

Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Impact of Sustained ESL/Bilingual Professional Development

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Abstract

As English-speaking industrialized countries experience waves of immigration, they struggle to provide immigrant children ESL (English as a Second Language) or bilingual instruction. Short on finances, school districts often offer teachers limited or no professional development regarding instructing English-language learners (ELLs). Yet, there is little research on the changes that experienced teachers make after receiving sustained ESL/bilingual training. This qualitative case study chronicles the results that 73 in-service teachers observed when they engaged in a sustained program of ESL/bilingual professional development. It reports changes in the teachers themselves, in their pedagogy, and changes they observed in the children they instruct.

With the impact of global immigration, a number of English-speaking industrialized countries educate large numbers of children for whom English is a second language (ESL). As the world moves toward global perspectives of education, these countries have concurrently experienced issues around the training and support of ESL teachers that can jeopardize effective instruction of immigrant children. For example, in the US, the total number of kindergarten through 12th-grade students increased 8.5% in the decade between 1998 and 2008, while the English-Language-Learner (ELL) population grew 53.2%, from 3.5 million to 5.3 million students (Batalova & McHugh, 2010). Yet, the US faced a shortage of teachers trained in ESL instruction. In 1997, the National Center for Educational Statistics issued its most recent report on the proportion of US teachers of ELLs who had the necessary training. At that time, 70% of those teaching ELLs had no training in ESL instruction; and fewer than 3% had received a degree in ESL or bilingual teaching (U.S. Department of Education, 1997).

After conducting a survey of five school districts across the US with high volumes of ELLs, Smith-Davis (2004) found continuing shortages of ESL and bilingual teachers and a lack of language and cultural understanding among general educators. Some districts turned to bilingual para-educators to provide instruction; however, certified teachers had trouble evaluating interactions because they could neither understand the assistants' teaching nor the children's responses. Batt (2008) discovered that, in Idaho, the majority of those teaching academic content to ELLs were teaching assistants rather than certified personnel. Harper and de Jong (2009) asserted that in many U.S. states, similar to their Florida case study, (1) the insufficient professional development for in-service teachers and (2) the "infusing" of ESL-oriented preparation into pre-service teachers' general curriculum (as a substitute for ESL-bilingual coursework) have resulted in inadequate classroom instruction of ELLs.

Similar challenges face Canada, Great Britain, and Australia. After noting the deleterious effects that stress, lack of opportunities for professional collaboration, and the pace of change have had on the professional development of Australian ESL teachers, Davison (2001) summed his view of ESL in Australia:

I would argue that the scale and rate of change in Australian education, exacerbated by the pressure to meet political rather than professional timelines, has been a particular and obvious stumbling block to successful implementation of ESL education at all levels. (pp. 87-88)

Regarding Canada, MacPherson, Kouritzin, and Sohee (2005) related the tension between the exploding need for Canadian ESL teachers and the difficulty of maintaining professional standards as more people enter the field. In Canada, as in other countries, financial issues can hurt educational programs, including ESL. Early and Hooper (2001) described budget shortfalls in Vancouver, resulting in severe teacher cutbacks and the firing of the district's entire ESL support team.

Assessing ESL in Great Britain, Leung and Franson (2001) reported that, as of the writing of their article, Great Britain required no specific training for those teaching ELLs other than an ordinary teaching credential. The authors mentioned Gardiner's research (1996), which found that two-thirds of British student-teachers felt "poorly prepared" for work with ESL students (p. 9).

While there is a good deal of international controversy regarding the amount of professional development needed to teach ELLs skillfully, there is little research on the perceptions of those receiving education in the discipline regarding the skills that their training has brought to them and any changes they see in their students. The purpose of this qualitative

research was to discover in-service teachers' views of the changes that a traditional six-course, 18-semester-hour university ESL-bilingual program had made in their professional lives and any results they observed in their students. The study's primary research question was similar: What are in-service teachers' perceptions regarding the impact of sustained ESL or bilingual professional development? This research was part of a larger mixed-method program evaluation; however, this portion of the research could also be viewed as a case-study. Four cohorts of in-service teachers, engaged in a program of study that led to an ESL or bilingual endorsement to their teaching certificates, formed the bounded case.

Theoretical Background

Knowles provided seminal theoretical work in 1973 regarding adult professional development (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). He suggested six principles for effective education of adults, which he termed *andragogy*. These principles emphasize that adults require instruction that (1) offers the reasons for learning particular content; (2) treats adults as self-directed learners; (3) acknowledges adults' life-experience; (4) meets their personal needs and goals; (5) provides learning that will help them in real-life situations; and (6) respects internal motivation.

In addition, researchers have discovered that sustained professional-development efforts, rather than short in-service exposures, aid adults in incorporating change into their professional lives (Sato, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2008; Sugrue, 2011). Also, adults are better able to sustain changes when they have the support of other adults, rather than trying to navigate change on their own (Lomos, Hofman, & Bosker, 2011; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Showers, 1996).

Methods

This qualitative research involved 73 in-service teachers who formed four cohorts at an Illinois university, pursuing an endorsement to their teaching certificates in either ESL or

bilingual education. One cohort met on campus; the other three met in various districts' schools. The course of study lasted about 18 months. To obtain the Illinois endorsement in ESL or bilingual education, the state requires teachers (1) to hold a valid teaching certificate, (2) to engage in 18 semester-hours of study that includes the following areas: linguistics, theoretical foundations of teaching ESL, assessment of bilingual students, methods and materials for teaching ESL, and cross-cultural studies for teaching limited-English-proficient students, and (3) to undertake either 100 hours of clinical experience or three months of teaching experience with ESL students (Illinois State Board of Education, 2013). For a bilingual endorsement, a teacher also needs to pass a language test.

The majority of teacher-participants in the study were born in the United States and grew up speaking English; however, some teachers had Spanish-speaking parents and spoke Spanish as their first language. Two of the four cohorts contained international teachers, recruited in Spanish-speaking countries to teach Illinois bilingual students. In one cohort the majority of teachers, 9 of 12, came from Mexico, Spain, Puerto Rico, or Central or South America. In another cohort, about half the teachers were born and educated outside the US. The 73 teachers received support for their studies through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

There were six sources of data for the research. First, as an evaluator of the federal project, the researcher held 90-minute focus groups with each cohort of teachers regarding their perceptions of their program of study; and a professional transcriber transcribed these recorded sessions. The researcher also took field notes regarding these focus groups, providing a second data source. Third, during each of their six courses, the teachers kept a log of the changes they made to their practices, based on what they had learned, and recorded any results they observed in their students. Fourth, at the end of each of their courses, the teachers wrote a reflection on

any ways they had integrated their own ESL learning into their classroom instruction and into their work with colleagues. They also reflected on any results they had observed from the integration. Lastly, the researcher also met on a number of occasions with the program's administrative team to plan the evaluation and gather background information. Likewise, she read all of the program documents for context. The focus-group transcripts, the field notes, the teachers' logs, their final reflections, the meeting notes, and the background documents provide the triangulated data sources.

The university's Institutional Review Board approved the research. Teachers' participation in a focus group was optional. Since focus groups offered the teachers a venue to provide feedback on their program that could result in program improvement, nearly all participated and seemed eager to do so. The grant evaluation required the teachers to complete the logs and reflections; however, they had the option of asking that their documents not be used for research purposes. None of the teachers requested that their logs or reflections be eliminated from professional research. All teacher-participants' names remain confidential.

Analysis and Results

The researcher read and reread transcripts, notes, and documents, developing codes that resulted in five themes. The teachers' ESL/bilingual study led to changes in their (1) general pedagogy, (2) specific classroom techniques, (3) compassion for students and understanding of their needs, (4) more integration with parents and community, and (5) professional career growth with deepening social networks. In a number of these areas, the teachers also noted the effect of their own changes on their students or the students' families. A more detailed analysis of each of the five themes follows.

Teachers Reported that Their Coursework Prompted General Changes in the Way They Provided Instruction

One area where teachers described general change was in having higher expectations for their students. An international teacher stated, “I have modified my instruction to adjust to the needs of my bilingual students, where they have more of a context-rich, high-expectations content, which they can relate to their lives and create meaningful input that should support long-term learning.”

Almost universally mentioned was the value of SIOP, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Plan, as a way to structure instruction.

I have integrated in my classroom the SIOP lesson plan that we created for an assignment. I used the SIOP model that our professor discussed in detail with us. It is a valuable tool that allows you to break down your lesson into the four domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This format allows you to create a lesson (or various lessons) that will give the ELL student the necessary components he/she needs to understand the English language. My lesson plan dealt with pronouns, and I have created the materials to practice and integrate the lesson into my classroom instruction.

In a related change, teachers noted that they had begun to integrate students with different levels of language ability in cooperative projects. “The change worked well; the higher functioning students were able to help struggling learners understand and use the concepts to present more clearly.” They also mentioned having students self-assess their language and content learning, making them more accountable for their learning.

A teacher shared other general pedagogical changes that helped engage her students. As I completed my Change-in-Instructional-Practices log, I found that teaching in a variety of ways, such as student-led instruction and adding cultural awareness into

everyday lessons, really helped further enhance the learning and kept students engaged in lessons more. The best part for me was that these changes were simple and seemed to really help with understanding.

Another teacher expressed a similar thought. “Another valuable thing I took away from the class was valuing their heritage more and their knowledge more. I think accessing prior knowledge before every single lesson is a necessity.” A teacher reported one way she assessed young students on their background knowledge.

In order to build background knowledge, during my guided reading block, one group was going to read a fiction story about a bear that gets lost in the city. Before the students opened their books, I gave each student a paper. Each student had to draw an item or several items that they will see in the city. Most of the students drew pictures that correlated with things they can see in a city. One student drew a farmhouse. As a teacher, I realized I had to focus on that particular student when I was building background knowledge.

Teachers also found it valuable simply to slow down.

A change I have made to my current teaching practice is allowing the students more time to discuss the content within the classroom. At times I felt I had to rush to get through the content, but now I realize how vital it is for students to discuss and analyze the content.

Teachers increased their awareness of how helpful their students found visuals.

I also used visuals in each class. I used to only use them occasionally, but I have found through this assignment that visuals can be very helpful to students. As I was reading a short story in class, I displayed pictures and had students write what connections the

pictures might have with the story we were reading. This promoted higher-level thinking and was fun for the students as well.

Another teacher noticed the following student reaction when she used more visuals: “My students are more engaged, willing to share their new knowledge, and motivated to learn the concepts I am presenting. I am in the process of developing picture files to augment the visual learning process.”

Along with using visuals, teachers changed their delivery style. “I try to use simpler language. I am also more animated and use more hand gestures. I repeat myself more often and rephrase.” Teachers who had considered code-switching undesirable began to use the practice. A bilingual teacher shared this story:

One student wanted to share with his classmates that alligators live in the water. He said, “Los alligators viven en el agua.” I understood what he meant; however, my non-speakers in my classroom did not know what an alligator was. I had to explain in Spanish that an alligator is the translation for a caimán and said, “Los caimanés viven en el agua.” Even though this was something small that took place in my classroom, I felt prepared to assist my students in their learning and helped my non-speakers understand what was said without anyone feeling left out and not knowing. Also, I taught the first student how to say alligator in Spanish. I no longer feel code-switching sounds unprofessional.

Similarly, some teachers who had formerly prohibited Spanish in their ESL classrooms now allowed it. A teacher noted the impact this had on her students. “This made them feel more comfortable, and they also helped other students with vocabulary.”

Another teacher noted a similar practice of valuing the students' first language.

Some of the simplest changes were easy. I try to make language links with the students' first languages as a tool students can use to try to discover meanings of new words they encounter. Because Spanish is largely descended from Latin, and much of English is also, I find that some of the more difficult or academic terms students encounter look fairly similar in the two languages.

Teachers found that, even in technical subjects such as mathematics, introducing a language objective as well as a content objective helped students learn, even advanced students who were not necessarily English language learners. A focus-group participant shared this thought:

Even in my like higher classes, where I had like an accelerated math class, I still found myself using that [language objectives] way more than I had been because I was thinking kind of, "OK, they're advanced; we can move through things more quickly." And we could, but they benefited so much more when I spent more time on the actual language part of it. They were really able to, when they had to write how to do things, their use of the math language was even better with those accelerated kids. So it changed how I looked at my higher kids, not just the lower kids. I just kind of assumed some of that stuff, because they can do the math. But language in it was harder for them too, so it was good.

Teachers mentioned other pedagogical changes they had introduced: Using long-term goals to backwards-plan their lesson and content objectives, pinpointing key vocabulary and content; posting lesson and content objectives; and integrating more technology into learning. In sum, in addition to these changes, the teachers' ESL/bilingual coursework prompted them to (1)

expect more from their second-language students; (2) integrate students of different language abilities in cooperative learning projects; (3) increase the variety of their teaching techniques; (4) value the students' heritage; (5) assess background knowledge, filling gaps; (6) slow their pace; (7) introduce more visuals; (8) animate their speech; (9) use more hand gestures; (10) repeat and rephrase; (11) have students self-assess; (12) use SIOP to plan instruction; (13) allow code-switching; and (14) both respect and allow students to use their first language in class.

Teachers Learned and Practiced a Variety of Specific Classroom Techniques

A number of teachers found valuable the technique of allowing ESL students time to think and share with each other before speaking in class. "In my classroom we do "think, pair, share" sharing circles, and TAI (talk about it) on a daily basis. The power that comes from the student thinking of a sentence and then orally sharing it is great. These students need that time to form thoughts and not feel pressured or rushed to perform."

An international teacher explained how she used the inside-outside circle activity to promote more speaking.

I used this activity during my ESL class so students could practice speaking in English.

This activity was an excellent opportunity for students who normally do not interact with other students. I realized I need to incorporate more physical activities into my lessons.

Equally popular were written methods that helped the bilingual students visualize their thoughts. "I have been using graphic organizers to see what the students already know or to bring up 'remember when we talked about this.' When the kids are able to access that knowledge using a visual, they comprehend it a lot better."

A first-grade teacher shared a story about using the cooperative-strip-paragraph technique. She broke her first-graders into groups, and asked each group to devise a sentence about the life cycle of a butterfly.

Then we come together and try to put them together in a certain order. We decide what the order is; and we edit it together, the whole class, which was very powerful for the whole class, just on the editing phase of writing. And it didn't have anything to do with English language per say, just how to organize information. It took us a long while, but they were excited, "Oh, that's my sentence." "That's the one my group did." And so it really engaged them in the whole process. And after that, we took our paragraph, I typed it up, and they read it as part of the small group reading. And every single kid, no matter what level reader they were, was able to read our paragraph, even though it had science words in it.

Teachers found the multicultural picture file helpful in subjects as technical as mathematics.

The multicultural picture file was a file of 5-10 pictures in which we had to design questions and activities based on different aspects of language...As a middle-school math teacher, I do not "teach" my students aspects of the English language since I am a math teacher. However, I am regularly teaching the students new vocabulary and figures of speech...I have already used my multicultural picture file as a "hook" in a lesson about ratios and percent. The students were very motivated due to the visuals I brought to the lesson.

At a focus group, one of the teachers described a component of the multicultural picture, "And part of the assignment is to make sure that the picture is multi-cultural so we're not just using a

picture that we might encounter, but we're including kids in our class by having them see people like them or people different than them."

Also popular was the technique of having students hold up cards, A to D, to answer multiple choice questions, or red and green cards for a quick temperature check. One teacher shared, "These are great because it is a quick assessment on how many students understand a question or how they feel about a certain topic...Students do not just shout out the answers, and it gives students a little more of a wait time." A high school teacher noted that he used the multiple-choice cards to help prepare students for the ACT test.

An international teacher described using the carousel activity.

I used this activity to activate student's prior knowledge about the workers of the community. The class was divided into groups of five, and each group had a different colored marker to write on a poster. I explained and modeled to students how to rotate between stations every time they heard a bell's sound. Students were excited because they had the opportunity to move around their classroom.

In addition, teachers reported using many other new techniques: pictorial input charts, total physical response, number wheels, inquiry charts, picture sorts, mix-n-match, exit slips, word walls, picture walls, 4-corner strategy, vocabulary visits, photo tours, stir-the-class strategy, and each-teach. Their ESL/bilingual coursework introduced the in-service teachers to dozens of specific new techniques and encouraged them to use these techniques with their students.

Teachers Developed a Deeper Compassion for Their Students and a Greater Awareness of Their needs

Teachers found they were able to see their students in sharper focus.

The first important thing this course has taught me is to *notice* when a student might need help with science and social studies, not with the content but more with the English grammar and language aspects of the lesson. I can use my picture file as a whole-group bell ringer to pinpoint students that might benefit from smaller group lessons on grammar and language. [Emphasis in the original.]

In one course, teachers conducted interviews in their schools with students and teachers about their bilingual experience. “When interviewing the students, I was able to understand what a potentially bewildering experience school could be for them. I also learned about their families and the differing types and levels of bilingualism with which they deal.”

Sometimes this compassion grew out of an awareness of the teacher’s own preconceived notions. A teacher who immigrated to the US as a 10-year old reflected on her own bias. “One of the most extraordinary things that I learned was that sometimes even our own unbiased opinion is really biased, and usually more than we expected! After partaking in the learning of new information, it became clearer how unfair we treat our English language learners.”

Another teacher who had grown up in a Spanish-speaking home and did not learn English until the age of seven currently works in a mainstream classroom. The coursework helped awaken her compassion for students similar to her seven-year-old self. “Even though I am not a bilingual teacher, this course helped me appreciate the influence that we have on our students. It has increased my interest in educating myself more about the needs of bilingual students so that I can help them as much as I can.”

Teachers who worked in mainstream classrooms often reached a greater understanding of issues some of their students faced. After her linguistics class, a teacher shared the following:

My school serves a population that is approximately 85% Hispanic, where Spanish is the predominant language spoken at home. As a result, many students in my class exhibit the same linguistic challenges as the students found in an ESL classroom. One area that my students frequently struggle with is writing. Now, when I read my students' work, I have a greater understanding of why they make so many syntactical errors. In response, I now try to include strategies to help my students learn the correct syntactical structure into my lesson plans. One strategy I have implemented for creating richer text and modeling proper syntax is shared writing.

In addition to the student needs addressed above, teachers also mentioned an increased ability to notice when a student struggles not with lesson content but with the language aspects of a lesson; being able to analyze a students' language ability by comparing minority language development to the second language; having an increased capacity to decipher students' writing; appreciating the difficulty of learning English; and understanding that student-led teaching is the best approach. To sum, activities in which they engaged as part of their coursework, class discussions, and course content allowed teachers these insights plus an enhanced facility to see the world through their students' eyes. These gifts prompted compassion for those they taught and sharpened the teachers' understanding of what might aid their students' learning.

Teachers Worked to Integrate Parents into the School and Reached Out to the Community

Teachers described a number of ways in which their courses stimulated them to reach out to parents. One teacher took interest in not only in her school's communications, but also the physical environment. "I have been working on translating office materials and other school

entry-way information...It is important for parents and students to see signage and materials in their language to know that they are valued and accepted as part of the school community.”

A high school counselor mentioned displaying positive images in her office, such as postcards, symbols of diversity, and messages in the students’ first language. She also tried to reach out directly to Spanish-speaking parents.

I have strived to create and maintain positive communication with the community. Most recently I held a curriculum night in Spanish for all eighth-grade parents, and I think it served to include them in the school community as well as involve them in their child’s education.

Other teachers became aware of the repercussions poverty had on the immigrant community in which their students lived.

I am sensitized to not only the plight of immigrant assimilation in a foreign land, but also to the poverty level in which my students live. Having an understanding of my students’ background helps me tailor my classroom to their needs. For example, I give time in class for individual work. Not only do I have a difficult time getting students to return work they have taken home, but I realize many of my students’ parents are unable to help them with their homework. I also realize that many of my students have extra family responsibilities, which may prevent them from finishing their homework.

Since one cohort came from a community that is mostly Latino, a focus-group participant expressed a wish that all the teachers could obtain ESL or bilingual endorsements.

I think, all in all, it’s too bad that being in the city that we work in, whichever district, it is too bad that more people, more of our teachers, don’t go through this program because we do have such a high population of students that either are currently in the program

[bilingual classes] or recently exited from the program. And I think it would give a better understanding of the difficulties that those kids experience, especially after they've exited, the difficulties that they've gone through; and I think that would help us all to be better teachers.

Awakened community awareness sometimes expanded beyond the bilingual community.

Another teacher asserted:

I have also gained new ideas about what to do with my non-bilingual classes. I have a group of 100 students who all read between 3rd and 6th grade level, even though they are freshmen in high school. During the first presentation [in class], one group talked about PALS, Parents Advocating for Literacy, and I thought that would be a perfect group that we should start in the freshman academy to teach the parents the same reading strategies that we teach in class.

In summation, their ESL/bilingual coursework, their work with fellow teachers, and their own reflections provoked teachers to reach beyond their classrooms to parents and the community. They reported translating materials for parents; holding meetings in the parents' language; creating welcoming signage in the students' and parents first language; a broadening community awareness; and, given demands on families, replacing homework expectations with in-class activities.

Teachers Experienced Professional Career Growth

Teachers noticed that having time for reflection proved valuable. For a class project, one teacher chose to evaluate her bilingual program.

This is the one [project] I have enjoyed the most, not only because we had to interview different members of our school community and had a conversation about the program, which is not always that easy, but because we had to research the world around us, that

affects us and is affected by us. All these opinions that we hold in everyday life had to be reviewed and reapproved with the gain in experience that we had through this course. It was a very interesting insight work to do. All this made this class very close to our reality and, therefore, very valid for us.

Some teachers appreciated the refreshment and confidence-building that came with expanding their skills and meeting new colleagues.

I would say it hasn't been very long since I've been out of college, an undergrad, so it's nice because it's opened up a new type of study for me that is very relevant for the school that I work in. So I feel like I'm gaining a lot of knowledge, working with other coworkers and other teachers, so I feel that my professional goals are being met; and I'm feeling confident about what I'm gaining from them.

Through the classes, teachers learned from each other as well as from the instructor. There were also many opportunities to collaborate with each other in the classroom as well as share resources and lessons with one another. As a result of the openness to share and cooperate with each other, my repertoire of resources and lessons has increased and will benefit my students greatly.

The fact that the classes enrolled teachers from different school districts deepened the well from which the teachers drew ideas.

I was also able to learn more facts about the differences in bilingual programs throughout various school districts. Many of the other teachers would state strategies s/he used in his/her classroom to help strengthen the knowledge of his/her students. I took those teaching strategies and utilized them into my own classroom to help my own students.

Teachers expressed appreciation for the exposure to new colleagues, not only from different districts, but also from their own district and schools.

This course has given me an opportunity to work with my colleagues from the World Languages Department. Two women in specific I do not associate with during my day, I have enjoyed speaking to them about their students. Additionally I have had the chance to meet teachers from xxx [a neighboring district], which I have never done before, and I finally have seen their school, which I have wanted to do in the past 18 years of teaching. There is a mutual respect between both districts that I have come to appreciate during this course.

Teachers also shared their new knowledge with colleagues outside of the program. One teacher noted, “I gave my SIOP lesson to the language arts teacher, who was able to incorporate it into her lesson.”

A psychology teacher who found it “interesting to learn about the effects of multiple languages on the thinking process” thought that multilingualism had a positive effect on “the cognitive processing of our thoughts and creativity.” This new knowledge inspired him to take action. “I have actually initiated dialogue to look into the possibility of creating some kind of charter or magnet school that would utilize two-way dual language classes as part of the instruction.”

The teachers also described filling gaps in understanding of educational concepts, things teachers “didn’t know that I didn’t know;” developing a research-based understanding of bilingual education; having professional dialogues with a cohort of teachers who share a learning history; and receiving exposure to teachers from different grade levels—elementary, middle, and high school. In summation, their program encouraged reflection, built confidence, exposed

teachers to new colleagues and ideas from different grades, schools, and districts, stimulated sharing outside of the program, and prompted some blue-sky notions.

Summary of Themes

Table 1 summarizes the elements that comprise the five areas where sustained ESL/Bilingual professional development had an effect on in-service teachers. The two areas with the most numerous effects were specific classroom techniques and general pedagogy.

Table 1

Elements that Comprise Five Areas of Professional-Development Impact on Teachers

<u>Adjusting General Pedagogy</u>	<u>Introducing Specific Classroom Techniques</u>	<u>Expanding Compassion for and Understanding of ELL Students</u>	<u>Increasing Integration with Parents and Community</u>	<u>Experiencing Professional Career Growth</u>
Having higher expectations of ELL students	Think, pair, share	Viewing students in sharper focus	Translating office materials	Appreciating the value of reflection
Integrating students of different language abilities	Inside-out circle activity	Understanding difficulty of entering school not knowing language	Displaying signage in both English and minority language	Feeling professionally refreshed
Increasing variety of teaching techniques	Graphic organizers	Recognizing unfair treatment of ELLs	Displaying pictures and symbols of diversity	Having more confidence as a professional
Valuing students' heritage	Cooperative-strip paragraphs	Increasing motivation to help bilingual students	Holding meetings in minority language	Gaining knowledge from other teachers
Assessing background knowledge, filling gaps	Multicultural picture files	Understanding issues faced by mainstreamed ELLs	Understanding the repercussions of poverty on immigrant community	Widening understanding of programs in other districts

Table 1, Continued*Elements that Comprise Five Areas of Professional-Development Impact on Teachers*

<u>Adjusting General Pedagogy</u>	<u>Introducing Specific Classroom Techniques</u>	<u>Expanding Compassion for and Understanding of ELL Students</u>	<u>Increasing Integration with Parents and Community</u>	<u>Experiencing Professional Career Growth</u>
Slowing pace of instruction	Response cards	Increasing ability to separate difficulties with content from difficulties with language	In ELL-majority communities, seeing the need for all teachers to have ESL instruction	Creating a larger network of colleagues from other schools/districts
Introducing more visuals	Carousel activity	Increasing capacity to decipher ELL students' writing	Transferring ESL skills to work with other students	Sharing knowledge with colleagues outside program
Animating speech	Pictorial input charts	Appreciating the difficulty of learning English	Replacing homework with in-class activities	Forming creative ideas (e.g. creating a dual-language charter school)
Using more hand gestures	Total physical response	Understanding the need for student-led teaching		Filling educational knowledge gaps
Repeating and rephrasing	Number wheels	Increasing skill in analyzing ELL students' language ability		Developing research-based understanding
Having students self-assess	Inquiry charts			Having professional dialogues with colleagues who share a learning history
Using SIOP to plan instruction	Picture sorts			Gaining exposure to teachers and ideas from different grade levels
Allowing code-switching	Mix and match			

Table 1, Continued*Elements that Comprise Five Areas of Professional-Development Impact on Teachers*

<u>Adjusting General Pedagogy</u>	<u>Introducing Specific Classroom Techniques</u>	<u>Expanding Compassion for and Understanding of ELL Students</u>	<u>Increasing Integration with Parents and Community</u>	<u>Experiencing Professional Career Growth</u>
Allowing and respecting use of first language	Exit slips			
Developing long-term goals to backwards-plan lessons	Word walls			
Pinpointing key vocabulary and content	Picture walls			
Posting lesson and content objectives	Four-corner strategy			
Integrating more technology	Vocabulary visits			
	Photo tours			
	Stir-the-class strategy			
	Each teach			

Discussion

The program was not perfect. Focus groups and formative evaluation revealed technological deficiencies at the school sites and the need for the university to communicate better with off-site students, meshing them earlier into online systems. There were some grumblings about uneven instructor quality. One cohort was less happy with the program than were the other three cohorts. Yet, overall, the teachers marveled at how much they had grown professionally and the improvement they were able to see in their students.

Although this research focused mostly on changes that teacher-participants sustained through professional development, the teachers also explained differences their pedagogical and

affective modifications seemed to make in their students. As reflected in the quotations above, the teachers noted increased student engagement, motivation, higher-level thinking, and deeper understanding, both with ESL/bilingual students and native English speakers.

By mixing students of different English levels in projects, the lower-level students presented more clearly. By using more visuals and incorporating more culturally-relevant materials, students better understood content and showed higher-level thinking. Taking time to assess students' background knowledge and to fill gaps allowed teachers to reach a wider spectrum of students. As teachers slowed their presentations, students had more time to discuss and analyze, extending their learning. Introducing more physical movement in class increased student engagement.

In ESL classes, when teachers allowed students to use their first language as well as English, all learners seemed to feel more comfortable; and the more advanced English-speakers helped the less-advanced. Likewise, when bilingual teachers allowed their students to code-switch between first and second languages, their students gained knowledge of their first language as well as of English. As teachers had students self-assess, the students became more accountable for their learning. Teachers also discovered that ESL-oriented techniques, such as introducing both language and content objectives, seemed to help a wide variety of students, even accelerated native English speakers.

In terms of theory, the type of ESL/bilingual-oriented professional development in which the teachers engaged stands squarely in Knowles' definition of andragogy. It offers reasons for learning content; treats adults as self-directed; and acknowledges their life experience. The teachers were able to meet their personal and professional needs and goals. The program provided learning that helped teachers immediately in their real-life situations, and it respected

their internal motivation to improve their practice (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). In addition, the program provided deep, sustained professional development that researchers have found most effective (Sato, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2008; Sugrue, 2011). Finally, the program offered the teachers the support of their colleagues; they were not alone on the difficult road of improving practice (Lomos, Hofman, & Bosker, 2011; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Showers, 1996).

While countries deal with increasing numbers of immigrants who need to learn a second language and are tempted by strapped finances to serve up quick in-service teacher training or no teacher training, this research provides evidence that sustained professional development can make a real difference. Buttressed by instructors and colleagues, teachers were able to make pedagogical changes. They gained confidence when they saw what a difference improved teaching made for their students' learning. The sustained program also altered the teachers' affect, helping them to see the world through the eyes of the students and their parents. It expanded their visions, across grade-levels, schools, and districts. Time for reflection even inspired big ideas—how to start a new dual-language school that invoked best practices. Ultimately, the program created a community of colleagues with a similar goal—to best serve their students, the students' parents, and their communities.

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