and Spanish. Worthy et al. (2013) highlight the positive effects of using a read-aloud to continue a discussion in both Spanish and English, employing translanguaging as a strategy to make meaning and open a Spanish and English to be used fluidly together. Students in this type of situation are encouraged to utilize both languages during discussions. Makalela (2015) found that her study of the use of translanguaging with pre-service teachers affirmed her belief and prior research that showed positive results when using students’ first language as a resource and reinforcing their “plural identities,” (p.213). This finding reveals consistency with other findings that demonstrate the usefulness of using a student’s first language in order to develop a new language. Duran and Palmer (2014) concur that teachers must understand that people who are bilingual are not in fact comprised of two monolingual proficiencies, but they use both of their linguistic repertoires to communicate. Understanding that languages can be used fluidly to support one another is an important concept for educators to embrace. Palmer et al. (2014) observed that teachers valued students’ language choices and usage in the classroom. Palmer also agrees that teachers must provide space for “dynamic bilingualism” (p.769) Classrooms that allow space for dynamic bilingualism are those classrooms in which students’ languages are valued, and translanguaging as a strategy can be employed. In Straubhaar (2013)’s interview of Mexican students in a English immersion

program, he highlights a response from a participant that notes, “Esteban specifically noted that he would often not understand or be able to finish his assignments if his friends were not able to explain them to him in Spanish,” (p.101). This student demonstrates his tendency to shut down, or refuse to attempt work because of his lack of understanding. In their Language Ambassadors program, students engaged in natural practices of translanguaging (Martin-Beltran, 2014). The students from this study were set up with their peers as language experts, or “ambassadors”, as they helped each other to write autobiographical essays. The students negotiated meanings of words in their home language to write in English. In doing this, Martin-Beltran (2014) found that students were able to “co-construct meaning in a multilingual space,” (p.217). The strategy used for language ambassadors was strategic. This study further supports the notion that using translanguaging can support students in their understanding of content being taught in the dominant language.

Scholars in favor of dynamic bilingualism argue that translanguaging has its place in the classroom (Garcia & Sylvan, 2011; Makalela, 2015; Palmer et al., 2014). If translanguaging continues to be recognized, and consistently supports student growth, it is likely there will be a shift in thinking for bilingual programs. According to Garcia and Sylvan (2011):

Bilingual education programs often have language allocation policies that dictate when, how, and for how long each language should be used; that is, language allocation policies most often focus on the macroalternation of languages. Rarely do these policies include thinking about the microalternation of languages, the translanguaging that allows educators to adjust to language practices and content to the child. (p.391)

It is essential for educators to focus on the child’s engagement as the center of their practice. Garcia and Sylvan (2011) also note that it is important to notice the engagement of a student,

rather than focus on which language to speak at any given point. In focusing on the student, rather than the language, the student is more likely to understand content being taught. Palmer et al. (2014) observe teachers making room for translanguaging in their study. Though their school was considered a Dual Language school where time for each language was already allocated, teachers in a school in Texas chose to value their students' language and model "dynamic bilingualism" by incorporating translanguaging practices within their classroom (Palmer et al., 2014). These teachers were employing the use of translanguaging as a strategy for student success. Similarly, Makalela (2015) notes "The results showed positive effects of using multilingual resources in the classroom by using plural identities, bridging linguistic and cultural boundaries and increasing reasoning power through integrated multilingual practices," (p.213). This study again reinforces the notion that translanguaging is an effective strategy that embraces the learner in their entirety. Garcia and Sylvan (2011) highlight eight core principals of instructional design that contributed to the success of a school in their study. The principals are "heterogeneity and singularities in plurality, collaboration among students, collaboration among faculty, learner-centered classrooms, language and content integration, plurilingualism from the students up, experiential learning, and localized autonomy and responsibility," (Garcia & Sylvan 2011, p.393). These studies identify scholars' growing call for action from teachers and policy makers regarding best practices for bilingual and multilingual students with the use of translanguaging as a strategy in the classroom.

As educational policy is created, reevaluated and implemented, various factors play a role in how a child's education is shaped. In terms of a bilingual students and their education, the quality and type of program that will both enhance and develop their linguistic duality depends on the policy where they live, the teachers interpretation of policy and methods of

implementation, and the space that is created by teachers to involve translanguaging methods in their classroom.

## **Method**

### **Context**

The research for this study took place in a school located in an urban area of upstate New York. It is a K-8 building with approximately 705 students enrolled for the 2015-2016 school-year. Of these students, 86.1% are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Of the 705 students enrolled in this school, 58.9% are Hispanic, 35.3% are Black or African American, 5.1% are White, and .6% are Asian and .1% are American Indian or Alaska Native. This school offers different programs for students with various needs. 19.3% of students are classified as students with a disability, and 31.3% of students are currently classified as English Language Learners. Additionally, 5.8% are former English Language Learners (SPA Data, 2016).

This school was originally one of the 27 K-6 buildings in the district, and has now grown out to be a K-8 building. It is now one of the 14 K-8 buildings in the 2015-2016 school-year (Rochester City School District by the Numbers, 2016). This building has 114 staff members. Of these staff members 30 are classroom teachers. Of these classroom teachers, four are teachers of the Autism Spectrum, and seven are bilingual classroom teachers. 42 of the total staff are special subject teachers. These special subject teachers are teachers of the following: Art, ESOL, Music, Physical Education, OT/PT, SPED, Speech/Language, Health, and FACS/Technology. Of the 42 special subject teachers, the school also employs one Media Specialist, one Psychologist, two

Social Workers, one building Instructional Coach, one Bilingual Resource teacher, one Literacy teacher, two School Safety Officers, and two Primary Project teachers. The school also recently hired two RtI teachers. There are three administrators; the principal, the elementary assistant principal, and the intermediate assistant principal. There is also a total of 20 support staff. The remaining staff is clerical, custodial, food service, and nurse's office staff (Staff List, 2015).

This school is located near the outskirts of the city; however its students are bussed from various locations within the city limits. As of 2014, the population of the city where this school is located was 209,983 people. Of this population, the average household income was \$30,784. 33.8% is the number that represents the households living in poverty in Rochester, NY. As many students in this school are eligible for free/reduced lunch, it is evident that many come from disadvantaged households (QuickFacts, 2015).

The classroom where this study takes place is the only bilingual Kindergarten in the school. There are 21 students in this classroom. They receive two hours daily of HLA (Home Language Arts) in Spanish, one hour of ESOL in English, and one hour of Math in both English and in Spanish. Other services that are provided to some students in this room include RtI, reading support, speech therapy, and OT support. All support services are delivered in Spanish by certified bilingual specialists except for OT and ESOL. One student has a one-on-one aide due to medical needs. Therefore throughout the day, there are anywhere from two to three adults in the classroom.

## **Participants**

### **Students**

This study consisted of seven students from a bilingual kindergarten classroom. Of these students there were six girls and one boy. All of the student participants are Hispanic, and have been classified as English Language Learners. These students who are classified as English Language Learners also have identified English proficiency levels as a result of the NYSITELL (New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners) which was given at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school-year. The groupings of these students as identified by this test will be as follows: Entering (Beginner), Transitioning (Intermediate), and Expanding (Advanced). All students in this study are either five or six years old. Some of these students attended pre-school prior to being enrolled in Kindergarten this year; however not all participants have had schooling prior to Kindergarten. All seven students participated in lessons where data was collected, as well as one on one interviews where they responded to questions (Appendix A).

Jayla (pseudonym) is six years old. Her language level can be identified as Commanding (advanced), and was determined at the beginning of the school-year. Prior to entering kindergarten, Jayla attended pre-school in the same school district. She is an active participant in class, and an eager learner. She is also comfortable using both languages in her classroom setting.

Yolanda (pseudonym) is six years old. Yolanda's language level was also identified as Transitioning (intermediate) at the beginning of the school year. Yolanda did not attend pre-

school prior to entering kindergarten this year. She is an active participant in class, and comfortably uses both Spanish and English during class discussions.

Maria (pseudonym) is five years old. Her language level as an ELL can be identified as Entering (Beginner). Prior to entering kindergarten, Maria attended pre-school within the district. In class Maria is more comfortable speaking Spanish, however makes an effort to try and use the English that she is learning.

Johanna (pseudonym) is five years old. She is considered an Entering (beginner) ELL. This is Johanna's first year of formal schooling. She is making progress in her English language development, however mostly uses Spanish in the classroom.

Yadiel (pseudonym) is five years old. He is considered an Entering (beginner) ELL. Before beginning this school year, Yadiel did not attend pre-school. Yadiel often displays behavioral problems in the classroom as he begins to learn how to socialize with others. He is often off task, and focusing on what other students are doing. Despite behavior issues that arise, Yadiel is making excellent academic gains in both Spanish and in English this year.

Nayeli (pseudonym) is five years old. Nayeli's language level was identified as Entering (beginner) at the beginning of the school-year. Prior to this year, Nayeli attended pre-school in the mornings. Nayeli is Spanish dominant, however makes an effort to use her oral language in English when possible. For the beginning of the school year, Nayeli was in the lower Spanish group due to her sound recognition. However, she has made significant progress and knows all of her sounds in Spanish currently.

Charlie (pseudonym) is six years old. She is considered an Entering (beginner) ELL student. Before this school year, Charlie attended pre-school in the same school district. Charlie

is an active participant in class. She is always eager to answer questions. She often switches between both languages as she is still becoming comfortable with using English in the classroom.

### **Teachers**

There were a total of four teacher participants in this study. They were each interviewed individually, and two were part of the translanguaging collegial circle. In the interviews, teachers were asked a series of questions (Appendix B). During the collegial circles, the discussions of the participants were transcribed, and these discussions followed a specific protocol (Appendix D).

Amy (pseudonym) is a bilingual and general education resource teacher in the school. Amy is white and in her 30s. She has been teaching for 15 years. She participates in a school initiative to promote the use of translanguaging strategies in the classroom. She also takes on the role as a mentor in the district, and is on the RtI team. In addition to the work she does at the school, Amy teaches a graduate course in the evenings at a local private college that focusing on bilingual teaching methods. She participated in a one on one interview about translanguaging.

Farley (pseudonym) is a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade bilingual teacher at the school. She is white and in her 20s. She has been teaching for six years. Amy leads translanguaging professional development opportunities that are staggered throughout the school-year. She participated in a one on one interview about translanguaging.

Mitchell (pseudonym) is a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade bilingual teacher. Mitchell is Hispanic and in her 30s. She has been teaching for 13 years. Mitchell currently facilitates a year-long translanguaging collegial circle. She is one of the “go-to” people to talk to about translanguaging in the school. For this study, she was part of the translanguaging collegial circle, as well as participated in a one on one interview.

Lana (pseudonym) is a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade bilingual special education teacher in an integrated co-taught setting. Lana is Hispanic and in her 30s. She has been teaching in the United States for 10 years now. Prior to teaching here, she lived and taught in Argentina. She plays an active role in translanguaging initiatives in the school. Lana participated in the translanguaging collegial circle as well as a one on one interview.

In addition to these participants, 16 teachers completed a questionnaire about their knowledge surrounding translanguaging strategies (Appendix C). Of these 16 teachers, there were three ESOL teachers, five general education elementary teachers, two middle school teachers, one elementary special subject teacher, one bilingual resource teacher, one bilingual classroom teacher, two integrated bilingual special education teachers, and one middle school consultant special education teacher.

### **Researcher Stance**

I am currently a graduate student at St. John Fisher College seeking my Master’s degree in Literacy Education from Birth through grade 12. I hold an undergraduate degree which is a Bachelor’s of Science in Education specializing in Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages in Kindergarten through grade 12. My current position is at the school in which my study takes place. I am one of the six ESOL teachers at the school and provide this bilingual

Kindergarten with their ESOL services. My role in this research was as an active participant, since I conducted the lessons while simultaneously gathering data (Mills, 2014). According to Mills, “Teachers, by virtue of teaching are active participant observers of their teaching practice. When they are actively engaged in teaching, teachers observe the outcomes of their teaching,” (p.85). This role of an active participant is one that I took on during my research, where I instructed students, and observed the outcomes of strategies employed during my lessons. As an active participant, I gathered data through whole group instruction with students, as well as one-on-one interviews.

## **Method**

In my research, I collected both qualitative and quantitative data. I observed these students’ ability to answer comprehension questions in English about a topic being discussed. I observed a total of six times during whole group instruction. These lessons that I observed and taught were 40 minutes long. I tried three teaching methods that incorporated translanguaging. The first method I tried was using multilingual partners, where students negotiated meaning in their home language. Students were given a question in English, asked to think-pair-share in their home language, and then respond to the question in English. The second method was strategically using Spanish words to support student understanding. During instruction, specific words, and not the entire text were translated to allow students to understand the topic being discussed. Lastly, the third strategy involved using multilingual texts. Prior to the lesson,

students were exposed to a text in their home language to support their background knowledge of the topic being discussed.

Conducting interviews was also a component of my data collection. I interviewed students individually in order to gather their feelings about using English in class (Appendix A). I also interviewed teachers who use translanguaging in their instruction (Appendix B). A school-wide questionnaire was also distributed to teachers regarding their knowledge and use of translanguaging in the classroom (Appendix C). Lastly, I participated in, and transcribed meeting discussions from a focus group of teachers who are implementing translanguaging strategies into their practice (Appendix D).

### **Quality and Credibility of Research**

In order to validate the trustworthiness of research, Mills (2014) highlights the work of Guba (1981) in establishing four criteria for qualitative inquiry: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In order to effectively conduct quality and credible research, each one of these key characteristics of qualitative research was addressed.

There are many variables to take into consideration when conducting credible research. Mills (2014) defines credibility as “the researcher’s ability to take into account the complexities that present themselves in a study and to deal with the patterns that are not easily explained” (p.115). Therefore in my research, I used multiple methods in order to ensure my credibility. First of all, I implemented strategies for research and data collection on six occasions. I collected

this data by being immersed within the classroom setting. In order to gather a variety of data, and practice triangulation (Mills, 2014), I conducted interviews with students and teachers, distributed questionnaires, and transcribed meeting discussions of teachers surrounding the strategy that is being researched. I used field notes, observational notes, and audio recordings in order to analyze data and formulate credible research.

I took steps for my research to be understood and transferable to the work of others. According to Mills (2014) transferability is the “qualitative researchers’ beliefs that everything they study is context bound and the goal of their work is not to develop “truth” statements that can be generalized to larger groups of people,” (p.116). I ensured that my description of context and procedures were thoroughly explained. I also made note of other contexts in which my research can be applied, making it clear to the reader the transferability of my research.

Data must be dependable to produce credible research. “Dependability refers to the stability of data,” (Mills, 2014 p.116). In order for my data to be dependable, I used multiple methods, such as observations followed by interviews, to fully understand my results. I also described in detail the steps I took to arrive at my results in order for the process and findings of my research to be understood by the reader.

The fourth characteristic of what Guba (1981) considers to be a criteria for credibility is confirmability. Mills (2014) refers to confirmability as “the neutrality or objectivity of the data collected,” (p. 116). In order for my research to be confirmable, I used triangulation (Mills, 2014) by using multiple methods of data collection, I also practiced what Mills refers to as “reflexivity”. In doing this I revealed my biases and underlying assumptions about the research at hand. I consistently reflected on my findings and question my assumptions.

### **Informed Consent and Protecting the Rights of the Participants**

In order to protect the rights of the participants, I received informed consent, permission, or assent from all participants of this study. Of the parents of my students participating in the study, I received signed permission informing them about the study their child will participate in. Once permission was received from the parent, I obtained verbal assent from students to include them in my research. Since my students were between the ages of five and six, I did not require signed assent. Lastly, I obtained signed consent from all teachers who participated in interviews as well as questionnaires. All names of participants, including the school that is part of the study are provided with pseudonyms or will not be mentioned in any part of the study. Also, all artifacts gathered will be guarded in a securely locked in a location where only I have access to.

### **Data Collection**

I used different forms of qualitative and quantitative data for this study. First of all I conducted lessons as an active participant, collecting data while simultaneously instructing. Secondly, I conducted seven student interviews, and four teacher interviews. Third, I collected 16 teacher questionnaires. Lastly I recorded and transcribed meeting discussions of a focus group of teachers who are implementing translanguaging strategies.

As an active participant, I collected data while instructing lessons. I taught whole group lessons, and asked students to answer comprehension questions in English. In order to collect

data during this time, I kept track of the students who I asked questions to, and how they responded using a log (Appendix E).

During data collection, I used the method of enquiring in order to collect qualitative data. I conducted interviews with students (Appendix A) as well as interviews with teachers (Appendix B). All interviews were recorded and transcribed. All of the teacher interviews were conducted in English, while some of the student interviews required Spanish translation.

Another form of enquiring was distributing questionnaires for teachers to answer. A questionnaire (Appendix C) was distributed in all of the teachers' mailboxes. Teachers indicated the grade level and subject that they taught, answered questions according to a scale, and were also able to add any information about the topic of translanguaging that they felt was important.

Participating and transcribing the discussions of a collegial circle was another way that I collected data for this study. I participated in and recorded the discussions of four teachers (including myself) in collegial circle that focuses on the topic of translanguaging. In this collegial circle, teachers discussed translanguaging strategies that they used in their classroom in the past month, and discussed if they were or were not effective.

Lastly, using a district database, I compiled all of the students' NYSITELL (New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners) scores to use during data analysis. These scores allowed me to understand what proficiency levels students had achieved in English. This data is used to analyze data collected during teaching as well as student interviews.

### **Data Analysis**

During this study I collected multiple forms of both quantitative and qualitative data. I first compiled and analyzed all quantitative data such as students NYSITELL Scores, student responses to questions in an interview, as well as responses from a teacher questionnaire. This data lends itself to the triangulation of my study as I cross referenced my findings with those from the qualitative data.

In order to further understand my qualitative data, I conducted an in-depth analysis of all information gathered for this study. I read through and compared all observational notes. I also transcribed and coded all interviews, as well as the teacher collegial circle. Lastly, I read through and coded data collected from the teacher questionnaire.

The observational notes were taken during the lessons that I taught in this study. The first lesson was taught in English only, and the following lesson was the same, however translanguaging strategies were used. There were a total of six lessons (three in English only, and three using translanguaging strategies), and for each lesson, I gathered observational data. The form used for data collection (Appendix E) helped me to track to students' English language development as well as their comprehension during the lesson. After all data was compiled, I made a table of the results, and highlighted the areas in which students showed growth in language development, as well as when they answered questions correctly. In order to analyze if language development occurred, I tracked whether a student response changed from the first lesson to the second lesson with translanguaging strategies. If their use of English increased, for example if they responded in Spanish in the first lesson, and used an English word, sentence, or phrase in the second lesson with translanguaging, growth in English language development was

noted. Comprehension growth was measured if they answered a question correctly in the second lesson, and did not answer the question correctly in the first lesson. In my analysis I only highlighted the areas in which the students' grew as a result of the lesson using translanguaging, in comparison to the lesson that did not use translanguaging. These results were converted into percentages in order to evaluate the student participants' overall growth as a result of translanguaging strategies.

Student interviews were conducted at various times throughout the day. In giving the student interviews, all students were given the option of hearing the questions in Spanish. A Spanish-speaking teacher would then translate the question for the student to Spanish, and then translate their response from Spanish to English for me. These interviews were recorded and transcribed, however the findings are presented in English only. In order to analyze these interviews, I read through each transcribed interview session. I then identified patterns I noticed in all of the interviews. These patterns were highlighted, and I determined whether or not they answered my research question. Lastly, I read through and identified the interviews where students were able to elaborate on their feelings about the use of translanguaging strategies.

There were a total of four teacher interviews (Appendix B). Each interview was recorded and transcribed. During data analysis, I read through all interviews and coded various themes that emerged. I then reread the interviews and sorted my findings by these themes that were apparent, and selected the most compelling evidence that addressed my research question. The teacher collegial circle that I attended was also transcribed in entirety, and I coded this data in the same way as the teacher interviews. After coding the transcript of the collegial circle, I again reread this transcript and selected and sorted pieces of evidence that helped to answer my

research question. Portions of these interviews and the teacher collegial circles are presented in my findings as they support various themes that arose from this research.

Lastly, I analyzed the 16 teacher questionnaires that I received from the staff. In doing this, I first tallied each of the responses from the portion of the questionnaire where teachers responded on a scale. I then made a table and calculated percentages of responses for each level of response. Next, I read through and coded the open-ended comment section where teachers could add their thoughts about translanguaging. After doing this, I selected the pieces of evidence that helped to answer my research question, and then organized this evidence by categorizing it into the four themes that had already been determined.

Throughout data analysis, I looked for recurring themes that were present in my findings. After identifying four themes, I selected the most compelling and relevant evidence that addressed my research question. Findings were then connected to research that was presented in the literature review in order to discuss the connection that the data has to research that has already been conducted. The themes found as a result of data collection are presented in the following section.

### **Findings and Discussions**

Throughout my research, I gathered various forms of data in order to answer my research question. The quantitative data presented in tables represents student data, student responses to yes/no questions, as well as feedback from a teacher questionnaire. During my qualitative data analysis, four themes emerged. The themes that were identified are as follows: Translanguaging gives students permission to be themselves, teachers use translanguaging to strategically teach

bilingual learners, translanguaging develops students English language abilities, and language policy and programs plays a role in teachers' ideologies and use of translanguaging.

### **Quantitative Data**

During my data collection, various quantitative data were collected in order to triangulate my research. The first set of data that was collected was the student participants' NYSITELL (New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners) scores. These scores are available to district employees, and indicate the students' proficiency levels in English. These tests are given before the children enter Kindergarten in September. This data was important to collect in order to understand what language proficiency levels the student participants are identified as. Their proficiency levels can be seen below in Table 1.

Table 1  
*NYSITELL Scores*

Student	NYSITELL Score Fall 2015
Jayla	Commanding
Yolanda	Transitioning
Johanna	Entering
Maria	Entering
Yadiel	Entering
Nayeli	Entering
Charlie	Entering

The table above describes the student participants' English language proficiency levels. Jayla was identified as Commanding, indicating an advanced proficiency level. Jayla's English language can be compared to that of a native-speaking English student. Yolanda is identified as Transitioning, which is considered an intermediate proficiency level. Johanna, Maria, Yadiel, Nayeli, and Charlie have all been identified as Entering, which is considered to be at the beginning proficiency of the English language development continuum. It was important to know the students' scores in order to identify their capabilities in English while conducting the

study. Knowing these scores allowed me to evaluate the type of progress that was made. For example, it was expected that Jayla would respond mostly in English phrases and sentences and most of the time be able to comprehend lessons in English without Spanish support. As for students such as Yolanda and Maria, they might only respond in words or phrases in English. Understanding the English proficiency levels allows me to understand the impact that translanguaging has on students' language development.

Another set of quantitative data that was collected was during interviews with students. They were asked a series of questions in order for me to gain an understanding of their language of choice in the classroom and their overall comfort level with English. The table below shows their responses to a question about their language preference for the interview.

Table 2  
*Students' Language Choice for Interview*

Question	English	Spanish
Would you like to do this interview in English or Spanish?	29%	71%

This table demonstrates that the majority of students preferred to have their interview conducted in Spanish. These responses indicate that the students, though bilingual, mostly wanted to be able to fully understand the questions, and knew in order to understand completely they would need to hear them in Spanish. I was surprised however that 29% of the students wanted their interviews conducted in English. The fact some students wanted their interview conducted in English was most likely due to the fact that I am their English teacher, and hoping to show what they know in English, they wanted to attempt the questions in English. In making this decision about language, these students are choosing the identity in which they wish to reflect (Duran & Palmer 2014). Looking at the identified proficiency levels in Table 1, this data makes sense

considering most students are considered beginner ELLs. The following table shows students language preferences in the classroom.

Table 3  
*Student Language Preference in the Classroom*

Question	English	Spanish	Both
Do you like to use English, Spanish, or both languages?	0%	14%	86%

Table 3 demonstrates the majority of the students' desire to use both languages in the classroom. These responses tell me that these students have embraced their bilingualism in the classroom. Even though most of the students wanted their interview conducted in Spanish, they still like to use both languages in the classroom. Interesting as well, is that the 29% of the students who wanted their interview conducted in English did not show English only as their language of preference, indicated in Table 3. Again these choices about language connect with Duran and Palmer (2014)'s claim that students chose language to demonstrate who they want to be. Almost all the students in this interview demonstrate their desire to be bilingual. The small percentage that did not is revealing that they view themselves as a student who speaks prefers to speak Spanish in the classroom. The next table shows students' comfort level with speaking English in the classroom.

Table 4  
*Students' Level of Comfort with English in Class*

Question	Yes	No
Do you feel comfortable speaking English in class?	100%	0%

This table indicates that all students who participated in this study, regardless of English proficiency level feel comfortable using English in the classroom. Though the first language of

all student participants is Spanish, they all indicated that they felt comfortable using English in the classroom. This demonstrates that students feel safe and supported practicing their new language, and the culture for learning a second language in their classroom is a positive one. These students have been positioned as capable bilinguals (Palmer et. al, 2014). The following table will show the responses to a series of yes/no questions that students answered about the use of Spanish in the classroom, and if it helps with their overall comprehension.

Table 5  
*Students' Respond about the use of Translanguaging Strategies*

Question	Yes	No
Do you understand more when I use Spanish words?	100%	0%
Do you understand more when you can talk to a friend in Spanish before you answer in English?	100%	0%
Do you understand better in English when you've heard the same story before in Spanish?	100%	0%

Table 5 indicates that 100% of the students understand better when the teacher uses Spanish to support their learning. The students are able to understand in English when they hear Spanish words. In understanding strategically selected terms in Spanish, the students are then better able to access information they are learning in English. The students also acknowledged that they understand in English better when they are able to talk to a friend first in Spanish. This talking time allows the students to negotiate meaning in their home language, and discuss the concepts that they are learning in English. These conversations have ability to reinforce ideas learned in English by using their home language with their peers to clarify or extend their newly learned information. Lastly, all student participants indicated that they can understand a story better in

English, if they have heard it first in Spanish. Hearing the story in Spanish first can help students to understand key story elements before they listen to the story in English. Knowing the story first in Spanish allows to students to engage easier in English, as they are familiar with the characters, setting, and events, and are able to comprehend in English. This data therefore demonstrates the students' feelings about the use of translanguaging strategies as helpful to them in the classroom. The students' responses also supports the notion that multilingual practices have positive effects on learning and reinforces bilingual students' plural identities (Makalela, 2015).

Throughout my research, qualitative data was also collected through observational data, student interviews, teacher interviews, participation in a collegial circle, and a teacher questionnaire. In analyzing this data, there were four themes that emerged. The first theme is that translanguaging gives students permission to be themselves. Many teachers feel that the student is better able to learn when they are given permission to use the background knowledge that they have, regardless of the language that it is in. The second theme that emerged was that teachers who know about translanguaging, are using various strategies in their classrooms to support their bilingual learners. The next theme that was identified was that translanguaging does help the development of bilingual students' English language abilities. Lastly, many teachers expressed that language policy and programs have influenced their practice while teaching bilingual learners, which has subsequently affected their students' language development. These findings are presented in the following section by theme.

### **Translanguaging Gives Students Permission to be themselves**

One of the themes that emerged in my research is that Translanguaging allows students to be themselves. In response to the question about translanguaging and how it supports students'

English language development, Amy commented, “I do think it supports it. I think one of the most important things that translanguaging has done has really given students permission to use their entire linguistic repertoire,” (Teacher Interview, 2016). This teacher’s comment discusses how translanguaging gives permission to be who they are. She emphasizes this notion by saying it is one of the most important thing this approach to teaching has given students, is freedom to be themselves and use all the languages that they know. These students are bilingual, and the use of translanguaging not only gives them permission to use their bilingual brains, but it embraces their identity as bilingual learners (Sayer 2010).

In another interview a teacher felt similar to Amy. In a conversation about translanguaging and how it has changed her practice, Farley noted that:

It kind of gives us permission, so we do it more now. We have NLA (Native Language Arts) that is pretty exclusively in Spanish, then again if we read a book in Spanish and there is a question in Spanish for comprehension, and a student answers most of the question in Spanish, then switches back to English, and goes back to Spanish, I’m not gonna always correct them and say you must respond to me in Spanish because the goal was for them to comprehend in Spanish. (Teacher Interview, 2016)

Here, this teacher comments on how translanguaging allows students to be flexible. In this example, the student is using code-switching to express their understanding, and the goal of comprehension is accomplished. She notes how she does not penalize or discourage the use of English, because it does not hurt the child’s ability to make meaning, in fact it supports their understanding. This teacher is demonstrating how she embraces linguistic dexterity and fluidity between languages while students make meaning. When the classroom teacher allows a child’s

thought process to continue, uninterrupted between two languages, she is creating a culture for a multilingual learning environment, which is the essence of translanguaging. Sayer (2010) supports the use of code-switching when he states, “Clearly educational decisions should be informed by a linguistic and pedagogical examination of what actually helps students learn language and content,” (p.79).

Another teacher in response to the open ended comment section of the Translanguaging Questionnaire (Appendix C) noted that, “Allowing students to use all their “language repertoire” has helped to improve their language and academic development,” (Teacher Questionnaire, 2016). Therefore this teacher is noticing when students are allowed to use all of the linguistic tools that they have in an academic setting, they are able to grow. This comment concurs with Lee, Hill-Bonnet, and Raley (2011), when they highlight the notion that identity shapes learning.

As an active participant, I observed how students engaged in conversation in Spanish when given permission. These conversations were aiding students to understand the material that was being present in English. This observation, along with the findings presented in Table 5, affirms the notion that allowing students to be flexible in their language of choice, is supporting students in their academic setting. These findings agree with Palmer and Duran (2014) when they say that, “Their choices about language reflect not only whom they are but also whom they wish to be,” (p.369). These students are bilingual learners, with a desire to learn English, but understand that their entire identities as Spanish-speaking learners is valued and appreciated in the classroom.

These findings support the idea that translanguaging supports English language development because now students feel free to code-switch, and supplement with Spanish, and demonstrate their learning as bilingual learner, not just as two monolingual learners in one.

### **Teachers Use Translanguaging to Strategically Teach Bilingual Learners**

During interviews and questionnaires, teachers discussed many translanguaging strategies that they use. A reoccurring theme was the notion that translanguaging is not simply translation, it is strategic. In response to the question about how translanguaging has changed her practice, Mitchell notes that, “It’s more strategic, very focused, specific,” (Teacher Interview, 2016). Moving to a more strategic practice indicates that translanguaging was indeed happening before to support student learning, but the intentionality was not there. Strategically using translanguaging strategies allows teachers to really identify target language needs, and support students in meeting their specific language goals. This teacher continues to address her strategies for translanguaging. Mitchell gives some examples, “we use multilingual word walls...we have multilingual personal reading time,” (Teacher Interview, 2016). All of these strategies are in place to support students as they learn both Spanish and English, and as they practice using each language to support the other. She also comments on how she strategically organizes her classroom, “We are try to view our classroom the way our students are, they are bilingual, and they are a whole child,” (Teacher Interview, 2016). By setting up the classroom the way that she sees her students, this teacher is modeling and embracing the nature of being bilingual. She is establishing the cultural norms of fluidly using two languages in her classroom, and overall strategically supporting students in their language learning. This teacher is supporting students’ in their dynamic bilingualism (Garcia & Sylvan 2011).

Other teachers in this building indicated they feel comfortable using translanguaging strategies to help their diverse learners. The following table shows the responses from teachers who completed the teacher questionnaire about teacher comfort level using translanguaging strategies.

Table 6  
*Teachers' Comfort Level Using Translanguaging Strategies*

Statement	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
You feel comfortable implementing translanguaging strategies in your classroom.	6%	25%	25%	38%	6%

According to these figures represented in the table, most teachers who completed the translanguaging survey strongly agree that they feel comfortable implementing translanguaging strategies in their classrooms. There were however some teachers that were seemingly unsure about this practice when you look at the percentages of responses. This is aligned with the research that found that many teachers do not feel comfortable implementing programs in their schools without the necessary training (Heineke, 2015). The teachers' responses to the portion of the questionnaire is most likely influenced by the amount of training and familiarity they have with translanguaging. Teachers were then given a space to comment about translanguaging, and many teachers listed the strategies that they use. In the comment section on the questionnaire, a teacher noted that:

I have many items labeled in Spanish around my room, as well as days of the week, months, and body parts. My students who speak Spanish at home help others to learn Spanish words to show that we all value the Hispanic culture. (Questionnaire, 2016).

This teacher's response indicates that she is comfortable with some use of translanguaging in her classroom. Her response also indicates that she teaches a general education class with students who speak Spanish, and may not feel motivated or comfortable using more strategies than stated here. Nonetheless, these are strategies are put in place to support her ELL students' English acquisition while embracing their first language. Another teacher noted on the questionnaire, "I use a bilingual word wall. I offer 'do nows' in both languages (English and Spanish) and most assignments I use online translation services or online sites to offer Spanish classwork," (Questionnaire, 2016). This teacher also demonstrates her use of some translanguaging in her classroom. Her use of the word "offer" indicates that she recognizes that students can choose the language in which they feel comfortable completing the "do now" in. This teacher also makes an effort to translate work for students, again to "offer" them the choice of which language they would like to use. Both of these teachers exemplify the use of translanguaging strategies in their classrooms. They both are recognizing that they have bilingual learners in their classrooms, and see the value in providing these strategies that allows the practice of translanguaging to take place (Duran & Palmer, 2014).

In the Translanguaging collegial circle, teachers discuss strategies that they use, or would like to use in their classrooms. In the collegial circle that was used for data collection, Lana notes how she uses a specific strategy:

I did a lot of the preview, view, review. That's the way we are working in reading most of the time. I know I shared last time what I was doing in writing. All the time I introduce the book in Spanish, and we discuss it, and then we get to the reading in English so they see the connection. Then I knew we were gonna do some writing, so I used the book, "I can". It's obviously not a second grade level...[teacher shares example of writing]... 'My name is S, I can hop, I can write, I can climb, I feel happy,' (Translanguaging Collegial Circle, 2016).

After listening to Lana's description of the strategy she used, I questioned whether or not these students received help in this assignment. To this she replied, "So, yeah most of them used the four square, and they did a drawing. And some of them, they used translanguaging...[reads another example] "I feel feliz," (Teacher Collegial Circle, 2016). This teacher explains how she uses translanguaging to scaffold students' writing. Her specific employment of the preview-view-review strategy helps the students to negotiate the content in Spanish, before reading and writing in English. The student in this teacher's example who wrote, "I feel feliz", knew the structure of the sentence in English, however did not know how to write the word "happy". Instead of leaving his sentence incomplete, this child now has used Spanish to support his writing, and the reader's understanding of how he feels. This example supports Canajarah's (2010) study on how translanguaging supports student writing. Because of translanguaging in this example, the student was able to complete a full sentence, instead of a partial and incomplete sentence.

All of these findings exemplify how teachers are strategically using translanguaging methods in their classrooms to support the learning of their students. These strategies will lead to

the students' better understanding of content as they grow in English with the support of their native language.

### **Translanguaging Develops Students' English Language Abilities**

Findings from this research indicate that translanguaging does support English language development in bilingual learners. The following table shows teacher responses to two questions on a questionnaire about translanguaging and English language development.

Table 7  
*Teachers' Feelings about Translanguaging and English Development with ELLs*

Statement	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
You feel that translanguaging is an effective teaching strategy to use with your ELLs.	0%	12.5%	25%	50%	12.5%
You notice an improvement in your ELL's English language development as a result of using translanguaging strategies.	0%	12%	38%	25%	25%

The first question shows that half of the teachers who participated in completing this survey strongly agree that they think translanguaging is an effective strategy to use with English language learners; however only 25 % of these teachers strongly agree that they notice improvement in their English language learners' development in English as a result of

translanguaging strategies. This lack of confidence in the use of translanguaging to develop English language abilities could be for a variety of reasons. First all, these teachers might not be using translanguaging consistently enough in order to measure their students' English language development. Secondly, these teachers might also not be sure of what assessments to use to monitor student growth in their English language proficiency. Lastly, they may not truly be invested in the use of translanguaging. The lack of confidence to strongly agree with the statement that translanguaging supports English language development, relates back to Heineke (2015)'s notion that teachers feel unprepared on unsure of how to use the strategy, and therefore are not comfortable with it. Stephens and Johnson (2015) also highlight the fact that teacher buy in to a program is essential, and the responses on this questionnaire may reflect that. Though only 25% of the teachers strongly agreed with the second statement in the table above, many of the teachers who participated agreed that they noticed improvement in their ELL's English language development due to the use of translanguaging strategies. These responses on the questionnaire again indicate that some teachers are confident in this strategy's effectiveness, while others are noticing it, but may need more proof or practice with the strategy itself, which again concurs with the idea that teachers need to be prepared to implement specific programs and strategies (Heineke, 2015).

In a teacher interview, Farley responds to a question regarding her past practices incorporating translanguaging unofficially, "Because we knew in order for students to access knowledge, they needed support in their home language to be able to understand what was going on," (Teacher Interview, 2016). Here this teacher knew that in order for students to access the content in English, they needed the support in their home language, which is what she provided. In her mind supporting the student with their home language was already common sense, she

knew the home language of the students, and she knew that they did not understand the content being taught in English, so she would provide the support that they needed in Spanish. This practice seemed like it was exactly what should be done in order to best support the student in their learning. This example of a teacher's use of translanguaging informally connects to findings from Straubhaur (2013)'s study that found that students were not able to complete assignments if information was not available in Spanish. This example allows one to hypothesize that if a child cannot connect to content in their home language, they will struggle negotiate the meaning of content in their new language.

In a teacher interview, Mitchell comments on how the new dual language program allows her to be strategic in creating connections between English and Spanish. She notes:

And so now, being a one-way dual language program, really gives me the opportunity to just, in a very strategic and very natural way, create that bridge. And so now I see that using their Spanish as a resource, they're just moving along so quickly in English, and I never even thought about that. If I thought about how well that works out, I probably would have squeezed in a Spanish class at some point. (Teacher Interview, 2016).

Here Mitchell's comments indicate how she sees that students are successful in their connections between English and Spanish. She also points out that if she had known how well this strategy worked, she would have made time in her previous practice to teach her students Spanish, so they could see the connection in English. Mitchell's observation of her students' growth indicates that translanguaging in her classroom is effective, and similar to what Worthy et al. (2013) found, these strategically allotted translanguaging spaces that are made during the day for students are helping them to be successful in their English development. In this same interview,

Mitchell further articulates her belief that translanguaging strategies supports students' overall English language development. In order to provide evidence, she discusses the use of phonemic awareness to support her students in their writing:

I started using phonemic awareness for writing sight words, like the word because, or the sight word 'some' which is not 's-u-m' but 'some kids are coming over'. It was interesting because I would give them the words at the start of the week, then Friday I would say "s-u-m", but it was a tricky word, and I told them you have to write it in a different way than it sounds, but they were not getting it. So then I said, okay, let's read these tricky word in Spanish, so 'some' would be 'so-me', and 'are' would be 'a-re'. I actually have a video because I thought it was the cutest thing, because now I say, "I'm gonna tell you the word in Spanish, but this word is in English, and so you have to spell it out, and tell me what it says in English." And so I would say "a-re" and they would write "a-re", "What does it say?" and they would say "are". And then I would say okay, here's another one in Spanish, "so-me" [makes image of students writing] "Can you read it to me?" and they would say "some". Let me tell you, that they went from these ten words that they would get eight or nine wrong – and as soon as I started doing that, only one or two wrong, now they get disgusted when they get one wrong. (Teacher Interview, 2016)

Mitchell is finding that the students are able to strategically apply their knowledge of sounds in Spanish, to help them to spell tricky words in English that they will use in their writing. She notices how successful the students are when they realize that they are able to connect what they know in the first language to their writing practice in English. The students in this example also become more invested now that they have found the connection between two languages to aid their success in spelling. This example clearly shows how using what students know in their first

language, supports what they are learning in their second. This finding concurs with Lopez (2010)'s study that claims that students who obtain proficiency in their first language, transfer their phonological skills to their second language, proving as a beneficial resource in their second language learning.

Data that was collected while I was an active participant teaching using translanguaging strategies lends itself to support the idea that translanguaging does indeed support English language development. The following table shows data gathered during observations of the use of three translanguaging strategies. This table demonstrates the increase in English language development and comprehension during the lesson that used translanguaging compared to the lesson that did not.

Table 8  
*Increase in Language Development and Comprehension during Lessons with Translanguaging Strategies*

Strategy Used	English Language Development	Comprehension
Strategy 1 – Multilingual Partners	16%	67%
Strategy 2 – Strategic Translation	0%	50%
Strategy 3 – Multilingual Texts	16%	16%

This data demonstrates that Translanguaging strategies did affect students' overall English production and comprehension. When using the first strategy, multilingual partners, 16% of students increased their English language development by responding in English words, phrases, or sentences and 67% of students showed an increase of comprehension by answering the questions correctly. This growth indicates that this strategy was successful in developing

students' language development and comprehension, and students were given space to practice dynamic bilingualism (Garcia & Sylvan, 2011). When using the second strategy, strategic translation, students did not increase in their English language development; their use of English remained consistent to the lesson where no translanguaging strategy was used. However in this same lesson using the translanguaging strategy of strategic translation, 50% of the students showed an increase in their comprehension by answering the question correctly. These percentages show that this second strategy was more effective in allowing students to access the content rather than develop their productive linguistic abilities. Nonetheless, the increase in content knowledge demonstrates how strategic translation in bilingual students' language can support their learning (Straubhaar, 2013). Lastly, in the third lesson where the strategy of using multilingual texts was employed, 16% of students showed an increase of English language production, and 16% of students showed an increase of comprehension. This strategy was effective in developing student understanding in English, as well as their development of their oral language in English. This table shows clear growth due to the use of translanguaging strategies used during these lessons. The work of Duran and Palmer (2014) highlights the notion that when teachers opt to allow students to use dynamic discourse and open a new space that is not separated, yet combined and fluidly shifting, they are allowing the practice of translanguaging to take place. This space for dynamic discourse was created during the translanguaging sessions of my teaching, and growth in their English language production and comprehension was noted.

Interviewing students about their feelings of the use of English and Spanish in the classroom was another valuable piece of data. The following is from an interview with a student participant, Johanna. When asked about how she feels when she doesn't understand in English,

Johanna replied, “If I don’t understand it, I cannot say it,” (Student Interview, 2016). Therefore indicating that she sometimes needs to understand it in Spanish, so she can try and say it in English. When asked how this made her feel if she didn’t understand, Johanna noted that she felt “sad,” (Student Interview, 2016). Her lack of understanding in a learning situation can add to her overall confidence level which has the potential to affect her learning. In this same interview with Johanna, I asked her about how my use of Spanish words during English time helps her to learn more English, and she said, “To learn more English,” (Student Interview, 2016). Here Johanna’s response to this question indicates that she understands the purpose of my use of Spanish words is to help her with her English, and has the potential to support her overall motivation for being engaged if she already indicated that she feels sad when she does not understand. Her careful attention to Spanish words to support her English will help her to access content in English. Finally, I asked Johanna about how it is helpful to her when I read a story in Spanish before I read it in English. To this she replied, “It makes me more intelligent,” (Student Interview, 2016). Johanna demonstrates her awareness of her purpose in school. She understands that when I am teaching, my goal is to help her with her English, and that this particular strategy that is used, when I read a book in Spanish before I read it in English, is intended to help her to learn, and in her words, “make her more intelligent.” This interview exemplifies a student’s emotions and understanding of how the use of Spanish during English helps her to understand or use English. This student recognizes how translanguaging strategies are bridging information in Spanish, so she can understand in English (Makalela, 2015). Similarly, Yadiel responds to the question, to a question about how it helps him during lessons when I use Spanish words. Yadiel replies, “I listen,” (Student Interview, 2016). This student interview shows how Yadiel becomes engaged in a lesson when he hears Spanish words. The fact that Yadiel listens when I use

Spanish words indicates that maybe he is not listening, or not as engaged if he does not hear words that he is familiar with. Here this demonstrates how translanguaging is able to engage a bilingual learner with words he knows in his first language. Similarly, Maria responded to the same question as Yadiel about how hearing Spanish words during English class time helps her. To this question she responded, “To talk in English,” (Student Interview, 2016). Here Maria is demonstrating that she is aware that the use of Spanish during English time is meant to help her with her English. In each of these interviews, students acknowledge that the use of Spanish in the classroom helps them with their English. These interviews support Garcia and Sylvan (2011)’s claim that the focus should be on student engagement, rather than a particular language at any given point. Therefore students who are not understanding in English, can be engaged by the use of Spanish in order to negotiate meaning, for them to reach their targeted language goals.

All data presented in this section supports the idea that the use of translanguaging strategies in the classroom supports students’ English language development. Though some teacher participants were not completely sure in supporting this statement, no participant or piece of data completely negated the notion that translanguaging is an effective strategy for ELLs to develop English.

### **Language Policy and Program Plays a Role in Teachers’ Ideologies and Use of Translanguaging.**

A common theme that emerged during research was that of language policy. Many teachers found that their practices are influenced by policy mandates. In the comment section of the translanguaging questionnaire, a teacher commented that, “My old school believes this [translanguaging] is poor practice. This school strongly supports it, as does my Bilingual Extension course,” (Questionnaire, 2016). This comment shows how administration can have

differing views, as well as the ability influence practice (Heineke, 2015). In this response, it becomes evident that it is possible even in one district to have schools that have varying philosophies on language practice. It points out how a higher educational institution supports the use of translanguaging in schools.

In an interview, a teacher responds to the question about how translanguaging has changed her practice. Mitchell comments:

So I kind of saw it [translanguaging] as something that might get in the way at first when we were trying to transition. Because we were a transition school, so my mind was like, let's get rid of the problem, we just have to move them quickly. And not really understanding that I'm bilingual and I'm biliterate. I was so focused on what our school language policy was, and that was my focus. So this was something that I wanted to move them on quickly, not so much that they wanted to lose their Spanish, but their focus was 'learn English' and the focus was not maintain your language, or develop it any further, it was more English, you need to learn it, and you need you speak it, and we'll do anything we need to do to get you there as fast as possible. (Teacher Interview, 2016)

Here Mitchell discusses how the policy and school program that was in place in years prior influenced her practice. She was more concerned with immersing the students in English, and not as worried about preserving their first language, even though she herself is bilingual and didn't actually want the students to lose their first language. However as she puts it, Spanish was a "problem" and she needed to "get rid of it" to help her students to be successful in English. Mitchell's example demonstrates the power that state mandates have over teacher practice

(Salazar, 2008). In response to the same question, Lana, a teacher participant, talks about how a transitional program was sending the wrong message. She notes:

It was hard because the system was telling you something else. And also I wanted to help the kids, like if you do everything in Spanish, and you don't do it in English, and they take the ELA test in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, they are going to struggle. So I knew they needed more English, but I was sad that you had to get rid of Spanish. (Teacher Interview, 2016)

In her response, Lana is expressing frustration due to the program type of being transitional. Her feelings are similar to Mitchell's in that she knew she needed to help her students learn English quickly if they were going to transition, even if it meant not developing their Spanish literacy skills. These teacher interviews support Heineke (2015)'s findings that top down policies have the ability to silence teachers. These findings also support Makalela (2015)'s claim that notes that policies that are aimed toward the dominant language culture, English, ultimately limit bilingual and multilingual learners.

Ultimately the data collected from these teachers regarding language policy reveals that their ability to use translanguaging has enhanced their practice. Teachers are now able to use both languages fluidly in the classroom, and are not constrained by a language policy or program that keeps them from doing this. The shift in language policy in this school has overall enhanced learning and student achievement in both English and Spanish.

### **Implications**

The findings of my research supports the notion that translanguaging is an effective practice that supports bilingual learners' English language development. This research suggests

multiple implications for teachers of diverse populations. First of all, teachers must decide how translanguaging aligns with their school's language programs and policies, as well as their own ideologies. Secondly, educators must understand how embracing a student's culture embraces the development of their identities and can support academic growth. Lastly, teachers must decide how to incorporate translanguaging strategies into their practice of teaching bilingual students.

Teachers should understand how policies and programs affect their teaching. Palmer et al. (2014) note how teachers have the ability to position students as capable bilinguals. Using translanguaging in the classroom allows teachers position their students as capable bilingual learners. They first however have to analyze how rigid the language programs and policies are in their school. Once teachers assess the programs that their school dictates, they have the power to find a way for translanguaging in their classrooms. According to Salazar (2008), teacher ideologies can affect practice. My research found that teachers who were guided using rigid language policy were not able to perform best practices that would have incorporated translanguaging. However, a teacher noted that if she knew how beneficial translanguaging was when she was teaching in her previously mandated language program, she would have found space for it in her classroom. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to understand their personal ideologies in relation to policies and programs, evaluate what is identified as research-based best practices, and decide how they are going to incorporate these best practices into their classroom. In this case, teachers must decide how translanguaging will fit into their teaching, after identifying how the use of this practice aligns or misaligns with their language teaching ideologies.

Teachers must embrace a student's entire identity, and value their funds of knowledge. My research indicated that students felt happy when they were provided opportunities in Spanish, as it allowed them background knowledge or language that they needed to participate in a discussion in English. My findings also revealed that teachers notice a difference in their students when they are given permission to be who they are – bilingual. These findings support Duran and Palmer (2014)'s belief that language connects to identity, and the languages that students chose to use not only exemplify who they are, but who they wish to be. Straubhaar (2013) notes how ELL students are a non-dominant group in today's society whose culture capital is not valued. By using translanguaging, and valuing the culture capital of bilingual learners, teachers have the power to enhance these students' overall educational experience.

In order to facilitate English language development, teachers can use translanguaging strategies to support students in their learning. In my findings, many teachers discuss the variety of translanguaging strategies that they see working in their classrooms. My findings, along with the work of Straubhaar (2013) and Martin-Beltran (2014) support the notion that translanguaging is an effective practice in the classroom. Similarly, Garcia and Sylvan (2011) discuss how translanguaging and the choice of language being used is not about policy, it is about the child. Therefore if the goal in education is implement strategies that are student-centered to promote their achievement, it is necessary that teachers learn how to incorporate translanguaging into their practice.

### Conclusions

Research was conducted in order to answer the question, how does the use of translanguaging support bilingual learners' overall English language development? In order to conduct this research, a focus group of students was created in a bilingual kindergarten classroom. These students participated in lessons where specific translanguaging strategies were employed. Interviews were conducted with the students from the focus group as well as selected teachers in the school. In addition, a survey about translanguaging was distributed to collect data for this study. Lastly, research was conducted at a collegial circle that focused on the use of translanguaging strategies in the classroom. The findings from this research indicate that translanguaging is in fact an effective practice in developing students' English language proficiency. Findings also show that some teachers are effectively using translanguaging, though not all teachers are comfortable with using translanguaging strategies, or they are only beginning to attempt to create space for dynamic discourses in their classrooms. This research also found that language policy had in fact played a role in teachers' practice, and their teaching has changed since a new program has allowed them the ability to use translanguaging in their classroom. Overall, translanguaging embraces a child's first language and encourages a child to fluidly switch between each language to effectively negotiate meaning, and this approach to teaching allows students to be successful in their English language development.

Translanguaging also helps affirm students' identities as bilingual learners. It is important teachers become well versed and trained on how to use translanguaging strategies in order to feel comfortable and see the positive effects in their own classroom, and find how this practice can fit with current language policies and programs that are in place. In this study I used the culture as a disability theory to frame my research. My findings and implications highlight ways in which

educators can use translanguaging for best practices and position a student as “able” rather than “disabled” in the classroom.

If provided the opportunity to conduct this study again, there are a few things I would do differently. First of all, I would use more focus groups at various grade-levels ranging from K-6. I would conduct research in both the bilingual and general education classrooms. Using more focus groups would mean that I would also observe lessons rather than being the teacher as an active participant the entire time. Secondly, I would conduct interviews with both general education teachers, bilingual teachers, and administration. I would also add more of a range of responses to my teacher questionnaire, including options for teachers to somewhat disagree or strongly disagree. Lastly, if able, I would conduct a year-long study in order to document consistent growth as it occurred.

After completing my research, I am left with not only implications for educators, but questions about best practices for students regarding translanguaging. The first questions is how can teachers find a way to incorporate translanguaging regardless of rigid language policy? This school that was used for research had a program that supported the use of translanguaging, but schools that have a strict policy might not have the space, or see the value in translanguaging. Secondly, how can monolingual general education teachers be encouraged to use translanguaging in the classroom to support their English language learners? There were only a few general education teachers who returned the survey in this study, and it would be extremely beneficial for more teachers to become familiar with translanguaging strategies, especially if they have bilingual learners in their classroom. Lastly, do teachers have to speak the students’ language to be successful at translanguaging? Though there are ways for educators to implement translanguaging strategies without knowing a child’s native language, will they be as successful

as a teacher who does know the language? These are all questions worth considering as administrators and teachers embrace the notion of translanguaging in the classroom and at their school.

There were some limitations when conducting this study. The first and biggest limitation for this study was being able to only work with students in my classroom. Due to my schedule, I was unable to observe or work with students in any other classroom. Secondly, and connected to the first limitation is the fact that my classroom is made up of kindergarteners who are either five or six years old. The ages of these students play a large role especially during interview times when students were expected to elaborate on their thinking or feelings about particular strategies that I was using. Finally, another limitation was the fact that I only received 16 questionnaires back from the teaching staff at the school. In order to get the best data, it would have been beneficial for all teachers to return the questionnaire.

As classrooms become more diverse, it is important for teachers to consider how they are supporting those students with varying linguistic needs. It is essential that students feel that their culture is valued in the classroom setting as they begin to grow. Using translanguaging is one way to accomplish this academic growth. By valuing and supporting students in their native language, they will have an easier time transferring what they know to English, and developing the literacy skills they need to be successful in their schools. Though more research is to be done on the effectiveness of translanguaging and language development, this study serves as quick view into a school where translanguaging is effective, and growth is taking place because of teachers' dedication to supporting their linguistically diverse students.

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## Appendix A

### Student Interview Questions

1. Do you want to do this interview in English or Spanish?
2. Do you prefer to use English or Spanish in class?
3. Do you like to use English more, or Spanish more? Do you like to use both languages the same?
4. Do you feel comfortable speaking in English in class?
5. Do you understand better when I use Spanish words?
6. Do you understand more when you can talk to a friend in Spanish before you answer?
7. Do you understand better in English when you've heard the same story before in Spanish?
8. Do you understand when I only speak in English? (Never, A little, most of the time, or all of the time).
9. How do you feel when you speak English in the classroom?
10. Can you explain how you feel when you don't understand something during English time?
11. When I use Spanish words during English time, how does that help you?
12. How does hearing a story in Spanish before you hear it during English time help you to understand in English?
13. How does talking to your partner in Spanish help you to understand what we are talking about in English?

## **Appendix B**

### **Teacher Interview Questions**

1. How long have you been learning about translanguaging and using it in your classroom?
2. How has the use of translanguaging changed your practice and view on bilingual education?
3. Would you support the notion that translanguaging supports a student's overall English language development? Do you have evidence of observational data to support or dispute this idea?
4. What translanguaging strategies do you use in your classroom?
5. Do you think translanguaging strategies would be useful for students who are bilingual, yet not in bilingual programs?
6. Comments/Anything you'd like to add about your experience and understanding of translanguaging?

## Appendix C

### Translanguaging Questionnaire

*Dear Staff,*

*I am completing action research for my capstone project at St. John Fisher College. My research is about how translanguaging strategies develop English Language Learners' overall English proficiency. Below are some questions about how you use, or do not use, translanguaging strategies in your practice. If you don't mind, please take a minute to fill out the questions below, sign the consent form (see attached) so I can use this data in my study, and return to my mailbox (Champlin) by Friday, March 11<sup>th</sup>. Your participation is greatly appreciated!*

*Thank you!*

*Molly Champlin (ESOL)*

**Directions:** Please complete the questions below using the following scale:

**1** Disagree **2** Somewhat Agree **3** Agree **4** Strongly Agree or N/A if the question does not apply to you.

1. What grade/subject do you teach? \_\_\_\_\_

2. You have heard of and know what translanguaging is.    1    2    3    4    N/A

3. You feel comfortable implementing translanguaging strategies in your classroom

1   2   3   4   N/A

4. You feel that translanguaging is an effective teaching strategy to use with your English Language Learners 1   2   3   4   N/A

5. You notice an improvement in your English Language Learners' English development as a result of using translanguaging strategies 1   2   3   4   N/A

6. You would like more professional development surrounding translanguaging 1 2 3 4  
N/A

7. You could lead professional development surrounding translanguaging 1 2 3 4 N/A

8. Comments about translanguaging, what it is, how it is involved in your teaching practice, or if you'd like to incorporate it into your teaching practice:

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## **Appendix D**

### **Protocols and Guiding Questions for Translanguaging for Collegial Circle**

#### **Protocols:**

1. Each teacher shares a strategy that they tried or would like to try from the reading assigned prior to the meeting.
2. Each teacher will produce an artifact from a lesson that they have taught or plan to teach that is directly linked to a translanguaging strategy.
3. Other teachers may comment or ask questions about the strategy being shared.
4. All strategies should be connected back to the meetings' guiding questions.

#### **Guiding Questions for Meeting on 2/25/2016**

1. How can we build students' writing ability through the use of all of their languages?
2. How can we build students' content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?
3. How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?

**Appendix E****Observational Data**

<b>Student</b>	<b>Responds in English in complete sentence</b>	<b>Responds in English phrases/words</b>	<b>Responds in both English and Spanish</b>	<b>Responds in Spanish only</b>	<b>Answers Question Correctly</b>	<b>Answers Questions Incorrectly</b>
Jayla						
Lianna						
Yolanda						
Maria						
Johanna						
Yadiel						
Nayeli						
Charlie						