

Heritage/ Culture Preservation  
Model Bilingual Instruction

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### **Abstract**

Our first generation children face a loss of heritage in today's public schools. Unfortunately, the assets that one's bilingual ability brings into the classroom are difficult for educators to fully understand. Often this may happen because professionals in the field of education lack the knowledge about the need for children to maintain their culture heritage as a first generation or second generation child.

This study addresses the benefits of the preservation of culture heritage in Latino/ Latina children. The problem is that there are very few opportunities for people to see strong bilingual education programs with culture heritage preservation as part of the curriculum.

A review of the literature revealed that there is a need for preservation of culture and heritage in the youth of today's world. Often first generation students, particularly Spanish speaking students, lose their heritage language. The literature also indicates that schools that offer bilingual education had both native and non-native students engaged in learning and participating actively in school and their community.

There is a need for further investigation on this topic to ensure an increase on academic success for this population. The research question for this study addresses how educators instill cultural pride and ownership in students related to their heritage.

This study followed a qualitative research design with a purposeful sample of professionals who were selected because of their expertise and experience in working with Latino students in school settings. An interview protocol was designed to gather data on the research question.

Results indicated that further research needs to address the impact of cultural preservation particularly with the Spanish speaking population and students' academic success.

## **CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION**

During my time completing my fieldwork observation hours I came to the conclusion through first -hand experience that many Latino students I observed in the classroom had no knowledge of their heritage language. They were somewhat hesitant in wanting to learn more about their culture and their language. As a first generation Latina, this realization was not only troubling, but I felt required further investigation as the focus of this study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Unfortunately, the assets of bilingualism are difficult for educators to fully understand. In the United States the Latino population is growing at a rate that exceeds the demographics of any other ethnic group. Acknowledging the reality of an increasing Latino population in the United States is necessary.

It is surprising that educators fail to recognize the importance of developing students as fully bilingual and bicultural. It is also important that educators commit to helping students obtain the necessary knowledge and tools in order to compete bilingually and bi-culturally at a global level. In order for students to compete globally it is essential that educators foster bilingualism and embrace the heritage language that students bring to the classroom.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is to identify and describe the importance of heritage/ culture preservation in bilingual education. Understanding the benefits of culture and language heritage for Latino students is of great significance for self identity, flourishing academically and competing globally. There is a need for model bilingual education and an understanding of the

depth of knowledge and overall benefit bilingualism and biculturalism can offer Latino students, not only presently but in the future at a global level.

In order for educators to successfully shape this rapidly growing population embracing culture and language heritage is crucial and the beginning of the path in the right direction. The United States is one of the only monolingual countries in the world which is a disservice to our students. Pride and self-identity can be fostered through the preservation of these students' culture and heritage and can provide the sense of belonging and pride most of these students yearn for.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe the importance of heritage/ culture preservation in bilingual education, as viewed by select academic leaders in a city school district in the northern San Francisco Bay Area. As documented in the literature culture heritage preservation within the context of bilingual education is important in preserving student identity, building English literacy and maintaining academic competence.

### **Background Information**

Bilingual programs and the heritage potential in them are not always clearly understood by parents and educators. What children are missing by being excluded from bilingual classes and how schools can serve as vehicles of heritage are not expectations many have let alone have any knowledge. Farragio (2010) found that children who attended schools with a high Latino population and bilingual classes had a high heritage support. This suggested that experiences in this particular setting and length of time parents were able to observe their children learning in

their native tongue strengthened their overall goal for heritage preservation. The author suggests that there is a strong link between bilingual education and heritage.

The “funds of knowledge,” by Franquiz (2012) brought to light the crucial role cultural heritage plays in bilingual education. The “funds of knowledge” in bilingual education is the bringing together of every day practices both at home and in the community and their role in the socialization to language and construction of knowledge which can then become a resource in the classroom. The idea of personal and communal funds of knowledge and examples of educators who are contributing to the building of an academics foundation which respects of resources brought to the classroom is what led to my selection of questions.

### **Research Questions**

How do educators become aware of the importance of being culturally responsible? What are the steps needed in order to preserve the culture heritage and language of Latino/ Latina students in contemporary teaching practice?

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this study, the terms culture, first generation, and heritage language are defined. Culture refers to the characteristics of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts, (Zimmerman, 2012). First Generation is the first generation to be born in a country other than their parent’s native country. Heritage language in the United States is a language other than English that is either the main language at home or spoken by the family. Hispanic or Latino refers to an ethnic group of a

person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. In 1998-99, the title of this ethnic group was modified from *Hispanic* to reflect the new federal standards and more current use, (California Department of Education, 2014).

## CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Supporting Research

#### *Bilingual Education: Vehicle for Heritage Preservation*

Farrugio (2010) interviewed 69 Latino parents of ELLs from a school district that not only maintained but expanded their bilingual program after Prop 227 was voted into state law. Of the parents who were interviewed about half placed their English learner children in a bilingual class and the other half in an English only class. Out of the 69 generation immigrants in this study expressed a desire to preserve a Hispanic cultural heritage for their children.

The interviews conducted in this study consisted of research questions which focused on factors which might have influenced parents' thinking about heritage preservation. The quantitative analysis compared groups of parents based on background factors and the qualitative analysis focused on the experiences with bilingual education of these individuals. The findings of the quantitative analysis found that heritage support was high for individuals who had children in schools with a high Latino population and bilingual classes suggesting that experiences in this type of setting and the length of time parents observed their children learning in their native tongue strengthen their goal for heritage preservation.

The qualitative analyses found that those who had been exposed to the heritage potential of additive programs had a clear understanding of what their children were missing by being excluded from bilingual classes. Those who had not had the same experience had a lower expectation of schools serving as a heritage vehicle.

There were two implications resulting from this study. First, in order to raise the expectations of their children's intellectual growth it is crucial for bilingual programs to

continually maintain high standards for teaching in both languages. Second, bilingual educators must make an effort to educate parents about the connection between heritage preservation and bilingual education and its academic advantages.

### ***Effect of Words and Labels on Identity***

Fránquiz (2012) argues that words and labels have the ability and power to influence the identity of individuals. The individuals she is particularly speaking about are students who are not yet literate in English.

United States (US) language policies associated with illiteracy education historically include the following labels, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and English Language Learners (ELL) as descriptors for children becoming bilingual. Fránquiz points out that these labels/ terms focus on what the individual lacks instead of what they possess and therefore argues that we begin using the term Emerging Bilingual and cultivate it in our teaching. The term Emergent Bilingual and the term Biliteracy both put focus on the child's language by putting the word bilingual at the center of their growth.

Fránquiz stresses the importance of plugging into all the resources and capabilities the Emergent Bilingual students not only possess, but are available to them in order to meet all the academic and social challenges of living in today's world.

Fránquiz continues by theorizing language and identity. She speaks about the elementary school literacy settings and how the maintenance of the Spanish language has always been seen as a problem. Maintenance of the Spanish language for the purpose of developing an academic identity seems to always be overlooked. In addition programs that build on the linguistic and cultural strengths students' possess from home and their communities are very rare. High school

educators claim that heritage language development is not related to their work while K-12 teachers just does not seem to value biliteracy as an important academic identity, and instead are more focused on providing an English only education to immigrant students.

Fránquiz concludes that although the importance of inviting linguistic and cultural aspects into English language lessons makes sense, many teachers find this daunting. Many lack the knowledge and training about how to implement both linguistic and culture into their lessons.

Despite the unfamiliarity and unknown funds of knowledge teachers may lack from inter- racial, cross-cultural, and multilingual communities, it is important that they understand that, without opportunity to use family and community knowledge, students face barriers in achieving English language acquisition and academic achievement. The “funds of knowledge” is crucial in bilingual education and simply means that every day practices at home and in their community are all part of the socialization to language and knowledge construction which can be used as an important resource in the classroom.

The research method Fránquiz used to conduct her study involved reviewing the literature. Franquiz also interviewed and observed educators in the field.

Two of these educators turned out to be exemplary examples of teachers who are fostering the development of cultural citizenship in their classrooms. Fránquiz includes examples of planned lessons Mr. Ayalas provided students thus providing newcomer students with opportunities to learn new content area vocabulary such as discrimination, racism, segregation, integration, civil rights, among countless others. These words were not only integrated in their identity texts but invited all available linguistics resources including personal and communal funds of knowledge.

Ms. Ayala was successful at building the confidence needed by newcomers to write with a voice and a passion. She included examples of how educators are being successful at accomplishing the goal of fostering the “funds of knowledge” through providing access to culturally relevant oral, visual and written texts, proposing multiple opportunities for children to use their cultural assets in producing identity texts, fostering cultural preservation, and engaging students in activities with transformation.

Ms. Ayala serves as an example of an educator who is helping build an academic foundation that respects all resources brought to the classroom. This approach not only helps the newcomers, but also helps every student in becoming engaged with critical literacy skills. The author summarizes her extensive background knowledge. She included educators who are making a difference in teaching students and included writing examples. This research created for me, the researcher, a deeper understanding of the importance of maintaining one’s cultural heritage within the public school setting, while learning English.

### ***Culturally Responsive Teacher Education***

Vomvoridi-Ivanovic (2012) argues that in order for us to see culturally responsive teaching we must first provide the adequate culturally responsive teacher education. Vomvoridi-Ivanovic begins by introducing a common misconception many make when it comes to Latina/o teachers. Often it is assumed that because a Latina/o teacher is able to speak Spanish and at times share similar life experiences, they automatically have the necessary aptitude to effectively teach Latina/o students.

Supporting evidence included findings from Aguierre (2007) in which first year Latina/o mathematics teachers reported that, despite the strong connections with their students, they still

encountered several challenges in incorporating students' cultural experiences in their lessons. These challenges included lack of staff support, lack of professional development, and lack of resources/ curriculum. In addition these same teachers also reported a strong concern with the high stakes accountability policies which they felt constrained their ability in attempting and producing any type of culturally relevant mathematics lesson.

In an attempt to gain a better understanding of how Latina/o teachers use culture as an instructional resource Vomvoridi- Ivanovic conducted a study. The goal of this study was to describe how four Mexican American PSTs participants in a non-traditional field experience used culture, that is, shared experiences and social practices, as an instructional resource in teaching mathematics. The setting of her study took place in an after school mathematics program Los Reyos de CEMELA, and her participants include working class student of Mexican descent and four Mexican American prospective teachers.

The duration of this study was divided into two parts. During the first half of this study in Los Rayos the mathematical activities consisted of "binder work" which focused on fractions, logic, problem solving etc. These tasks did not build on one another and did not provide a connection to students' interest and experience. The few times that the PSTs did make a connection the focus was not on the mathematical content.

For the second duration of the study the mathematical activities consisted of the "recipe project" which was build around the students' life, interest and activities. For the "recipe activities" tasks involved team work, research of family recipes, going to the local market and shopping for ingredients, and knowledge of the best deals. This activity offered a cultural

connection, building on one another, providing the PSTs and students a chance to share experiences which helped students understand the objective of the mathematical activity.

The second portion of this study clearly was more successful than the first in its use of culture as a resource in teaching mathematics. Despite the connections made during the first portion between the PSTs and the students the focus was on the success of keeping it relevant to mathematics.

A qualitative analysis of Vomvoridi Ivanovics study revealed that the nature of mathematical activities affected how culture is used. Her study also supports the suggestions found in literature covering this topic, which state that sharing cultural background does not mean the teacher will effectively be able to use their cultural knowledge as an instructional resource, and also suggests that further work needs to be done in addition to preparation for Latina/o PSTs. Connecting with the students experiences and interest when teaching mathematics makes the concept learned and practiced using meaningful cultural connections.

### **Summary**

Key findings from the literature included the following; heritage preservation is strengthened when children learn in their native tongue. The potential of additive programs is not something everyone is aware of. As a result of this parents often have lower expectation of schools serving as a heritage vehicle. Model bilingual instruction is crucial in order to fully use every day practices as resources in the classroom and in students' culture and heritage preservation and learning.

### **CHAPTER III METHOD**

This study followed a qualitative research design using interview protocol, purposive and open-ended question to a select group of individuals. This study followed a qualitative research design through observation and interview of participants who were purposely selected and included; bilingual teachers, bilingual leaders,

The review of the literature showed that the need for the preservation of heritage is crucial in today education system. A link between language and heritage was also found to be key as well as the need for more model bilingual educators.

#### **Ethical Standards**

This study adheres to the ethical standards established by the American Psychological Association (2010) that safeguards participation of human subjects and research. Additionally, this study was reviewed by the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Rights approved and assigned number 10222.

#### **Overview**

Following review and approval of IRB I contacted my interviewee Mrs. P and explained the purpose of the study and obtained her consent to participate in an interview. The duration of the interview did not exceed an hour and occurred at a mutually convenient time and place.

The researcher contacted Mrs. P who works at a local school district and whom she has a personal connection with via email and included a series of questions which would be part of the research.

The questions were open-ended and benign in nature, and there was minimal risk involved in this interview. However, some questions might make the subject uncomfortable. There is also the risk of running over on time, causing some concern.

The researcher made sure they made accommodations based on my subject's schedule.

Information collected will be used in summary form only. Researcher used pseudonym when referring to their subject's responses in the final paper. This is to make sure that confidentiality is maintained.

The interview subject will have the opportunity to offer personal insight on preservation of culture through model bilingual instruction. If they agree, the participants can offer their views relating to improving the preservation of heritage/ culture in elementary school bilingual programs.

- 1) What are your personal experiences with model bilingual instruction in elementary schools in the district? How prepared do you feel teachers are in heritage cultural preservation?
- 2) Please describe how you either have seen or personally incorporated heritage/ culture in a classroom.
- 3) Describe any changes you see in those students who have had model bilingual instruction in regards to their self identity?
- 4) Currently, the fastest growing population in the United States continues to be the Latino population. A great deal of attention is being paid to the importance of nurturing the preservation of heritage for this fast growing demographic. What are the benefits of model bilingual instruction with the focus among Latino/a students?
- 5) What are some of the benefits that model bilingual instruction approaches offer teachers and how does it connect to heritage/ preservation of culture?
- 6) How prepared are first year teachers in regards to the importance of heritage/ culture preservation and bilingual instruction.
- 7) Please share with me any information you feel is important in regards to heritage/ culture preservation.

### **Participants**

The researcher interviewed a leader in a public education system at the elementary level in the San Francisco Bay area. Because of the nature of the topic the researcher purposely selected a professional with the knowledge to best inform the research questions. The participant is a first generation Latina native Spanish speaker and is trained as a bicultural educator. The interviewee has served as dean, instructional program manager, bi-literacy program coordinator, summer school principal, and teacher in pre- kindergarten through eighth grade. In addition the interviewee has also worked with schools on curriculum and instruction development, data analysis, program design, professional learning communities (PLC), common core implementations, and outreach to community partners, participation in Harvard Institute's Making It Work: Implementing a Comprehensive PreK-3 Approach; the National Equity Project Leading for Equity; and Latino Literacy Project.

### **Procedures**

Following her agreement researcher emailed the interviewee a series of questions. Questions are as followed:

- 1) What are your personal experiences with model bilingual instruction in elementary schools in the district? How prepared do you feel teachers are in heritage cultural preservation?
- 2) Please describe how you either have seen or personally incorporated heritage/ culture in a classroom.
- 3) Describe any changes you see in those students who have had model bilingual instruction in regards to their self identity?
- 4) Currently, the fastest growing population in the United States continues to be the Latino population. A great deal of attention is being paid to the importance of nurturing the preservation of heritage for this fast growing demographic. What are the benefits of model bilingual instruction with the focus among Latino/a students?
- 5) What are some of the benefits that model bilingual instruction approaches offer teachers and how does it connect to heritage/ preservation of culture?

- 6) How prepared are first year teachers in regards to the importance of heritage/ culture preservation and bilingual instruction.
- 7) Please share with me any information you feel is important in regards to heritage/ culture preservation.

### **Data Analysis**

Once the participant returned her responses to the questions the researcher examined them for overall themes. These themes were then identified and explained.

## CHAPTER IV FINDINGS

1. What are your personal experiences with model bilingual instruction in elementary schools in the district? How prepared do you feel teachers are in heritage cultural preservation?

*W K - 8 School is currently piloting a PreK - Kindergarten biliteracy model. The biliteracy model has been developed to serve English Language Learners. Currently, students in the Kindergarten classrooms are taught 80% in Spanish, and as they move into the upper grades the percentage decreases (K-80%, 1st grade-70%, 2nd grade-60%, and 3rd grade 50% taught in Spanish). Last year, as we prepared to launch the model we looked for ways to preserve the home language and culture through parent education classes. One of our programs focused on literacy in which parents were taught how to read to their children regardless of their home language, level of education or if they were literate. The books selected for the 9 week parent education workshop were based on Spanish literature and culture.*

*Teachers have been receiving coaching/professional development in heritage cultural preservation, but it is definitely a work in progress. Cultural proficiency has been the focus for the past 4 years. This has been done through book clubs, workshops, and Professional Learning Communities have selected focal students to strategic target throughout the year.*

2. Please describe how you either have seen or personally incorporated heritage/ culture in a classroom.

*"I have seen and personally incorporated heritage/culture in a classroom through literature, curriculum, and school events. I have observed a particular school learn a specific continent in depth throughout the school year. The students are taught about the continent's countries, people, religion, food, history, literature, and heritage. Each grade-level focuses on a different continent, and at the end of the school year the students have a big evening presentation in which*

*they share what they have learned about their continent. This is done through stations where students do a mini presentation on what they have learned.”*

3. Describe any changes you see in those students who have had model bilingual instruction in regards to their self identity?

*Currently, parents are reporting how well their students are learning their home language, and the high academic vocabulary they are utilizing on a daily basis. Many of the Kindergarten students are teaching their older siblings how to speak their home language. Some parents have shared the pride their children have in becoming bilingual. These students have a high interest in sharing what they learn on daily basis.*

4. Currently, the fastest growing population in the United States continues to be the Latino population. A great deal of attention is being paid to the importance of nurturing the preservation of heritage for this fast growing demographic. What are the benefits of model bilingual instruction with the focus among Latino/a students?

*Bilingual instruction allows students to preserve their home language, and to easily transfer those skills into English. We are currently facing the issue in which many students are reaching high school, and they are not able to dominate English or Spanish. In many cases, students have lost their home language once they begin to reach the upper grades. Sometimes students are not able to communicate with their parents or family members. Parents need to be informed about the benefits of preserving the home language and heritage. The community needs to be aware of the benefits of being bilingual, and how it impacts the opportunity of finding a job.*

5. What are some of the benefits that model bilingual instruction approaches offer teachers and how does it connect to heritage/ preservation of culture?

*The collaboration time taking place between the PreK and Kindergarten teachers has made them a solid team. The vertical and horizontal alignment is allowing both grade levels to fine tune their curriculum and instruction. Teachers are more strategic about the curriculum they select to teach and the strategies they are implementing in their classrooms. The planning is much more intentional. The team is aware of their students' needs, and they are able to differentiate their instruction. It is easier to communicate with parents, and volunteering in the classroom becomes easier for many Spanish speaking parents.*

6. How prepared are first year teachers in regards to the importance of heritage/ culture preservation and bilingual instruction.

*First year teachers need more exposure to the benefits of bilingual instruction and the importance of heritage/cultural preservation. Bilingual instruction takes work and effort to successfully implement. At V V we have done a lot work to support our PreK and Kindergarten teachers to move the work forward. Teachers need collaboration time and ongoing coaching. Without the appropriate support system teachers begin to feel alone in the process. It took the school a whole year to plan, and it continues to be an ongoing process.*

7. Please share with me any information you feel is important in regards to heritage/ culture preservation.

The school's community needs to have heritage/culture preservation as one of their goals as they restructure their curriculum and programs. Teachers, parents, students and community partners need to be part of the process. The vision of the school must promote diversity and bilingualism to move the work forward. The appreciation of different cultures and languages should be intentional as the school year is planned. School events promoting diversity and bilingualism such as inviting a bilingual author to present at the school site, a travel around the world event, a

Martin Luther King's birthday celebration, a Cesar Chavez's birthday celebration, invite parents to share their own traditions/culture in their child's classroom, etc.

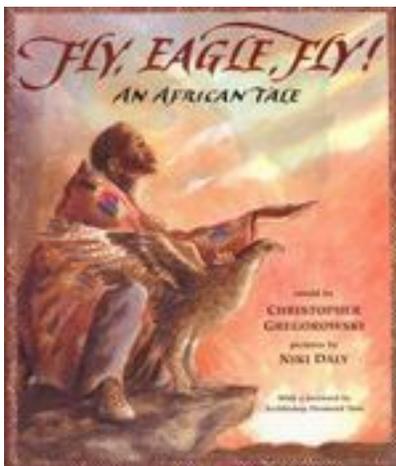
1. What are your personal experiences with model bilingual instruction in elementary schools in the district? How prepared do you feel teachers are in heritage cultural preservation?

*In South Africa our teachers are not well prepared for teaching bilingual instruction. It is accepted that the teachers will use code switching as they teach in English to students whose first language is not English, but there are few strategies like GLAD taught.*

2. Please describe how you either have seen or personally incorporated heritage/ culture in a classroom.

*Mainly this is done through traditional games, like MORABARABA. There are more children's books being written and illustrated in African languages about the culture and particularly the rural ways of living. See the book below:*

*Fly, Eagle, Fly*



*Fly, Eagle, Fly* is my toddler's favorite book at the moment. A farmer (in the Transkei region of South Africa) goes in search of a lost calf. Instead, he rescues an eagle chick, brings it home to his family and proceeds to raise the eagle, "the king of birds", as a chicken. A friend of the farmer's, on seeing the bird among the chickens, remarks that the bird is not a chicken but an eagle. To which the farmer replies:

*Of course it's a chicken. Look – it walks like a chicken, it talks like a chicken, it eats like a chicken. It thinks like a chicken. Of course it's a chicken.*

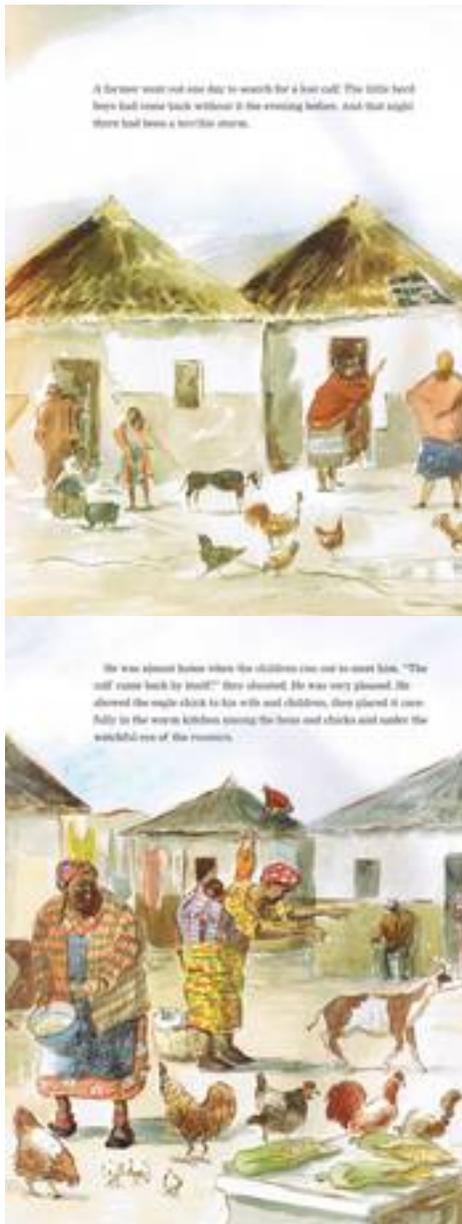
*The friend resolves to show the farmer that the bird is still an eagle and has not forgotten how to be an eagle. The friend tries twice to get the eagle to fly; first by catching the bird and holding it above his head, and then by carrying the eagle up the tallest thatch hut in the village. He tries to convince the bird:*

*You are not a chicken but an eagle. You belong not to the earth but to the sky. Fly, Eagle, Fly.*

*Each time, the eagle finds its way back to the chickens. On the third day, the friend wakes the farmer up in the early hours of the morning. He plans to take the eagle to the mountains where the farmer found the bird so that the "eagle may see the sun rise over the mountain and follow it into the sky where it belongs". When they reach the top of the mountain: the friend talked on, telling the bird about the sun, how it gives life to the world, how it reigns in the heavens, giving light to each new day.*

*"Look at the sun, Eagle. And when it rises, rise with it. You belong to the sky, not to the earth"*

*The story concludes with the flight of the great eagle into the sky to greet the sun as it rises in the east. The eagle will never again live among the chickens.*



3. Describe any changes you see in those students who have had model bilingual instruction in regards to their self identity?

*Those who are encouraged to use their own language as a resource achieve excellent results.*

*They are taught how to use exploratory talk in their first languages and then to translate the academic language into English.*

4. Currently, the fastest growing population in the United States continues to be the Latino population. A great deal of attention is being paid to the importance of nurturing the preservation of heritage for this fast growing demographic. What are the benefits of model bilingual instruction with the focus among Latino/a students?

*I cannot speak for Latinos but I should imagine it would be the same as for isiXhosa speaking students. Here you can add a poem or two from the article from educ as change about “speaking your language without shame”*

***My language- isiXhosa***

*Oh my beloved language  
Oh my African language  
Respected by the African speaking Nation  
amaXhosa, the sons of the African nation*

*I can write, read and speak isiXhosa  
Awu axakekile amaXhosa ngengxoxo yakwaXhosa  
My language, powerful, almighty language  
You rose above whilst you wer  
Brutally murdered, tortures, destroyed  
By those who were in power*

*Be strong my language, fear no one  
Now is your time  
The sky is the limit  
IsiXhosa sama Xhosa- AkwaXhosana*

5. What are some of the benefits that model bilingual instruction approaches offer teachers and how does it connect to heritage/ preservation of culture?

*Inestimable benefits – a pride in one’s own culture and language; a sense of belonging; community; preservation of folk tales; preservations of idioms and anecdotes See the poem*

*where the word for “mother tongue” is actually the corn the mother grinds and makes for porridge in the morning. The word evokes the smoky safety and smell of warm family togetherness*

6. How prepared are first year teachers in regards to the importance of heritage/ culture preservation and bilingual instruction.

*As said before – in SA not NEARLY prepared enough*

7. Please share with me any information you feel is important in regards to heritage/ culture preservation.

*One CANNOT let a heritage and a culture be subsumed by a bigger, culture because of expediency. We need to be forever in touch with our roots*

### **Summary of Findings**

The main findings indicate that an attitude shift be implicated not only in the classroom but in our educators. There is a need for a shift in attitude which carries more than just the Caucasian view point of education but instead one that embraces all cultures. Teacher need to continue to receive coaching/ professional development in heritage and culture preservation in order for there to be continuous progress. A high interest can be seen in students as young as Kindergarten in learning about their heritage and culture therefore the need for collaboration between not only educators but also family and community is crucial along with the restructuring of curriculum and programs which embrace the different heritages and cultures of the world we live in. The

necessity and encouragement of maintaining ones roots and embarrassing ones language is evident in all cultures around the world.

## CHAPTER V DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

### Discussion

The purpose of this study is to address the benefits of heritage/ culture preservation for Latino/ Latina students. Parents, educators and the community need to become aware of the benefits of preserving the home language and heritage. The benefits of being bilingual are powerful and can open door in the future. In order to embrace heritage and culture in our education system there need to be collaboration. The appreciation of different cultures and languages should be intentional as the school year is planned. In order to reach this goal restructuring of curriculum and programs might in most cases be necessary if the current work in process is to be continued.

### Limitations

Interview consisted of one interviewee which although they had a wealth of knowledge and experience this presented a limitation in the study. Relying on the convenience sample of one individual rather than several individuals with experience and knowledge on the topic of this study presented limitations. Interviewing more individuals would have provided several perspectives and could have presented different findings. This study also did not interview parents, which would have been important since it would have provided their perspective on heritage/culture preservation and the level of importance they believe it to be in their children's education. In addition the data presented is specific to the region where the study was performed. Performing research at other districts might have presented different findings.

## **Implications**

### **Practical Implications**

The importance of first year teachers to be exposed to the benefits of bilingual instruction and the important role it has to heritage/ cultural preservation seems to be of great necessity especially since bilingual instruction takes work and effort to successfully implement. In order for the work to continue to move forward support for the teacher is crucial. Collaboration time and ongoing coaching is essential for strides to continue to occur.

### **Research Implications**

This is an important field that requires further research. Limitations included number of schools that implement heritage/ culture preservation as part of the curriculum and educators who successfully implement model bilingual instruction.

## **Conclusions**

The themes that emerged through the interview of this research suggest that exposure to the benefits of bilingual instruction and the importance of heritage/ culture preservation is crucial for educators especially first year teachers. It is also important to know that model bilingual instruction is difficult to find and requires work and effort to successfully implement. Support is needed for educators through coaching/ professional development in heritage cultural preservation in order for the work in continue progressing. Cultural proficiency should be a focus in our education system and can be done through book clubs, workshops, and professional learning communities.

The United States is a diverse country. California continues to have the fastest growing Latino/Latina population but yet many times unfortunately the teaching population does not reflect this diversity nor does it embrace the changes of student population. Positive results are possible through incorporating heritage/ culture in the classroom.

### **About the Author**

Heidi Samayoa is committed to the importance of embracing heritage/ culture preservation in the classroom. She envisions and plans on promoting diversity and bilingualism through as many possible ways as she can in her future classroom. Installing a sense of knowledge and pride about your culture and heritage is of great importance and is part of everyone's identity. Sharing her own traditions and cultures and learning from her students is something she looks forward to doing. As a bilingual Latina she hopes to serve as an example to her own students and understands bilingual instruction takes work and effort to successfully implement and therefore hopes to continue a lifetime of learning in the field of bilingual education.

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