THE SECRET LANGUAGE OF SUCCESS:
ACCESSING AFRICAN AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENT IN TWO-WAY IMMERSION PROGRAMS

Jillian La Serna

A dissertation submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the Educational Leadership Department in the School of Education.

Chapel Hill
2017

Approved By:
Kathleen Brown
Emily Bivins
Amanda Hartness
Martinette Horner
Stan Schainker
Dana Thompson-Dorsey
ABSTRACT

Jillian La Serna: The Secret Language of Success
(Under the direction of Dr. Kathleen Brown)

This dissertation examined pedagogical practices used by teachers in two-way immersion programs in closing the reading achievement gap for African American students. A set of common pedagogical practices were identified after analyzing nine classroom across two schools in which the percentage of African American students were performing at or above grade level in reading, based on end-of-grade tests. Drawing from the quantitative work that exists detailing African American student achievement in two-way immersion programs, this study used qualitative methods to create a holistic picture of instruction across the nine classrooms. Three forms of data were collected for the study: teacher interviews, classroom observations, and lesson plan document analysis. This dissertation complements existing research on pedagogical practices that may assist in closing the achievement gap for African American students and adds to this body of research in identifying instructional practices that are beneficial for all students but nonnegotiable for ensuring closure of the achievement gap. This study also found that two-way immersion programs make use of several high-yield pedagogical practices found in this research: clear expectations planned and set for students; explicit vocabulary instruction; graphic organizers; explicit teaching of habits for academic success; collaborative grouping of students; regular student-teacher interactions; small group support for language development; simultaneous or sequential instruction of literacy skills across languages; team planning; student
access to on-grade-level text; and the use of direct instruction through what can be termed “escalating questions.”
For Nannie and Papa
This work is in your memory, I love you the whole world full.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must begin by thanking my amazing committee who read and helped to define and shape this work: Dr. Kathleen Brown, Dr. Dana Thompson-Dorsey, Dr. Stan Shainker, Dr. Emily Bivins, and Dr. Amanda Hartness. Dr. Brown, thank you for your never-ending belief that I could do this while serving in a full-time school leadership position and being a full-time mother.

I also want to give special thanks to Dr. Bivins, who has not only mentored me in this work, but in my career. Thank you for being my mentor and seeing something in me that I hadn’t yet seen in myself.

I must also thank the nine teachers who participated in this study for spending their already limited free time to contribute to this study.

I also thank my family for their unwavering support of my career and education. Mateo and Micaela, I will always remember your telling me that you believe in me when you would go leave for a few hours or go on a trip with Dad so I would have a quiet time to write. Know that I believe in each of you, always, and I can’t wait to see you accomplish your dreams! Miguel, my husband and best friend, thank you for supporting me on this incredible journey! This project was completed because of your unwavering support. I love you.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................................................................................... xii
LIST OF FIGURES ........................................................................................................................................... xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ..............................................................................................................................xiv

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION .......................................................................................................................... 1

   Background .................................................................................................................................................. 1
   Problem Statement ..................................................................................................................................... 2
   Purpose Statement ...................................................................................................................................... 5
   Major Research Questions ........................................................................................................................... 5
   Research Questions ....................................................................................................................................... 5
   Rationale for the Study ................................................................................................................................. 6
   Limitations .................................................................................................................................................. 6
   Significance of the Research ....................................................................................................................... 7
   Conceptual Framework ............................................................................................................................... 8
   Definition of Terms ...................................................................................................................................... 8

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .................................................................................................................. 10

   Introduction ................................................................................................................................................ 10
   History of Dual Language in the United States .......................................................................................... 10
   Dual Language Programs ............................................................................................................................ 12
   Student Achievement in Dual Language ...................................................................................................... 14
   Academic Achievement Gap: African American Students ........................................................................ 20
Limitations of the Study..........................................................53
Significance of the Study..........................................................54
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS.............................................................56
Introduction...........................................................................56
Teacher Participants..............................................................58
  Teacher 1...........................................................................58
  Teacher 2...........................................................................59
  Teacher 3...........................................................................59
  Teacher 4...........................................................................60
  Teacher 5...........................................................................60
  Teacher 6...........................................................................61
  Teacher 7...........................................................................61
  Teacher 8...........................................................................61
  Teacher 9...........................................................................61
Academic Success.................................................................62
Cultural Competence.............................................................67
Sociopolitical Consciousness.................................................70
Emergent Domains...............................................................72
  Spanish as a second language...........................................73
  Simultaneous or sequential instruction of literacy skills........74
  Teaching partners............................................................75
  Access to on-grade-level texts.........................................78
  Direct instruction............................................................79
APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT PROFILE ..............................................................117

APPENDIX 5: INITIAL CODING SCHEMA ......................................................118

REFERENCES ..................................................................................................119
LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. Dual language program models ................................................................. 13
2. Reading EOG Scores for LEP Students by Grade and Program Type, 2009 .......... 16
3. Reading EOG Scores for African American Students by Grade and Program Type, 2009 ................................................................. 17
4. Reading EOG Scores for Low SES Students by Grade and Program Type, 2009 ................................................................. 18
5. Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education .................................. 28
6. Effective, Observable Dual Language Pedagogical Practices .................. 30
7. Effective, Observable Culturally Relevant Teaching Strategies ........... 35
8. Intersection of CRP and DL principles based on broad themes developed by Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) ........................................ 37
9. La Serna’s Conceptual Framework: Instructional Pedagogy for overlapping dual language instructional practices and cultural relevant pedagogy ................................................................. 39
10. Research Site Information ........................................................................ 46
11. Data Collected .......................................................................................... 50
12. District and School Demographics .......................................................... 54
13. Teacher Participants ................................................................................ 58
14. Components of Academic Success ....................................................... 63
15. Components of Cultural Competence .................................................. 67
16. Components of Sociopolitical Consciousness ...................................... 71
17. Emergent Domains ................................................................................ 72
18. Instructional Practices Utilized by Teachers ......................................... 84
19. Pedagogical Practices Observed Connected to Literature .................... 89
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - NAEP Reading Scores for Nine-Year-Olds..........................................................21
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRP</td>
<td>Culturally Relevant Pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DL</td>
<td>Dual Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOG</td>
<td>End-of-Grade Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEP</td>
<td>Limited English Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAEP</td>
<td>National Assessment of Educational Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCLB</td>
<td>No Child Left Behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLC</td>
<td>Professional Learning Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCES</td>
<td>South Campbell Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSL</td>
<td>Spanish as a Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWI</td>
<td>Two-Way Immersion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

Dual language (DL) has become increasingly popular in the United States over the past 30 years. Multiple factors can be attributed to the increased interest in language education models. Lindholm-Leary (2001) considered three highlighted factors for this increased interest. First, there is a greater need for individuals to develop multilingual competence in a globalized world. Second, waves of immigration have forced an analysis of the education needs of language-minority students. Finally, there has been a revitalization of minority languages, which historically had been suppressed. Lindholm-Leary points to these factors as driving the need for educational language models that can meet the needs of diverse student populations. There are several types of DL programs used for different purposes in the United States, such as developmental bilingual programs, foreign language immersion, heritage language programs, and two-way immersion (TWI). For the purposes of this research, the focus will be on Spanish-English TWI education, which promotes bilingualism, cross-cultural appreciation, and academic success (Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2007).

TWI is designed for and beneficial to students considered to be English Language Learners (ELLs). However, TWI is not a remedial program offered to ELLs during the day; rather, it is an education program in which native English speakers and native speakers of the
minority language receive core content instruction in both English and the minority language. Torres-Guzmán (2002) describes TWI programs as an enrichment bilingual multicultural education program for all students. Collier and Thomas (2004) explain that in TWI programs, a cognitive challenge is created through thematic units of the core curriculum, focused on problem solving, leading to more than one year’s progress in both languages for students.

Problem Statement

There have been multiple studies on student achievement in TWI classrooms (Collier & Thomas, 1997; Collier & Thomas, 2011; Lindholm-Leary, 1991, Quintanar-Sarellana, 2004). Over the last 31 years, the premier researchers in the field, Virginia Collier and Wayne Thomas, have been conducting and publishing research on TWI programs including longitudinal studies in 35 school districts in 16 states (Collier & Thomas, 2012). They have conducted research in small and large districts in many states, representing urban, suburban, and rural contexts (Collier & Thomas, 2004). In their studies, Collier and Thomas have documented that students in TWI classrooms outperform their peers in traditional, English-only classrooms. In their most recent ongoing study, done on TWI programs in North Carolina (2012), Collier and Thomas analyzed student achievement data in student subgroups. They found that ELLs, African American students, and low-SES students in DL programs are outperforming their peers in English-only classrooms. As they conclude, “Substantial research has shown these [DL] programs to be effective for all participating groups, especially historically low-scoring groups such as African Americans, Title I students, and English learners” (Collier & Thomas, 2012, p. 89).

Collier and Thomas’s research with African American students in TWI classrooms in North Carolina indicated that African American students score practically and statistically significantly higher in reading in all grades when compared to African American students not in
TWI programs. They also found that in reading, beginning in fourth grade and continuing through eighth grade, African American students in TWI programs score higher than African American students in the next grade, who are typically a year older (Collier & Thomas, 2012). Through statistical analysis, Collier and Thomas demonstrate academic achievement that is statistically (meaning the observed effect is greater than we would expect by chance) and practically (the difference observed is large enough to be of practical value) significant.

The research findings on African American student achievement in TWI programs in North Carolina merit investigation given the historic, well-documented achievement gap between African American students and their Anglo peers (Coleman et al., 1966; Darling-Hammond, 1995; Hallinan, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lee, 2002; Skrla, Scheurich, Johnson, & Koschoreck, 2001). Like the nation, North Carolina is plagued by a historic achievement gap. The 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results revealed that Black students had an average score that was 23 points lower than White students based on the fourth grade reading assessment, not significantly different than the gap of 26 points in 1992 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

Many research studies have focused on causes and strategies to address the achievement gap (Delpit, 1995; Foster, 1996; Gay, 2004; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Sleeter, 2001; Steele, 1999; Uhlenberg, 2002). However, there are few studies on the subject of African American achievement and experiences in TWI beyond the research of Collier and Thomas and almost none on the topic of causes for African American student achievement in the programs. The few studies that have been conducted on African American students as a TWI student group have primarily focused on student and parent perceptions. One example is Anberg-Espinosa’s (2008) research. She examined the experiences and perceptions of African
American upper elementary and middle school students in TWI programs. Anberg-Espinosa found that parents were satisfied overall with the TWI program, students received extra academic support, students felt comfortable culturally, and students had positive cross-cultural relationships. They could be themselves as African Americans in the programs, but both students and parents wanted a more culturally inclusive school that included more African American learning experiences and activities (Anberg-Espinosa, 2008).

With some research to indicate that African American students are experiencing academic success and building bilingualism in TWI classrooms, it is important to investigate the contributing factors of this success. Theories on the causes for increased achievement of students in TWI classrooms include self-selection through school lottery systems and cognitive functioning of the DL mind (Schneider & Buckley, 2003; Esposito & Baker-Ward, 2013). There is also research indicating reasons that the TWI program model of instruction is beneficial for ELLs (Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2010). However, empirical studies looking at aspects of TWI instruction that are beneficial for African American students are largely lacking in the literature.

As the instruction that students receive is a critical factor of student success, analyzing instructional pedagogy being used by TWI teachers with African American students may have an impact on the field, including professional development for TWI teachers. This instructional pedagogy may be similar to what has been shown effective for African American students in traditional English-only classrooms, it may be something new, or it may be a hybrid of pedagogical practices. Analyzing pedagogical practices is informative for TWI classrooms, but there is potential for these practices to be utilized in English-only classrooms as well.

This study focuses on TWI classrooms in Grades 3-5 in the state of North Carolina.
Schools were selected from the Collier and Thomas study demonstrating quantitative data on the achievement of African American students in DL (Collier & Thomas, 2012). From the schools highlighted in the Collier and Thomas study, two schools were selected for the study, each of which have a percentage of African American students passing the reading EOG at a higher percentage than the state average (NC School Report Card, 2012). This study examines similarities in pedagogical practices across the classrooms at the two selected sites.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this research is to analyze pedagogical practices utilized in two-way immersion (TWI) classrooms in which the percent of African American students proficient on the reading End-of-Grade (EOG) exam in Grades 3-5 is higher than the state average by 5%.

**Major Research Question**

What pedagogical practices are used by dual language teachers during literacy instruction that are effective in raising African American students’ academic achievement as measured by the reading EOG?

**Research Questions**

The following questions guided the process of inquiry:

- What culturally relevant teaching strategies are used by teachers in dual language literacy classrooms in which the percent of African American students proficient on the reading End-of-Grade (EOG) exam in Grades 3-5 is higher than the state average by 5%?
- How do dual language teachers build a culture for academic success?
- How do dual language teachers nurture cultural competence in classrooms?
- How do dual language teachers foster sociopolitical consciousness through curriculum content and instruction?
**Rationale for the study**

Collier and Thomas have collected quantitative data on North Carolina TWI programs that indicate increased African American student achievement as demonstrated on EOG exams (Collier & Thomas, 2012). This study digs deeper into those initial findings to investigate the instructional practices that may contribute to this achievement.

This study analyzes multiple aspects of the classrooms selected for the study. Nine teachers were selected from the schools identified for the study. Teachers were interviewed. Lesson plan documents were analyzed. Classroom instruction was observed. Through multiple sources of data collection, this research seeks to provide an overview of each teacher’s use of pedagogical practices.

**Limitations**

Multiple limitations exist in the context of this study. First, the selection of schools was limited to North Carolina TWI programs included in the North Carolina research conducted by Collier and Thomas and published in their book (2012). Self-selection is an issue that is unavoidable in this sampling of schools, given that all TWI programs in the Collier & Thomas study enroll students through a lottery process. This enrollment selection may impact the student achievement data and findings of this study.

Also, schools from the Collier and Thomas study with fewer than 30 African American students taking the EOGs in Grades 3-5 (which is the number required by the state accountability system to form a measurable student subgroup) were excluded from this research. In addition, at school sites included in the research, only teachers and classrooms in Grades 3-5 were considered for participation, as the quantitative research conclusions were based on EOG results (Collier & Thomas, 2012).
Due to the small sample size (fewer than 10 teacher participants), results cannot be generalized to other schools or classrooms. Data collection is limited to the number of classroom observations and lesson plans that were reviewed by the researcher. Finally, it must be noted that the researcher is currently a leader in a DL school, is bilingual, and values bilingualism.

**Significance of the Research**

This project moves dialogue forward in several areas for DL education. Many still view TWI programs as targeted programs only for students learning English as a second language. Others may view bilingual education as an extracurricular activity that must be completed outside of school and in addition to English-only core content instruction. This project pushes the dialogue further along in asking who DL and TWI programs are serving and which students can benefit from TWI programs.

This research also contributes to the literature on successful instructional pedagogy for African American students. This research not only has implications for DL teaching practices, but some of the empirical evidence collected can transfer to teaching practices in English-only classrooms.

This research is informative for DL program leaders, both at the school and district level. In thinking about TWI instruction, it is important to begin thinking about having all students participate in the program. Can we begin to push against preconceived ideas about which students to recruit into TWI programs? Instructional leaders in dual language programs are also responsible for ensuring culturally relevant teaching in classrooms. The practices observed in this study offer a possible framework for discussing what instructional pedagogy can look like in TWI programs.
Conceptual Framework

In collecting and analyzing data, this research builds upon Lindholm-Leary’s (2001) work on DL programs and pedagogy and Ladson-Billing’s (1994) seminal work on culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). There are multiple connections between the two pedagogical approaches: the focus on multiculturalism as a programmatic goal that includes respect and appreciation for cultural differences, including language; the need to draw from the students’ culture and background in the classroom; high academic expectations for all students and increased student self-esteem; and a focus on equity and social justice that bridges beyond the classroom. These commonalities in the literature lead to the research question of whether these teaching practices are in place in DL classrooms in which African American students are experiencing academic achievement greater than their peers in English-only classrooms? What instructional strategies in DL programs are helping African American students score higher than their peers in English-only classrooms? Are these instructional strategies aligned with CRP?

For this research study, a unique framework was designed by the investigator that combines Ladson-Billings’s (1995) components of CRP with the program standards and pedagogy for DL (Howard et al., 2007). The framework used for data collection and analysis of instructional pedagogy used by teachers in TWI programs is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Definition of Terms

- Dual Language (DL): students are taught language and literacy in two languages
- Two-Way Immersion (TWI): Native English speakers and native speakers of another language receive content and literacy instruction in both languages, with the goal of promoting bilingualism, biliteracy, and cross-cultural awareness
• Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP): practices recognizing the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995)

• Additive: dual language programs/enrichment models that value a student’s primary language and build on primary language knowledge and foster continued development and proficiency in two languages

• Subtractive: programs in which English replaces the minority language and all other nonstandard dialects of English

• Pedagogical Practices: the strategies and methods used in the practice of teaching in a academic subject

• Achievement Gap: the observed and persistent disparity between groups of students on educational assessment measures. This study will specifically refer to groups based on race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Dual language (DL) education is not prevalent in the United States, but the number of DL classrooms across the country is rising. In 1987, there were only 30 documented DL programs in the country (Feeman, 1998). As of 2012, there were over 400 such programs in the United States (CAL, 2012).

The following literature review is divided into five subsections. The first section will give a brief history and overview of DL programs in the United States. The second section provides an overview of quantitative research on academic achievement of students in Spanish-English two-way immersion (TWI) programs and possible factors contributing to this achievement. The third section offers abbreviated evidence outlining the pervasive problem of the achievement gap and a historical perspective of that issue. Next, literature with a specific focus on African American students in Spanish-English TWI programs is reviewed. The last section outlines a framework of DL principles and culturally relevant teaching pedagogy as a framework for examining teaching practices occurring in Spanish-English TWI classrooms in which African American students are outperforming their peers in traditional English-only classrooms.

History of Dual Language

DL programs in the United States first appeared in Dade County Public Schools in Miami, Florida, in 1963 (Freeman, 1998). Coral Way Elementary School’s program was established as an organized community and federal effort to serve large numbers of Cuban refugees that were resettling in Miami at the time. The program served as a means to provide
equitable educational opportunities to native English-speaking and native Spanish-speaking students (Freeman, 1998).

By 1968, bilingual education was provided in at least 56 programs in 13 states (Collier & Thomas, 2012). Most DL programs were Spanish-English, but other languages, such as Navajo, were represented (Collier & Thomas, 2012). During this same period in Canada, the first English-French DL school was established in Saint-Lambert, Quebec. Research there demonstrated that “students can study the curriculum using the non-majority language at least half of the instructional time with no loss to academic success in their primary language” (Collier & Thomas, 2012, p. 10).

After the successful performance of the Canadian DL schools, programs continued to spread in the United States. By the early 1970s, DL education began in Culver City, California, and by the 1980s multiple DL programs were in place across the state. DL programs in California gained attention due to their students’ high-achievement results. Las Palmas Elementary School became a California Distinguished School in 1998, and Ralph A. Gates Charter Language Academy received the National Blue Ribbon Award and the first official Spanish International Academy designation in California in 2004 (Acosta-Hathaway, 2008).

In 1985, Cambridge Public Schools began a DL program, Amigos, to address language needs of English learners and promote foreign language instruction for English-dominant children (Acosta-Hathaway, 2008). Like the Coral Way program, the Amigos program promoted cultural understanding. However, almost half of the native English-speakers enrolled in the Amigos program were African American (Acosta-Hathaway, 2008).

By 2000, there were 248 DL programs in 23 states. Currently, there are over 400 programs across the country. The growth in DL programs is fueled by several factors. Parent
request for high-quality language programs continues to push expansion of DL programs (Acosta-Hathaway, 2008). In addition, a second language is becoming a necessity for native English-speakers to compete in a global world and economy (Acosta-Hathaway, 2008). DL programs are also shown to be effective with ELLs, and the body of research demonstrating the effectiveness continues to grow (Acosta-Hathaway, 2008).

**Dual Language Programs**

There are several types of programs included under the umbrella of DL education: developmental bilingual programs, foreign language immersion, heritage language programs, and two-way immersion (Table 1). Each one of these programs differs in purpose, language allocation, and outcomes. For the purposes of this research, the focus will be on English/Spanish two-way immersion (TWI) education, which promotes bilingualism, cross-cultural appreciation, and academic success (Howard et al., 2003).

In contrast to other DL programs, TWI does not segregate students based on native language; rather, it integrates students who are dominant in English with students who are dominate in a minority language (Scanlan & Palmer, 2009). Students receive content instruction in both English and a target language with the goal of bilingualism and biliteracy for all students. This additive approach to bilingualism stresses the value for all students to build language and literacy in two languages. Traditional English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are subtractive, meaning that at the end of the program, proficiency in the native language is diminished and English is the only focus. According to Zenealla (1997):

The diverse linguistic abilities that Latinos learn in their communities are not tapped by the educational system, which adopts a subtractive instead of an additive approach; that is, the standard English dialect is viewed as a substitute for all the varieties of Spanish
and other nonstandard dialects of English that children bring to school, not as an important addition to their verbal repertoire. (p. 123)

Table 1

*Dual Language Program Models*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Title</th>
<th>Native Language of Students</th>
<th>Language of Instruction</th>
<th>Language Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two-Way Immersion</td>
<td>50% native majority language speakers, 50% native target language speakers</td>
<td>50% English, 50% target language</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Bilingual Education</td>
<td>100% minority language speakers</td>
<td>Minority language in early grades moving to all English</td>
<td>Fluent English language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content-Based English as a Second Language</td>
<td>Minority language speakers</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Fluent English language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language Immersion</td>
<td>Majority language speakers (English is the US)</td>
<td>English and Target Language</td>
<td>Target Language proficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research on DL demonstrates that it is the optimum program model for ELLs and language-minority students (Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 2002; Thomas & Collier, 2012). It is important to note that TWI is not a remedial program offered to LEP students during the day, but TWI is instead an educational program in which all students, native English speakers and native speakers of the minority language, receive core content instruction together in both English and the minority language. In fact, TWI is defined as an enrichment bilingual multicultural education program by Torres-
Quantitative research shows that all students in DL classrooms perform as well or better than their peers in traditional English-only classrooms (Collier & Thomas, 1997; Collier & Thomas, 2011; Lindholm, 1991; Quintanar-Sarellana, 2004). Research also indicates that many student groups that experience achievement gaps are closing the gaps in DL programs (Collier & Thomas, 2011). In their most current research, Collier and Thomas found that the achievement gap for African American students in TWI programs is narrowing (2012). The achievement gap is often defined as the differences between the test scores of minority and/or low-income students and the test scores of their White peers (National Education Association, 2012). Currently, limited qualitative research has been done asking what is occurring in TWI classrooms that leads to this increased achievement for student groups that traditionally experience achievement gaps.

**Student Achievement In Dual Language**

There have been many studies pertinent to the effectiveness of DL programs on student academic achievement and increased test scores. In a longitudinal, 7-year study, researchers from the Center for Applied Linguistics collected data on 344 students across the country in Spanish/English DL programs. In reading, both native Spanish speakers and native English speakers showed growth from third to fifth grade, with each reading at grade level performance at fifth grade with no significance differences between the two groups (Sugarman & Howard, 2001). Many small studies like this one showing increased achievement in DL programs have been duplicated across the country (Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Montenegro, 2006; Thomas & Collier, 2002; Thomas & Collier, 2012).
Thomas and Collier have been conducting research in this area for over three decades, with more than 20 large and small school districts in a multitude of states, representing all regions of the U.S. in urban, suburban, and rural contexts (Collier & Thomas, 2004). Collier and Thomas take care in their studies to draw the distinction between enrichment and remediation programs, concluding that DL and TWI programs exemplify enrichment rather than remediation. They classify programs such as intensive English classes, English as a Second Language (ESL) pullout, ESL content/sheltered instruction, structured English immersion, and transitional bilingual education as remediation. These programs offer less rigorous instruction in modified curriculum (Collier & Thomas, 2004). In contrast, the authors describe the DL enrichment models as teaching the mainstream curriculum through two languages. Intellectual challenge is created through thematic units of the core curriculum, focused on problem solving, which stimulates students to make more than one year’s progress in both languages. The extensive research of Collier and Thomas has consistently reflected similar results, showing that DL is beneficial to the academic success of all students.

Collier and Thomas (2010) recently conducted a multiyear study on the effectiveness of TWI DL programs in North Carolina. Their research included six districts in the state with at least one DL school within each district. In this research, Collier and Thomas (2010) disaggregated data into student subgroups identified by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements. Their findings for reading achievement on the North Carolina EOG test for the various subgroups (Collier & Thomas 2010) includes the following:

- In NC school districts that have TWI programs, current LEP DL students score statistically and practically significantly higher in reading in each grade (3-8) than current LEP non-DL students (Table 2)
• By Grade 5, current LEP DL students are scoring as high on Reading EOGs as current LEP non-DL students a year older, and this trend increases through the eighth grade.

• African American students in TWI DL programs score practically and statistically significantly higher on Reading EOGs in all grades compared to African American students not in DL programs (Table 3).

• Beginning in 4th grade in Reading and continuing through 8th grade, African American students in DL programs score higher than African American non-DL students in the next grade who are typically a year older.

• Low-SES students in DL programs score statistically and practically significantly higher in Reading in Grades 3 through 8 compared to low-SES non-DL students (Table 4).

Table 2

Reading EOG Scores for LEP Students by Grade and Program Type, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>DL Program</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>DL vs. Non-DL Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>No, not in DL</td>
<td>331.3</td>
<td>2348</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, in DL</td>
<td>334.4</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>331.4</td>
<td>2444</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>No, not in DL</td>
<td>337.5</td>
<td>1625</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, in DL</td>
<td>340.9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>337.6</td>
<td>1668</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>No, not in DL</td>
<td>343.9</td>
<td>5448</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, in DL</td>
<td>346.3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>344.0</td>
<td>1480</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3

**Reading EOG Scores for African American Students by Grade and Program Type, 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>DL Program</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>DL vs. Non-DL Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>No, not in DL</td>
<td>334.4</td>
<td>5668</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Yes, in DL</td>
<td>337.1</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>334.4</td>
<td>5748</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>No, not in DL</td>
<td>341.3</td>
<td>5414</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Yes, in DL</td>
<td>343.8</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>341.3</td>
<td>5466</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>No, not in DL</td>
<td>346.8</td>
<td>5129</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Yes, in DL</td>
<td>349.9</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>346.8</td>
<td>5181</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 and Table 4 each show an increasing effect size through the grade levels. For instance, the effect size for African American fifth graders .12 higher than third grade (Table 3). The effect size for fifth grade low SES students is .20 higher than third graders (Table 4).
Table 4

*Reading EOG Scores for Low SES Students by Grade and Program Type, 2009*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>DL vs. Non-DL Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>No, not in DL</td>
<td>333.6</td>
<td>7430</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, in DL</td>
<td>333.6</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>333.6</td>
<td>7583</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>No, not in DL</td>
<td>340.7</td>
<td>7044</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, in DL</td>
<td>344.2</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>340.8</td>
<td>7163</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>No, not in DL</td>
<td>346.4</td>
<td>6406</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, in DL</td>
<td>350.5</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>346.4</td>
<td>6508</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many factors, such as teacher quality, school community, attendance, and class size to name just a few, affect student achievement (Betts, Zau, & Rice 2003). Researchers have been examining what contributes to the increased student achievement in TWI programs. One argument suggests that TWI programs in which students are selected through a lottery process are examples of self-selection. In self-selection, the results from achievement studies may not be representative of the general population. In any study that investigates the effects of programming on student achievement, it becomes important to account for selection biases (Schneider & Buckley, 2003). Since a great number of TWI programs enroll students through a lottery, this is a significant limiting factor to both quantitative and qualitative research studies.

Another contributing factor for increased student achievement in TWI programs is the difference in cognitive function between bilinguals and monolinguals. In a 2012 *New York Times* article on the advantages of bilingualism, Bhattacharjee cites a 2004 study by
psychologists Bialystok and Martin-Rhee, which found that bilinguals were more adept than monolinguals at solving certain kinds of mental puzzles. Bhattacharjee also cites several studies concluding that the ability to be bilingual improves the brain’s executive function, “a command system that directs the attention processes that we use for planning, solving problems, and performing various other mentally demanding tasks” (Bhattacharjee, 2012). A researcher at the University of Pompeu Fabra also found that bilinguals perform better at monitoring tasks and do so with less activity in parts of the brain involved in monitoring, indicating they are more efficient at this process (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Studies demonstrate positive relationships between bilingualism and aspects of cognitive functioning such as cognitive flexibility, divergent thinking, and creativity (Cloud, Genesse, & Hamayan, 2000; Cummins, 1998; Esposito & Baker-Ward, 2013).

While self-selection and cognitive function may impact the student achievement results in TWI classrooms, pedagogy implemented by teachers within TWI programs is another key contributing factor to the quantitative results. Teacher effectiveness has been shown to be the key factor contributing to student achievement (Wright, 1997; Rockoff, 2004).

Regardless of the causes, the increased achievement of African American students in DL programs is compelling. With the history of the achievement gap in the United States, DL programs offer an additional strategy for addressing the pervasive gap. This research analyzes what is occurring in these programs that may serve as effective models of instruction to be duplicated. The history of the achievement gap illustrates the importance of educators closing the gap moving forward.
Academic Achievement Gap: African American Students

Documentation of the achievement gap began in the 1960s by educational groups. According to Hallinan (2001), National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data beginning in 1971 revealed that 9-year-old African American children were lagging alarmingly behind Anglo children in the area of reading by at least 20 points, and that 17-year-old African Americans scored at least 30 points lower than their Anglo counterparts (Hallinan, 2001, as cited in Boone, 2007). While some gains were made early in closing the achievement gap, the gains disappeared in the late 1980s (Lee, 2002). The early closing of the achievement gap can be attributed to a number of possible factors. During the period of gap closure, there was some closure in resource gaps such as parental income, education, and occupation (Barton & Coley, 2010). Likewise, desegregation and reduction of class size have been considered as factors, but these are not conclusive causes for the closure in the gap (Barton & Coley, 2010).

In 2005, the NAEP results showed a gap in reading scaled scores of more than 26 points between Black and Latina/o fourth graders as compared to White fourth graders. In math, the gap was more than 20 points (Ladson-Billings, 2006). The achievement gap exists even when comparing like socioeconomic groups (Ladson-Billings, 2006). More recently in North Carolina, the 2013 NAEP results showed a continuation of the achievement gap. Black students had an average score that was 23 points lower than White students based on the fourth grade reading assessment, which is not significantly different than the gap of 26 points in 1992 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

The achievement gap is a national problem that plagues the educational system in the United States. Dreeben (in Darling-Hammond, 1995) found that African American and Anglo children of comparable ability achieve at the same levels when given the same quality of
instruction. However, researchers conclude that African American children continue to score significantly below Anglo children on standardized tests (Skrla, Scheurich, Johnson, & Koschoreck, 2001). Figure 1 illustrates the achievement gap based on NAEP reading assessment scores from 1975 through 2012.

Figure 1

NAEP Reading Scores for 9-year-olds

Since the achievement gap in the United States was identified, researchers have sought answers to why the gap exists and how to address it. The Coleman Report, Equality of Educational Opportunity (1966), argued for integrated classrooms and cited a combination of factors including the composition of a school, a teacher’s verbal skills, and a student’s family background as contributing factors for student achievement (Coleman et. al., 1966). Brown and Uhlenberg (2002) summarized the literature on contributing factors to achievement into four categories: the child; parents and home environment; the teacher; and the school/educational
system. Social psychologist Steele (1999) argued that a “stereotype threat” contributes to the gap. Delpit (1995), Foster (1996), Irvine (2003), and Lee (2004) have all focused on the culture divide as a factor in the achievement gap, while Gay (2004) examined curriculum as a factor. Sleeter (2001) and Ladson-Billings (1994) have focused on the pedagogical practices of teachers as contributing to either the exacerbation or the narrowing of the gap.

While many researchers have analyzed the achievement gap, its causes, and strategies for addressing it, limited research exists around dual language. Contributing factors for African American student achievement in DL have yet to be investigated. While some research exists on African Americans in DL, it focuses primarily on student perception and does not evaluate instructional practices. This research study complements the limited research that exists in this area.

**Research on African American Students in Dual Language**

Research on the historical achievement gap and strategies for addressing the gap have been a focus for educators for decades (Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2004; Ladson Billings, 2004). In the field of DL, research has focused on the achievement gap as it pertains to English Language Learners (ELLs). However, research focused on African American students and their academic achievement in TWI programs is slim. The first study of interest is a 1998 study conducted by Nicoladis, Taylor, Lambert, and Cazabon. The study examined standardized test scores for first though fourth graders in a TWI program in Massachusetts. They found that while a gap still existed on English-language exams, native-English speaking African Americans and Anglo American students performed at equal levels on Spanish reading and math tests. These researchers argued there is an equity gap that exists in education, and given the opportunity to eliminate the equity gap, the achievement gap is also eliminated.
Another study sought to examine African American caregivers’ and students’ perceptions regarding participation in a TWI program (Boone, 2007). Boone found that caregivers felt involvement in a TWI program would enhance the lives of their children economically, educationally, and socially. She found that caregivers maintained involvement in the education of their children by facilitating homework completion in Spanish, communicating with teachers, and so forth, as they felt more support was needed to facilitate Spanish acquisition for their children. Boone’s study also indicated that students perceived that positive teacher interaction played a vital role in their academic success.

Anberg-Espinosa (2008) researched the experiences and perceptions of African American upper elementary and middle school students in TWI programs. In one study, a TWI program in northern California with 301 students in Grades K-8 was selected as the research site. Five percent of the student population identified as African American. Nine students and their parents participated in the study, and data was collected through interviews and dialogue. Anberg-Espinosa (2008) found parents were satisfied overall with the program, students received extra academic support, and students felt comfortable culturally and had positive cross-cultural relationships, stating that they could be themselves as African Americans in the programs. Both students and parents wanted a more culturally inclusive school that included more African American learning experiences and activities. They also wished to see more students enrolled from underrepresented groups and cultures (Anberg-Espinosa, 2008).

An additional study on perceptions of African American students in a 50/50 TWI program revealed that while students knew multiculturalism was a goal of the program, they had not been taught much about their own heritage. African American parents were concerned that the school emphasized Latino cultural and academic concerns more than their own. Parents’
primary goal for enrolling and keeping their children in the TWI program was to give their children the best chance for future educational and job opportunities and to take their children out of segregated, ineffectual schools (Parchia, 2000).

Carrigo’s (2000) case study of another TWI program found the school to be supporting positive attitudes toward Latinos and Spanish language but providing less support for African Americans. Carrigo (2000) did not observe curriculum and teaching that was culturally responsive or inclusive of African American students.

The studies reviewed above provide a view of DL programs through the lens of the African American family and student experience. Instruction, however, is minimally addressed. What types of teaching strategies are implemented in the DL classrooms? What frameworks are used when planning instruction? This study, in contrast, addresses, evaluates, and analyzes instructional pedagogy when considering student achievement in TWI classrooms.

**Instructional Pedagogy**

**Dual language pedagogy.** *Pedagogy* is defined by Shulman (1987) as consisting of subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge. For the purposes of this literature review, *dual language pedagogy* will include best practices in DL programming and teaching. In 2007, a team of researchers compiled a set of guiding principles for DL programs. These principles were grounded in evidence and drawn from research on best practices (Howard et al., 2007). The guiding principles begin with a literature review by Lindholm-Leary (2007) in which she reviews research that focuses on characteristics of programs or schools that are considered effective in promoting language proficiency and academic achievement of ELLs.
Lindholm-Leary (2007) points out that there is consistency between the factors that define exemplary DL programs and practices found in effective mainstream schools. From her review of the literature, Howard, Sugarman, Christian, and Lindholm-Leary (2007) found a set of factors that create a successful DL program. In The Guiding Principles for Dual Language, these factors are organized into seven categories: (a) assessment and accountability, (b) curriculum, (c) instructional practices, (d) staff quality and professional development, (e) program structure, (f) family and community involvement, and (g) support and resources (Howard et al., 2007).

In The Guiding Principles for Dual Language, assessment and accountability are integral components of teaching pedagogy. Assessment in effective DL programs is:

… used to shape and monitor program effectiveness, aligned with curriculum and appropriate standards, aligned with the vision and goals of the program, conducted in both of the languages used for instruction, used to track the progress of a variety of groups in the program over time using disaggregated data, a topic for professional development for teachers and administrators, interpreted accurately, carried out in consistent and systematic ways, supported by an appropriate infrastructure and budget, and disseminated to appropriate audiences. (Howard et al., 2007, p. 9)

For curriculum, the Guiding Principles for Dual Language describe key concepts that programs should consider for curriculum. DL programs should implement curriculum that:

… is aligned with standards and assessment, is meaningful and academically challenging and integrates higher-order thinking, is thematically integrated, is enriching, not remedial, is aligned with the vision and goals of bilingualism, biliteracy, and multiculturalism, and includes language and literature across the curriculum, reflects and values students’
cultures, is horizontally and vertically aligned, incorporates a variety of materials, and integrates technology. (Howard et al., 2007, p. 11)

Instruction is a primary component in any classroom. How teachers deliver instruction is just as vital as the curriculum they are offering the students. Best practices in DL classrooms would include:

… a variety of instructional techniques responding to different learning styles and language proficiencies, positive interactions between teachers and students and among students, a reciprocal interaction model of teaching with genuine dialogue, cooperative learning or group work situations, language input that uses sheltering strategies to promote comprehension, use of visual aids and modeling instruction, is interesting, relevant, and of sufficient quantity, is challenging enough to promote high levels of language proficiency and critical thinking, language objectives are integrated into the curriculum, structured tasks and unstructured opportunities for students to use language, language policies that encourage students to use the language of instruction, monolingual lesson delivery, and balanced consideration of the needs of all students. (Howard, et al., 2007, p. 16)

The Guiding Principles of Dual Language also include the importance of professional development for teachers to continue developing and improving teaching pedagogy. Best practice suggests professional development that focuses on:

… language education pedagogy and curriculum, materials and resources, assessment, development of professional language skills in the partner language, educational equity (particularly with regard to high expectations for all students), dual language theory and models, second language acquisition, and biliteracy development. (Howard, et al., 2007, p. 22)
In discussing program structure, four components are discussed by the team of researchers: vision and goals focused on bilingualism, biliteracy, and multiculturalism; ensuring equity and a positive school environment; effective leadership; and ongoing program planning. In focusing on pedagogy, it is important to examine the first two components. Darling-Hammond (1995) states that an environment that facilitates learning requires equity among all groups. A vision must be established with a clear understanding of equitable treatment directed toward culturally and linguistically diverse students and multicultural themes should be integrated into instruction (Howard et al., 2007).

According to Lindholm-Leary (2001) research indicates a social gap exists in many TWI schools between native English speakers coming from middle-class families and ELLs coming from working-class families. Researchers argue that the best practice is to acknowledge and address these differences to ensure equal educational opportunities in the classroom for all students and to address these differences in professional development, parent training, assessment, and interpretations of evaluation results (Carallo & McDonald, 2002; Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

The sixth strand in The Guiding Principles for Dual Language focuses on Family and Community. A DL program should:

… incorporate a variety of home/school collaboration activities, maintain a welcoming environment for parents and community, value bilingualism and biliteracy, hire office staff who speak the partner language, make announcements in both languages, post signs in both languages, value multiculturalism, foster a sense of belonging, and establish parent liaisons. (Howard et al., 2007, p. 37)

The last strand details the importance of support and resources (see Table 5 for a summary of all
seven principles). Effective features of support and resources include that the program is:

… supported by the community, the local Board of Education, and the district, resources are allocated equitably, is seen by all stakeholders as a permanent and enriching part of the school and district and program administrators, understand, support, and advocate for the program, facilitate integration of the program across the school, ensure equitable access to resources for all students and in both program languages, and has families and communities that are knowledgeable about the program and can advocate on its behalf.

(Howard et al., 2007, p. 39)

Table 5

*Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and Accountability</td>
<td>Assessment in both languages, track progress, disaggregate data, use for professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Aligned with standards and assessments, enriching not remedial, reflects students’ cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Interesting, challenging, relevant, consideration of student need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Language education pedagogy focus, high expectations for all students, dual language theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Structure</td>
<td>Focused on goals, ensure equity, effective leadership, ongoing program planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Community</td>
<td>Collaborative, value bilingualism and multiculturalism, foster sense of belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support and Resources</td>
<td>Seen by all stakeholders ad permanent and enriching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Torres-Guzmán’s (2002) work on the key features of DL programs outlines three theoretical underpinnings of DL programs: (a) It takes most individuals 5-7 years to acquire the
second language well enough to function academically; (b) One can transfer the knowledge and skills acquired in one language to the other; and (c) by continuing to develop two languages, children’s educational and cognitive development is enhanced. Torres-Guzmán (2002) also explicitly states how DL is different from other bilingual education models in that it protects minority languages and cultures, with a goal of promoting their use among English-speaking students and focusing on quality education for all.

In her description of key features of DL programs, Torres-Guzmán divides the features into three categories: linguistic, sociocultural, and pedagogical. In the pedagogical category, she includes the goals of academic achievement for all children, thematic organization of units of study, teachers as monolingual models, development of level team teaching structures, and distinct curriculum linguistic policies (Torres-Guzmán, 2002).

In the linguistic category, there is an emphasis on strict language separation and equality in language distribution. This emphasis allows for both English and the target language to receive equal distribution of minutes and the symbolic significance of placing equal importance on each language. Simultaneous translation should be avoided, and language should be taught through the content and not in isolation. Students should be grouped heterogeneously by language so that native English speakers and native Spanish speakers are not separate. Additionally, program goals should focus on building bilingualism and biliteracy (Torres-Guzmán, 2002).

It is in Torres-Guzmán’s description of the sociocultural features that multiple connections to culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) can be found. In this feature, programs focus on an appreciation of cultural diversity, development of student self-esteem, cooperative group learning structures, mixing language minority and majority students, parental involvement, and school/community support structures (Torres-Guzmán, 2002). In addition to these subfeatures,
culturally relevant teaching is directly referenced as a key component in successful DL classrooms.

Torres-Guzman (2002) lists four features under the umbrella of what she defines as CRP: (a) inclusion of original works from the worlds of the language minority groups so that children see the authors as intellectual role models; (b) acknowledgment of what students bring into the classroom—life experiences, cultural ways, and so forth—as legitimate knowledge upon which to build; (c) incorporation of homes as knowledge resources for curricular development; and (d) challenge of social expectations for the language minority children by organizing their classrooms around high expectations.

DL researchers have identified effective instructional strategies that are observable in the classroom. Table 6 provides an overview of research detailing specific and observable practices exhibited by teachers in dual language classrooms.

Table 6

Effective, Observable Dual Language Pedagogical Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observable Practices</th>
<th>DL Strategy Concept</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least 50% of the day is in the target language every day</td>
<td>Language allocation (50% or more of target language instruction)</td>
<td>Collier &amp; Thomas (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher does not interchange languages</td>
<td>Language separation</td>
<td>Collier &amp; Thomas (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary focus</td>
<td>Visual cues</td>
<td>Total physical response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Hands-on activities
- Inquiry-based lessons
- Active, discovery learning
- Collier & Thomas (2012)

### Students in pairs or groups
- Interactions between students
- Cooperative learning
- Collier & Thomas (2012); Freeman (1998)

### Rubrics
- Verbal expectations stated
- High expectations for students

### Partner and group work
- Language and oracy goals in lesson
- Collaboration and exchange of ideas
- Howard & Sugarman (2007); Freeman (1998); Montecel & Cortez (2002)

### Strategies for independent working skills
- Independent work time
- Fostering Independence
- Howard & Sugarman (2007)

### Open-ended activities
- Incorporating language and content standards
- Higher Order Thinking
- Howard & Sugarman (2007); Montecel & Cortez (2002); Berman (1995)

### Risks taken in classroom, including in target language
- Students reflect on learning
- Self-assessment and reflection
- Howard & Sugarman (2007)

### Student and teacher culture reflected in lessons
- Culture in the Curriculum

While research begins to draw connections between best practices in DL pedagogy and what has been written about CRP, the literature is still lacking connections for what this means for African American student achievement within DL classrooms. In the majority of the research on DL, the focus is on ELLs as a student subgroup. Given the recent findings on African American student achievement in DL, this study offers a closer examination of instructional pedagogy in DL.
classrooms in which African American students are experiencing academic achievement.

**Culturally relevant teaching pedagogy.** Gloria Ladson-Billings spent years researching excellent teachers of African American students (Ladson-Billings, 1990, 1992, 1994). Like Lindholm-Leary, Ladson-Billings acknowledges that she is describing good teaching and questions why it seems to be occurring so infrequently (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Ladson-Billings argues that a pedagogy she identifies as “culturally relevant” (CRP) is central in the academic success for African American and other children who have not been well served by public schools (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Ladson-Billings draws on several theories as she begins to define CRP (Irvine, 1990; Jordan, 1985; Mohatt & Erickson, 1981; Perry, 1993; Villegas, 1988, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1995). These works look at developing a closer congruency between students’ home culture and school (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Ladson-Billings defines CRP as:

… a pedagogy of oppression not unlike critical pedagogy but specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment. CRP rests on three criteria or propositions: (a) students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the current status quo of the social order. (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 160)

Ladson-Billings points to academic success as a necessary component of CRP. The eight teachers Ladson-Billings observed reinforced and produced academic excellence in their students. They demonstrated ways for students to demonstrate academic power by drawing on issues and ideas that the students found meaningful.
The second component in CRP is maintaining and developing cultural competence. According to Ladson-Billings, culturally relevant teachers utilize students’ culture as a pathway for learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Ladson-Billings (1995) points to several examples of teachers helping students maintain and develop cultural competence. In one case, a teacher creates residencies in the neighborhood by collaborating with people in various careers. In another, a teacher encourages students to use their home language while they acquired a secondary discourse of “standard” English.

Ladson-Billings’ third component of CRP includes developing a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows students to critique the world around them. Students obtain skills to examine cultural norms and values and critique institutions that produce and maintain social inequities (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Students in culturally relevant classrooms engage the world and others critically. They are compelled to challenge things they observe and to become actors in their world.

Delpit (1996) reviews Ladson-Billing’s work (1994) as being a “godsend” for individuals working in the field of teacher education and preparing teacher candidates who do not know children can receive an excellent education in America’s public schools. The factors that Ladson-Billings brings forth, Delpit argues, are so often ignored as education focuses on “technical” aspects of the classroom. Delpit states that the most critical factors brought forth by Ladson-Billings are: (a) what teachers believe about the children they teach, (b) the material they present, and (c) the society they live in (Delpit, 1996).

In a qualitative study by Howard (2001), students’ perceptions of CRT were collected and analyzed. Howard found that CRT has a positive affect on students’ effort and engagement in the classroom. Howard also revealed three conditions that students preferred in their learning
environments: (a) teachers who form caring bonds and attitudes, (b) teachers who established community- and family-type classroom environments, and (c) teachers who made learning a fun and entertaining process (Howard, 2001).

Revisiting her original work on CRP, Ladson-Billings (2014) encourages building upon her research to meet the needs of today’s students and schools. She also warns against a distortion of CRT:

What state departments, school districts, and individual teachers are now calling culturally relevant pedagogy is often a distortion and corruption of the central ideas I attempted to promulgate. The idea that adding some books about people of color, having a classroom Kwanzaa celebration, or posting diverse images makes one culturally relevant seem to be what the pedagogy has been reduced to. (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 82)

Researchers Paris and Alim (2014) extend the original theory of CRP from the mid-90s and explore the term cultural sustaining pedagogy. As such, they focus on the multiple identities and cultures that influence students (Ladson-Billings, 2014). They consider global identities as well as complexities and changes in culture over time, stating:

We must be open to sustaining [cultures] in both the traditional and evolving ways they are lived and used by young people. Our pedagogies must address the well-understood fact that what it means to be African American or Latina/o or Navajo is continuing to shift in the ways culture always has. (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 87)

McCarty and Lee (2014) introduce another term, cultural revitalizing pedagogy. They examine the connections that exist between language and culture. Building from the CRP framework presented by Ladson-Billings (1994) and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris,
McCarty and Lee add the goal of sustaining and revitalizing culture as some cultures risk extinction (McCarty & Lee, 2014). Similar to the research by Paris and Alim (2014), McCarty and Lee’s (2014) research expands and builds upon the seminal work of Ladson-Billings (1994). Despite the years of research since the introduction of the term *culturally relevant pedagogy*, Ladson-Billings’ research remains the bedrock for studying the incorporation of culture in the classroom as a pedagogical technique. Many culturally relevant teaching strategies are observable in the classroom. Table 7 summarizes the body of research completed over the past 30 years detailing a variety of CRP strategies observed in the classroom environment.

Table 7

**Effective, Observable Culturally Relevant Teaching Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observable Practices</th>
<th>CRP Strategy Concept</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher creates positive proximity experiences with all students equally</td>
<td>Uses positive proximity with all students equitably</td>
<td>Ladson-Billings (1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodding</td>
<td>Body language that conveys all students’ questions and comments are valued</td>
<td>Gay (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaning toward student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student chairs arranged in groups</td>
<td>Classroom arranged for discussion and teacher-student and student-student interaction</td>
<td>Shade (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home language posted</td>
<td>Visually in the classroom and resources used reflect students’ home, community, and values</td>
<td>Shade (2004), Nieto (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature selection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ culture reflected visually in classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic organizers modeled</td>
<td>Advance graphic organizers such as semantic mapping</td>
<td>Tatum (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic organizers used by students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Intersection of Dual Language Principles and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

There are various ways in which DL pedagogy and CRP intersect. Drawing from research by Gay (1994, 2000) and Nieto (1999) and building on Ladson-Billings’ definition of CRP (1995), Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) build a conceptual framework in which broad themes of CRP are grouped into five major themes: (a) Identity and Achievement, (b) Equity and Excellence, (c) Developmental Appropriateness, (d) Teaching Whole Child, and (e) Student-
Teacher Relationships. The framework created by Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) can be utilized to examine the compatibility of DL principles and CRP (Table 8).

Table 8

*Intersection of CRP and DL Principles based on broad themes developed by Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brown-Jeffy and Cooper’s broad themes of CRP</th>
<th>Dual Language Principles</th>
<th>Elements of CRP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity and Achievement</strong></td>
<td>Assessments in multiple languages</td>
<td>Identity development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Affirmation of diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Public validation of home-community cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equity and Excellence</strong></td>
<td>Curriculum aligned with multiculturalism</td>
<td>Dispositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academically challenging for all (not remedial)</td>
<td>Multicultural curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curriculum reflects students’ cultures</td>
<td>Equal access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High expectations for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developmental Appropriateness</strong></td>
<td>Thematic integration</td>
<td>Learning styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Variety of instructional techniques</td>
<td>Teaching styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching based on students’ needs</td>
<td>Cultural variation in psychological needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language and literacy goals across curriculum</td>
<td>(motivation, morale, engagement, collaboration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Whole Child</strong></td>
<td>Educational equity focus for professional development</td>
<td>Staff development in cultural context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Address differences to ensure equal educational opportunities</td>
<td>Bridge home, school, and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home/school collaboration</td>
<td>Learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welcoming environment</td>
<td>Supportive learning community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foster sense of belonging</td>
<td>Empower students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conceptual Framework

Current research, such as that by Collier and Thomas (2012), is now revealing quantitative evidence that African American students in DL programs outperform their peers in English-only classrooms on standardized tests. There are several factors that have been outlined by other researchers as possibilities for the quantitative findings, such as self-selection’s affecting research findings and the cognitive benefits gained from bilingualism. Instructional pedagogy, however, is overlooked in many of these studies.

A review of the literature examined above reveals multiple ways in which CRP and DL pedagogy intersect. Many of the descriptors of DL programs and CRT strategies have commonalities: the focus on multiculturalism as a programmatic goal that includes respect and appreciation for cultural differences, including language; the need to draw from the students’ culture and background in the classroom; high academic expectations for all students and increased student self-esteem; and a focus on equity and social justice that reaches beyond the classroom to give students a broader world perspective and challenges them to inject their ideas and opinions on these issues. These commonalities in the literature lead to the research question of whether these teaching practices are in place in DL classrooms in which African American students are experiencing academic achievement greater than their peers in English-only classrooms. Are teachers drawing upon these pedagogical frameworks in narrowing the achievement gap for African American students in TWI classrooms?

For this research study, a unique framework was designed by the investigator that combines Ladson-Billings’ (1995) components of CRP with the program standards and
pedagogy for DL (Howard et al., 2007). Instructional pedagogy is classified into three areas identified by Ladson-Billings (1995): (a) academic success, (b) cultural competence, and (c) sociopolitical consciousness. Within each of these overarching components of CRP identified in the literature, elements of CRP and DL pedagogy that pertain to classroom instruction have been included. This framework used for data collection and analysis of instructional pedagogy is depicted in Table 9.

Table 9

La Serna’s Conceptual Framework: Instructional Pedagogy for overlapping dual language instructional practices and cultural relevant pedagogy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Success</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academically challenging curriculum and activities</td>
<td>Higher-order thinking assignments and questions</td>
<td>Howard (2007); Gay (2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom organized around high expectations</td>
<td>Rubrics, clear verbal expectations, gradual independence</td>
<td>Howard, (2007); Rodriguez &amp; Bellanca, (1996)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture of academic excellence is cultivated</td>
<td>Recognition of effort and accomplishment; prompt feedback</td>
<td>Cole (1995); Howard et al. (2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Competence</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration across cultural groups</td>
<td>Heterogeneous grouping Partner/group activities</td>
<td>Sadler (2005); Howard (2007); Collier &amp; Thomas (2012); Freeman (1998)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered instruction focused on students’ background and culture</td>
<td>Background knowledge valued, vocabulary focus, advanced organizers</td>
<td>Collier &amp; Thomas (2012); Tatum (2005); Shade, Kelly, &amp; Oberg (1997)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-teacher connection</td>
<td>Home language reflected, teacher proximity, personal</td>
<td>Ladson-Billings (1996); Collier &amp; Thomas (2012)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sociopolitical Consciousness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation of cultural diversity</td>
<td>Lessons connected to students’ life, community, and culture, visuals reflect students’ homes and values, fluid culture integration</td>
<td>Howard (2007); Brown (1999); Shade (2004); Nieto (2000); Ladson-Billings (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal norms and expectations are challenged</td>
<td>Group discussion, lesson topics</td>
<td>Ladson-Billings (1996); Howard et al. (2007)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

Two-way immersion (TWI) as a dual language program is a growing instructional model in the United States with goals of biliteracy, bilingualism, and cross-cultural awareness (CAL, 2012). Beginning in the 1960s and driven by the increase of native Spanish-speakers in the public school system, DL programs now number over 400 in the country (CAL, 2012). At the same time, the achievement gap for underrepresented groups has been documented since the 1960s (Coleman et al., 1966). Despite efforts to narrow the gap, researchers conclude that African American children continue to score significantly below Anglo children on standardized test scores (Ladson Billings, 2004; Gay, 2004; Skrla, Scheurich, Johnson, & Koschorek, 2001; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013).

Current research on TWI programs has disaggregated achievement data by student subgroups. Current research from North Carolina indicates that native English-speaking African American students in TWI are outperforming their peers in traditional, English-only classrooms (Collier & Thomas, 2010, 2012). The increased achievement by students in TWI has been analyzed and researchers have shown a variety of factors that may contribute to increased
academic achievement (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Cloud, Genesse, & Hamayan, 2000; Cummins, 1998; Esposito & Baker-Ward, 2013).

This research study examines pedagogical practices taking place in the classroom as a factor for increased academic achievement of African American students in North Carolina TWI programs as measured by End-of-Grade exams in Grades 3-5. Through a merging of DL and CRP practices and pedagogy, this research examines ways in which these frameworks intersect in TWI classrooms to determine how and if teachers in TWI classrooms are utilizing elements from these pedagogical frameworks.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Purpose. The purpose of this research is to analyze pedagogical practices utilized in two-way immersion (TWI) classrooms in which the percent of African American students proficient on the reading End-of-Grade (EOG) exams in Grades 3-5 is higher than the state average by 5 points or more.

Research questions. The central question for this study is: What pedagogical practices are used by dual language teachers during literacy instruction that are effective in raising African American students’ academic achievement as measured by the reading EOG?

Qualitative research for this study focused on the following questions:

• What culturally relevant teaching strategies are used by teachers in dual language literacy classrooms in which the percent of African American students proficient on the reading End-of-Grade (EOG) exam in Grades 3-5 is higher than the state average by 5 points or more?
• How do dual language teachers build a culture for academic success?
• How do dual language teachers nurture cultural competence in classrooms?
• How do dual language teachers foster sociopolitical consciousness through curriculum content and instruction?

Methodology Rationale

This study complements and expands the extensive research done by Collier and Thomas (2012) that documents the above-average academic achievement of native English-speaking
African American students in TWI programs in the state of North Carolina. As Collier and Thomas have conducted solely quantitative research, this preliminary study explores qualitative techniques as a methodology for examining factors that are contributing to the success of African American students in TWI programs and analyzes pedagogical practices that have been effective in those classrooms.

Qualitative research has the advantage of adding narrative data to accompany quantitative research that already exists. The qualitative research in this study adheres to the guidelines for qualitative research put forth by Taylor and Bogdon (1984), who assert that qualitative research can be inductive and holistic. Qualitative research is descriptive and, in this study, enables the researcher to create a picture of literacy instruction occurring in the classrooms observed. Qualitative research also values the subjects’ point of view (Taylor & Bogdon, 1984). In this research study, the teachers’ point of view is instrumental in answering the research questions. Qualitative research values all perspectives available (Taylor & Bogdon, 1984). Cresswell (2013) categorizes four types of qualitative data sources: (a) interviews, (b) observations, (c) documents, and (d) audiovisual materials. This research drew from three of those sources. While quantitative data collection on student achievement has reflected African American achievement greater than the state average on EOG exams in TWI programs in North Carolina, it has not provided us with information on what occurs in the classroom and how instruction is planned and executed, and it lacks information to duplicate successful pedagogy in other settings (Collier & Thomas, 2012).

**Researcher Role**

During classroom observations, the researcher’s role was a participant observer. Participant observer is defined by Glesne (2011) as a researcher remaining primarily an observer
but having some interaction with the study participants. The researcher did not offer advice or assist teachers, students, or administrators. While the researcher observed student work during classroom observations, she could not solely be an observer because the participants knew they were being observed. As such, a participant observer could affect the results of the study. To increase trustworthiness and validity, the study utilized the following procedures outlined by Creswell (1998): triangulation through the use of multiple data collection methods, member checking so that participants could review interview responses, and clarification of researcher bias (Glesne 2011).

**Site Selection and Participants**

**Site of study.** Several factors contributed to the selection of the sites for this study. First, sites were considered for selection based on the most current research conducted by Collier and Thomas (2012) indicating that African American students in TWI programs are performing one grade level above their peers in non-dual-language (DL) classrooms in North Carolina. While they have collected quantitative data in multiple states and districts showing similar results, Collier and Thomas are currently conducting a longitudinal study on DL schools in North Carolina with TWI programs.

Collier and Thomas’ study includes 12 TWI elementary programs spread across six districts in North Carolina. Of these programs, three schools were ineligible for this study based on the age of the program (i.e., students in the TWI program have not aged into EOGs and thus state test results are not available). Another two schools were ineligible for data collection due to the small size of the African American student population in Grades 3-5 (i.e., fewer than 30 students taking the EOGs, which is the number required by the state accountability system to form a measurable student subgroup). Two additional schools were eliminated due to the fact
that the grade levels in the program end prior to fourth grade. Finally, a school with only one dual language (DL) track was eliminated because the small program reduces the number of African American students in the student subgroup. Table 10 includes a summary of the remaining elementary schools eligible for inclusion in the study. In two of the sites, the percent of African American students proficient on reading EOGs is lower than the state average (ranging from 4 to 8 points below), eliminating them from the study. In three of the sites remaining, the percent of African American students demonstrating proficiency on the EOGs is higher than the state average (ranging from 5 to 36 points above).
Table 10

*Research Site Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Points above/below EOG state average for African American students on EOGs 2012-13</th>
<th>Number of EOG tests taken by African American students, Grades 3-5</th>
<th>Program Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools Above State Average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chambers School District</td>
<td>Otis Academy</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>District magnet, lottery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chambers School District</td>
<td>Crater School</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>District magnet, lottery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavern School District</td>
<td>South Campbell Elementary</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>District magnet, lottery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools Below State Average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant School District</td>
<td>West Grant Elementary</td>
<td>-7.9</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>District magnet, lottery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Sorento School District</td>
<td>Amber Elementary</td>
<td>-4.4</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>District magnet, lottery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Access.** Access to the three sites meeting the selection criteria was requested through the research and evaluation department in the central office of each selected school district. Documentation of Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from UNC Chapel Hill’s Office of Human Research and Ethics was provided with the application process. The principals from each school were contacted directly during the application process. Of the three sites, one did not respond. The two remaining sites participated in the study.
Participants. At each of the elementary schools selected, four to five classroom teachers from each school site agreed to participate. This study had nine teacher participants in total. In order to acquire these participants, the researcher:

1. requested permission from the district office for the research study;
2. interviewed school principals to assist in identifying three to five teacher participants per school in Grades 3-5 based on the African American student EOG scores from the previous school year (highest proficiency rates);
3. provided potential participants with an outline of the research project, including why they were chosen (i.e., identification by the principal), the purpose of the project, the steps and timeline for the research, and how their identity and the identity of their school and students will be protected;
4. collected written or verbal permission from participants.

Data Collection

Data was collected through a variety of methods. Data on pedagogical practices of teachers in TWI programs was gathered through document collection, classroom observation, and participant interview. Together, all three data collection methods created a picture of the pedagogical practices used in the classroom.

Document analysis. Curriculum materials and one month of lesson plans were collected from each teacher. These documents provided an overview of instructional planning at various levels for the classroom. such as whole group, small group, and individualized planned instruction. In addition, the documents were analyzed for expectations based on student assignments and activities. A defined rubric based on the conceptual framework integrating DL
program standards with culturally relevant teaching practices was used to analyze lesson documents (Appendix 1).

**Classroom observations.** The researcher observed each teacher two to three times, teaching various subjects, throughout the course of the study. When the teacher was not in literacy instruction, literacy integration with content was the focus of the observation. The researcher primarily observed each teacher’s instructional practices during the lessons. During classroom observations, the conceptual framework outlined for this study provided a lens for examining what information was gathered from the observations (Appendix 2). For instance, pedagogical practices that research has shown to be beneficial for African American students served as a focus for the researcher.

**Participant interviews.** Interview questions (Appendix 3) were developed based on the research questions of the study and grounded in related theory and literature (Glesne, 2011). Before the interviews were conducted, each participant was asked to fill out a participant profile (Appendix 4) either in writing or by answering the questions by phone, which helped to frame interview questions and allowed the researcher to build rapport with the participant. Each participant was interviewed for approximately 30 minutes. Individual interviews enabled the researcher to have a focused and guided conversation on the research project and enabled the participant to share information more freely, compared with a group interview (Brinkmann, 2013). A first interview took place prior to classroom observations and followed a semi-structured interview format. A semi-structured interview consists of specified questions but allows flexibility for follow-up questioning or depth-probing (Glesne, 2011). A second, brief interview consisting of follow-up questions after data collection was used as needed. Follow-up questions were based on what was observed and ranged from clarification questions to probing.
for reasoning behind teacher-student interactions or lesson design. Follow-up interviews were conducted by phone or in person after classroom observations.

**Data analysis.** Data was analyzed during the data collection phase and after data collection was complete. By analyzing data concurrently with data collection, the researcher generated emerging understanding about research questions, which informed question formulation for follow-up interviews. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), describe the a process of data collection and analysis that leads to a point in which no new categories or themes emerge. This culmination to data analysis is referred to as saturation, signaling that data collection is complete.

Documents, observations, and interviews were coded using predetermined codes from the theory and literature. Coding allows pieces of that represent the same theoretical or descriptive idea together data to be grouped together to create an organizational framework for the study (Glesne, 2011). As the data were reviewed and coded, codes that were not predetermined and that are grounded in the data did emerge. These emerging codes created new theory grounded in the data that was not apparent in the literature. Documents were coded by hand. Observation and interview data were also coded by hand.

The initial coding schema (Appendix 5) was based on the conceptual framework for the research study. The initial coding is classified into three categories: (a) academic success, (b) cultural competence, and (c) sociopolitical awareness. The data collected were also further broken down into a more detailed coding schema based on the conceptual framework (see Table 9). Finally, the data were analyzed for emergent codes based on the data collected.

The researcher kept a reflective log throughout the data collection process. Memo writing helped to capture analytic thoughts as they occurred during the research process (Glesne,
2011). These written thoughts helped to identify connections in the research and assisted in the process of writing up the research findings.

A quotation file was also utilized during data analysis. Quotes that pertained to the coding schema or that were of additional interest were collected. This process aided in telling the story of the participants. All paper documents were kept in a locked file at the researcher’s home, and computer files were kept on a password-protected hard drive. Table 11 depicts the data collected.

**Trustworthiness.** Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggest several steps to ensure trustworthiness: “explicitness of data collection methods; analytic constructs documented by data; negative instances displayed and accounted for; personal, professional, and theoretical biases discussed, analysis strategies articulated; and documentation of the field decisions that altered research strategies” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 148). In this research project, data collection and analytic constructs were well documented through rubrics and coding. Researcher biases are defined and noted in the limitations of the study. Field notes and adjustments to methodology are documented. Through analysis of a variety of qualitative data collection tools, triangulation was used to increase trustworthiness. Table 11 depicts the data that was collected and analyzed for the study.

Table 11

*Data Collected*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Length, greater or less than 30 minutes</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ramirez</td>
<td>3/3/16</td>
<td>&lt;30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sills</td>
<td>3/2/16</td>
<td>&gt;30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Classroom Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ramirez</td>
<td>3/16/16</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/18/16</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12/7/16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sills</td>
<td>3/16/16</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Science/Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/18/16</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Science/Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>3/18/16</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/23/16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/28/16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urubamba</td>
<td>3/23/16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/6/16</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Science/Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/28/16</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Science/Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yelly</td>
<td>3/23/16</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/6/16</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12/7/16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniels</td>
<td>12/12/16</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/15/16</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Dates Collected</td>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Subject(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hickey</td>
<td>12/12/16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/15/16</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flor</td>
<td>12/12/16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/15/16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tills</td>
<td>12/12/16</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/15/16</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Mathematics and Social Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Lesson Plan Document Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Dates Collected</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Subject(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ramirez</td>
<td>Week of 2/15/16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week of 2/23/16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week of 2/29/16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leader in Me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week of 3/7/16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sills</td>
<td>Week of 2/22/16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week of 2/15/16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week of 2/29/16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leader in Me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week of 3/14/16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>Week of 11/2/16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week of 11/9/16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week of 11/16/16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urubamba</td>
<td>Week of 2/1/16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week of 2/8/16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week of 2/15/16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week of 2/22/16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yelly</td>
<td>Week 1, date not given</td>
<td></td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week 2, dates not given</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social Studies/Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week 3, dates not given</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week 4, dates not given</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Limitations of the Study

As this is a relatively small qualitative study, this research is limited to what was observed in the classrooms and the interviews conducted. The number of participants is a small sample size (<10) and results cannot be generalized to other schools or classrooms. The research study includes only two research sites, which further limits the study. Due to limited time and resources, the study is additionally restricted by the number of classroom observations the researcher was able to conduct.

The biases of the researcher must also be noted. The researcher has served as a school administrator at a two-way immersion school for seven years and is currently a school principal of a two-way immersion school. In addition, the researcher has lived in South America and taught English in Spanish-speaking schools abroad. Due to these past experiences, the
researcher values bilingualism. Research methodology techniques, such as member checking and journal entries, were used to limit the effects of personal perspective on the study.

The limitation of this study with the largest impact is the issue of self-selection of the student sample. All TWI programs included in this study use lottery systems for student enrollment. Table 12 offers comparison data on student demographics at each TWI school site compared to the district demographic data. In each TWI school site, the percentage of Free and Reduced Lunch numbers are higher than the district average. Ethnicity demographics of African American students and Hispanic students are also comparable to or higher than the district demographic percentages. Although there are some similarities in school and district enrollment, self-selection remains a key limitation on TWI data analysis in the state of North Carolina.

Table 12

*District and School Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/District</th>
<th>Caucasian</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Low-SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chambers School District</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>56.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crater School</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>54.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavern School District</td>
<td>54.73%</td>
<td>12.47%</td>
<td>27.86%</td>
<td>52.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Campbell Elementary</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
<td>92.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significance of Study**

The study has potential to not only influence the field of DL programming but also education in general. Given that teachers have a great impact on student academic achievement,
this study observes and highlights pedagogical practices evident in TWI classrooms that may be contributing factors to the achievement of African American students in those TWI programs. The findings of this study may have an influence on DL program planners and school leaders that are supervising DL teachers. They may be able to use the research findings as they evaluate their own programs and teachers to see if they observe similar pedagogical practices and what the results of those practices are.

This study may also have significance outside of DL programs because effective pedagogical practices can be replicated in traditional English-only classrooms. This study complements the quantitative work that has been done on the effectiveness of DL programs and builds upon that body of research, examining teacher pedagogical practices as a factor in the quantitative results.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

This study set out to explore what pedagogical practices are used by teachers in North Carolina dual language (DL) literacy classrooms in which the percentage of African American students proficient on the reading End-of-Grade (EOG) exam in grades 3-5 is higher than the state average. This chapter explores these findings through the lens of three questions centered on DL and culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP):

- How do dual language teachers build a culture for academic success?
- How do dual language teachers nurture cultural competence in classrooms?
- How do dual language teachers foster sociopolitical consciousness through curriculum content and instruction?

The findings from the research are divided into seven subsections. The first section provides an introduction and overview of the two elementary schools that participated in this study. The second section offers a brief biography of each teacher participant and a context for her or his classroom and school. The next three sections focus on findings within the major domains of the conceptual framework: (a) academic success, (b) cultural competence, and (c) sociopolitical consciousness. The sixth section addresses emergent codes and observations that became apparent during data analysis but were not initially identified as a component of the conceptual framework. The final section provides a summary of the findings in connection with the primary research question.
The two sites selected for the study, South Campbell Elementary School (SCES) and Crater School are both two-way immersion (TWI) schools.

SCES is a K-5 elementary school that has both a TWI program and a traditional English-only program. Two classrooms per grade level are part of the TWI program. The TWI program follows the 50/50 model, meaning that the students spend half of their day in English instruction and the other half in Spanish instruction. Students have two classroom teachers, one teaching subjects in English and another in Spanish. All native English speakers must enroll in the program during kindergarten or first grade. About 64% of the student body is Hispanic, 33% is Caucasian, and 12% is African American. Over 90% of the students enrolled in the school receive free or reduced-price lunch. Admission to the TWI program is done through a lottery system for rising kindergarten students in the school’s attendance zone. The school defines three goals for the TWI program: to ensure students achieve a high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, understanding, and communicating in both English and Spanish; to ensure students attain academic levels equal to or exceeding state standards; and to foster positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors.

Crater School is a K-8 school. Unlike SCES, Crater is a full TWI school and all students at Crater are enrolled in the program. Crater’s students are also enrolled as kindergarteners through a lottery process, but it is a magnet program that enrolls students from throughout the district. In kindergarten, students spend almost the full day in Spanish, with about 30-45 minutes of English instruction. In first through eighth grades, students follow the 50/50 TWI program model and have two classroom teachers, one teaching in English and the other in Spanish. Like SCES, native English speakers can only enroll in the program in kindergarten and first grade. About 62% of students enrolled in the school are Hispanic, 19% are Caucasian, and 17% are
African American. A little over half of students in the school receive free or reduced price lunch. The school is based on five principles: learning, high expectations, cultural appreciation, community, and character.

**Teacher Participants**

Teachers in the study ranged from novice to veteran. Some teachers have certifications beyond the bachelor’s degree, such as English as a Second Language (ESL). Others had recently completed their bachelor’s degree and teaching certification. Table 13 provides an overview of the teachers participating in the study, school location, grade level and language of instruction.

**Table 13**

*Teacher Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Language of Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ramirez</td>
<td>SCES</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sills</td>
<td>SCES</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>SCES</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urubamba</td>
<td>SCES</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yelly</td>
<td>SCES</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniels</td>
<td>Crater</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hickey</td>
<td>Crater</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flor</td>
<td>Crater</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tills</td>
<td>Crater</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher 1.** Ms. Ramirez teaches third grade at South Campbell Elementary School (SCES). She teaches math and literacy in Spanish. She has been a teacher for 2 years and before
that was a teacher assistant at the school. She is a native Spanish speaker and has spent most of her adult life in the United States. When discussing African American student achievement, Ms. Ramirez spoke about differentiation groups and meeting students where they are academically. She also applauded the support students are given by English as a Second Language (ESL) and Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) teachers. Students who are having difficulty in either language have an opportunity to receive pullout or push-in language support.

**Teacher 2.** Ms. Sills is a third grade teacher at SCES. She partners with Ms. Ramirez, teaching English to their students. She teaches science/social studies and literacy in English. She has been teaching at SCES for 5 years. When discussing African American student achievement, Ms. Sills mentioned the Leader in Me program at the school. Leader in Me focuses on teaching, practicing, and celebrating the following character goals: be proactive; begin with the end in mind; put things first; think win-win; seek first to understand then to be understood; synergize; and sharpen the saw. Consistent teaching of this program was most evident in Ms. Sills’ classroom compared to the others observed at SCES. Ms. Sills also discussed clear expectations and goals that students work to reach every day.

**Teacher 3.** Ms. Carter is a fourth grade TWI teacher at SCES. She teaches math and literacy in Spanish. She is in her 16th year as a teacher and is a native Spanish speaker. She taught at SCES in 2005 as a visiting international teacher for 3 years. She returned to Colombia to teach English from 2008-2010. In 2010, she returned to the United States and to her teaching position at SCES. She listed a number of reasons that, in her opinion, contribute to increased achievement of African American success in TWI programs, including the increased challenge of learning in two languages: “There is also more focus on communication. Also they have an
opportunity to reinforce what they did in one class and language when they use it in the other class in the other language,” Ms. Carter added.

**Teacher 4.** Mr. Urubamba is a fifth grade TWI teacher at SCES who teaches science and literacy in Spanish. He began as a teacher in 1995 in Costa Rica. This is his 6th year as a TWI classroom teacher at SCES. He previously taught ESL and served as the parent involvement coordinator for the school. Mr. Urubamba recognized that parents of all students in TWI selected the program and that this factor may impact the student data. He felt that high expectations for language learning as well as student perception impacts African American student achievement. According to Mr. Urubamba, the African American students feel that they are in a specialized program in which the teachers emphasize the importance of learning two languages. This emphasis, Mr. Urubamba believes, makes African American students feel better equipped to compete with other students and people in the work force. Mr. Urubamba shared a story of one of his African American students who was talking with another friend in a traditional English-only class: “The student in the English-only program told her friend how lucky she was to be in the program and speaking Spanish,” he said.

**Teacher 5.** Ms. Yelly teaches fifth grade math in Spanish and writing in English at SCES and partners with Mr. Urubamba. She worked previously in Venezuela as a curriculum coach and teacher in a bilingual school. In the United States, she has experience teaching ESL in both middle and high school. From 2004-2007, she taught in a Spanish DL school in another state. She joined SCES in 2014. In discussing her African American students’ achievement, she emphasized the importance of language and vocabulary. “The awareness of language and the way words work is such a focus in the classroom and in every subject area,” Ms. Yelly asserted. “This constant focus on language makes a difference in literacy achievement.”
Teacher 6. Mr. Daniels teaches fourth grade math and social studies with literacy skills integrated into content at Crater School. Before arriving at Crater, he taught at an International Baccalaureate (IB) school in Lima, Peru. When discussing the program and how it provides unique opportunities for students, Mr. Daniels spoke about the focus on respecting cultures and having a “wide-world lens.” In discussing African American student achievement, Mr. Daniels shared that he always bases instruction on student need and not on who they are or where they come from. As Mr. Daniels maintained, “We really have a handle on differentiation groups and we spend effort and energy on students who need more academic support.”

Teacher 7. Ms. Hickey teaches third grade English at Crater Elementary. She is a first-year teacher and is responsible for teaching science and literacy to the students. She sought out a bilingual school for her first position as a classroom teacher. She argued that her African American students “feel accepted and don’t feel disadvantaged.” She talked about how second language development and cognitive development are linked, claiming that all of her students are highly challenged because they are “pushed to perform in both languages.”

Teacher 8. Ms. Flor partners with Ms. Hickey in teaching third grade at Crater. She is an experienced teacher and has been teaching in the TWI program at Crater for 3 years. She teaches math and social studies with Spanish literacy. Prior to teaching at Crater, Ms. Flor taught English in Colombia. She is a visiting international teacher at the school and will return to Colombia at the end of her 5th year.

Teacher 9. Ms. Tills is a visiting international teacher in her 2nd year at Crater. She teaches third grade and is responsible for math and social studies instruction combined with Spanish literacy. She has a master’s degree and 32 years of experience in education. Before coming to the United States to teach, Ms. Tillis taught English in a DL school in Costa Rica.
When asked about reasons for the success of African American students in the school, Ms. Tillis mentioned her focus on students’ mastering the Spanish language. She talked about her use of language objectives and tools such as oral presentations, songs, and poetry to teach Spanish literacy. She also shared that, because Crater is a magnet school, parents are required to sign a contract agreeing to do their part to ensure that their children learn language. She also mentioned a daily 40-minute intervention block in which students, including African American students, can receive differentiated instruction based on their needs in Spanish or English.

**Academic Success**

In the nine classrooms observed, there were elements of focus on academic success to varying degrees. Table 14 provides an overview of the domain of academic success identified in the conceptual framework. The most dominant practice in this domain across all classrooms was clear expectations, given with both verbal and nonverbal representation. In all lesson plans for all classrooms, the standards for the lesson are clearly stated. In eight of the nine classrooms, during each observation either an essential question or “I can” statement relevant to the instruction was posted for students. For example, in Ms. Sills’ class, as students finished reading *Monsters of the Everglades*, the “I can” statement was posted on an anchor chart stating, “I CAN distinguish the main idea from supporting details.” Ms. Sills also had objectives posted for all subject areas that day. For writing later that day, the objective was posted as: “Today as a writer I can write high frequency words with 90% accuracy and use the RACE strategy to answer text dependent comprehension questions with 100% accuracy.” In Ms. Carter’s class, an example of a posted objective for literacy stated, “Yo puedo describir la conexión entre oraciones particulares y párrafos” [I can describe the connection between particular sentences and paragraphs]. In seven of the eight classrooms, during each lesson observed, the teacher directly
referred to the standard being taught through referring to the “I can” statement or the essential question. The learning objective for the lesson was clearly stated for students, making the goal for the lesson explicit.

Table 14

*Components of Academic Success*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear Expectations</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Standards in lesson plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Posted standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture of Academic Success</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Leader in Me PAWS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubrics</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher-Order Thinking Questions</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Scripted questions in lesson plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the “I can” statements and essential questions, teachers included specific standards in their lesson plans. Ms. Tills outlined specific standards from the Common Core curriculum for the week that would be taught during the social studies literacy block. She included “R.I.3.1: Asking questions that demonstrate understanding of the text and referring to the text to answer the questions” and “R.I.3.2: Identifying and inferring the main idea of a paragraph section and entire text. Identify key details that relate to the main idea.” At both school sites, standards are specified in lesson plans either on a daily or weekly basis.

It is clear across both schools that creating lessons based on standards and posting and sharing objectives with students is an expectation of the school. During one observation in Mr. Daniels’ class, a curriculum coach at the school was observing his lesson as he transitioned from
social studies to mathematics. The standard being taught in the math lesson was posted:
“4.NF.A.1 orden y operaciones de fracciones” [order and operations of fractions]. However, Mr. Daniels began the lesson by asking students to use white boards to draw tape diagrams of fractions he wrote on the board, without identifying the objective of the day for students. After two problems, while the students were working independently, the coach approached Mr. Daniels and asked, “What is the objective for the day? Where is that posted in the classroom for students?” The coach reminded Mr. Daniels that, although the standard was posted, he should still share the objective with students before beginning the lesson so they are clear about the goal for learning that day. This exchange is evidence that the school leadership was working to ensure that all students understood the learning goals for each lesson.

In addition to a consistent effort to ensure objectives are clear to students, each school had programs and protocols in place to cultivate an environment of academic success. SCES is a Leader In Me school. The program is based on the work of Franklin Covey’s whole-school transformation process and is designed to teach leadership and life skills to students and build a culture of student empowerment. The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People provides the foundation of the program. The students in the school are explicitly taught and practice the following seven habits: be proactive, begin with the end in mind, put first things first, think win-win, seek first to understand then to be understood, synergize, and sharpen the saw. Each class has a designated 10 minutes each day for Leader In Me habits. Evidence of the program was seen in all five classrooms at SCES. In working on beginning with the end in mind, all classrooms exhibited evidence of students tracking their own data, either individually or as a class. For instance, students in third grade tracked their progress toward a predetermined goal of reading words per minute. Third graders also knew where they were in progress toward reading a
level P text, a required goal students must meet by the end of the year according the North Carolina Read to Achieve requirements. In fifth grade, some students tracked their speed for computation, while another tracked their words per minute as they build fluency in Spanish.

At Crater School, the culture is focused on a set of rules or guidelines for conduct. These guidelines were as follows: respond to adults respectfully; track the speaker; support and encourage your peers; be appreciative by saying “thank you”; be a good sport in all circumstances; transition quietly and orderly; in English class only speak English; en la clase de Español habla Español; use complete sentences when answering questions; use the school’s problem solving strategies; and always tell the truth. In addition to the school rules, all teachers had an acronym posted. PAWS stands for Positive attitudes will take you far, Always be considerate of others, Work hard and do your best, and Show respect for everyone. Students earned rewards for showing PAWS characteristics in the classroom and could use points toward a weekly store. Students were reminded and rewarded for hard work and for doing their best during the class lessons. For example, Mr. Daniels recognized a student who had diligently worked to complete a graphic organizer based on his Google classroom lesson on North Carolina regions. Ms. Hickey recognized a student who respectfully disagreed with a student during classroom discussion of the authors’ purpose for selecting a text feature.

Rubrics were not observed in any lessons or as attachments or components of lesson plans. This is not to say that rubrics are never used, but they were not present during observation. To document the teachers’ use of higher-order thinking, their questions to students were categorized as either lower-level or higher-order thinking questions. If questions required students to remember, understand, or apply knowledge, they were categorized as lower-level thinking. If questions required students to analyze, create, or evaluate, they were considered
higher-order thinking questions. The analysis of questioning by teachers showed higher-order thinking questions were limited. Teachers used either understanding or remembering prompts during classroom observations. For example, while reading a text about wildfires, Ms. Carter asked, “What is the cause and effect?” and “What words signal cause and effect?” During small-group reading instruction, Ms. Ramirez asked students, “What is the text feature and how does it help us?” and “What words in the text help us identify the text structure?” Most questions asked of students begin with the words what, who, or how. In none of the lessons observed did teachers ask students to evaluate or create.

Lesson plans also demonstrated a focus on lower-level comprehension questions. For instance, in Mr. Urubamba’s lesson plans for Esperanza Rising, he planned to ask questions such as, “What is the setting?,” “Who are the characters?,” and “How does the character feel?” When studying figurative language, Ms. Sills planned questions such as, “What is an example of a simile?” and “What is an example of a metaphor?” After reading about cultural celebrations, Ms. Tills planned to have students complete a diagram that retells important events from the text. Some limited higher-order thinking questions could be found in several teachers’ lesson plans. For example, while Mr. Urubamba did not plan higher order questions within the lesson, he did attach Bloom’s Taxonomy Question and Task Design Wheel to the weekly lesson plans. This indicated an awareness of using the wheel in the lesson design process. It was also clear that teachers at Crater have been doing some work with higher-order thinking skills. In three of the four classrooms observed, teachers have a small poster for each tier of higher-order thinking with examples of assignments or verbs for each tier. This was available in both English and Spanish, depending on the classroom language of instruction. Ms. Sills asked students to identify the purpose of a text structure and then to compare the purposes of the structures. Higher-order
thinking questions were evident in four of nine teachers’ lesson plans. Again, this is not to say that higher-order thinking questions are not being asked or planned for, but that they were not preplanned for literacy in the weeks of lesson plans submitted for this research project.

**Cultural Competence**

The second domain of the conceptual framework is teaching with cultural competence. For this domain, data were collected to look at student grouping, vocabulary instruction, use of graphic organizers, and evidence of student-teacher relationships. Table 15 outlines each data collection focus and if that component of the domain was observed.

Table 15

*Components of Cultural Competence*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration across cultural groups</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary focus</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Instruction and anchor charts observed in classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic organizers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Graphic organizers posted and used by students during observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-teacher connection</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Collaborative groups were evident in many of the classroom observations. In fact, at some point in the observation process, all teachers in the study had students working on a task in pairs or small groups. Collaboration ranged from quick “turn and talks” in Ms. Hickey’s room to group work talking about prior knowledge of text structure in Ms. Yelly’s class to identifying
Spanish and English cognates in mathematics problems. Most often native English speakers were paired with native Spanish speakers.

Ms. Hickey’s lesson on comparing and contrasting two articles offers an example of teacher-guided collaborative group work. Ms. Hickey had modeled how to compare and contrast two articles on a previous day. Students were then given the same two articles. Students worked in assigned partnerships to create a chart in their notebooks with similarities and differences of the articles before sharing with the class. Ms. Hickey provided scaffolding through small-group instruction for students who needed additional support to complete the task.

Teachers across the board recognized the value of collaboration. According to Mr. Diaz, this collaboration can cut across cultural differences: “Collaboration between students allows them a new vision of [the] world,” he said. “In the [classroom] community we have collaboration in order to learn, respect, and have a high level of curiosity for learning about each other. We build teamwork, sharing, and tolerance of other cultures.” Ms. Carter also discussed the importance of collaboration, emphasizing the need for dual language students to develop listening and speaking skills in both languages: “I need to create an environment where students can talk. Ultimately I am a language teacher and all of [the students] are language learners. Students need time to talk to develop language,” she said.

Of course, students cannot feel empowered to develop language without the proper vocabulary, and the explicit teaching of vocabulary was practiced in all classrooms. Anchor charts were present in all nine classrooms. Vocabulary support was either posted in a word wall format or in a content-based anchor chart. Seven out of nine teachers’ lesson plans included specific vocabulary that would be taught as a part of the lesson. For her lesson in mathematics, Ms. Flor identified math vocabulary, such as *suma* (sum), *commutativa* (commutative property),
asociativa (associative property). Similarly, Ms. Sills identified vocabulary and created word documents that were attached to her lesson plans to post during instruction highlighting vocabulary, such as simile and metaphor. Ms. Tills’ classroom had evidence of multiple vocabulary charts posted on top of each other, providing an opportunity for students to flip through the charts to go back to previous units. Charts were posted on the following topics: medidos y area [measurement and area], fracciones [fractions], mapas [maps], mi comunidad [my community], coqui (a book about frogs).

Graphic organizers were another key component observed at both school sites. At Crater School, a set of graphic organizers was used throughout the school and was taught to all students. Each teacher observed at Crater had these graphic organizers posted in their room. They included a double bubble, a circle map, a Venn diagram, a tree map, a multiflow map, and a brace map. In addition, both Ms. Hickey and Ms. Tills had graphic organizers posted for each text structure being taught. Charts for the cause-and-effect text structure were posted in the respective language of instruction, with signal words and a graphic organizer that could be used by students in outlining any cause-and-effect text.

At SCES, the Frayer model was evident in three of the five classrooms. Ms. Sills and Ms. Ramirez both used the Frayer model to identify supports for text structures: the purpose of the structure, identifying words, examples, and graphic organizers. Ms. Sills shared that using the Frayer model each time the students work on a text structure allows them to compare across the different text structures.

Another pedagogical practice of cultural competence is relationships. Student-teacher relationships are always subjective and difficult to assess. In this case, student-teacher proximity in lessons and teacher-student interactions were observed. In all lessons observed, the teacher
moved about the room during instruction, unless she or he was working with a group of students for small-group instruction at a table in the room or on the carpet. Ms. Flor moved through rows of students as they completed an assignment on identifying cause and effect in nonfiction books they were reading. Mr. Urubamba laughed with his fifth graders as they acted out a Reader’s Theater from a short text they had read during the week to build fluency in Spanish. Mr. Daniels told jokes in his class, such as, “Espero que no haya un dolor de cabeza porque este problema será tan difícil” [I hope there will not be a headache because this problem will be so difficult]. Students all giggled and prepared for the challenge of the question.

Student work was posted either inside each classroom or in the hall outside the classroom. Work samples ranged from individual writing assignments to group-work charts. Ms. Ramirez had students’ math work posted on a bulletin board. Ms. Hickey posted group work on articles.

**Sociopolitical Consciousness**

The domain of the conceptual framework that was least observed in these classrooms was sociopolitical consciousness in instruction. Table 16 provides information on each practice from the conceptual framework domain that was analyzed and if that practice was observable.
Table 16

*Components of Sociopolitical Consciousness*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature selection connected to student life and culture</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Observations Lesson Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visuals reflect students’ homes and values</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Visuals posted during observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal norms are challenged</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Observations Lesson Plans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The initial component of this domain analyzed the literature selections. Of all classrooms observed, only two lessons reflected students’ cultures. Ms. Flor, for instance, taught a lesson about a Hispanic girl spending time with her grandfather while he tells her stories. Ms. Tills’ social studies lesson focused on typical food eaten in communities in the city they live in.

Evidence of culturally reflective literature was also limited in the lesson plans. Three of the nine teachers had lessons in their plans that were culturally reflective. Ms. Tills’ and Mr. Daniels’ lessons focused on culture and traditions in North Carolina and asked students to compare them with their own traditions. The use of Spanish language and placing value on Spanish texts also provides cultural relevance for Spanish speakers. Mr. Urubamba selected *Esperanza Rising* as a read-aloud text. However, while *Esperanza Rising* may connect with Spanish-speakers, evidence from the lessons did not show instruction that drew connections for African American students. When interviewed, Mr. Urubamba stated that “material selected is mainly aimed at Hispanic culture.” Although it may be evident in other lessons that were not observed or lesson plans that were not collected, there was no evidence in the sample of literature selection culturally relevant to African American students.

71
Student work was posted in all classrooms observed, either in the classroom or in the hallway. Personalized pictures of students appeared in two classrooms of the nine observed. Conversations or evidence of challenging societal norms through instruction or selection of resources was not observed in any data collection.

**Emergent Domains**

Through the process of data collection and triangulation of data during analysis, it became evident that there were emergent domains that warranted separate attention in the study. Commonalities from lesson plans, interviews, and classroom observations arose across teachers, classrooms, and school sites. Table 17 provides an overview of the emergent domain areas described within this section.

Table 17

*Emergent Domains*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSL Instruction</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simultaneous or sequential instruction of literacy skills in both languages</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and discussing students across DL teaching partners</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to on-grade-level texts</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct instruction</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson Plans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Spanish as a Second Language.** The first emergent practice was identified at only one of the schools, SCES. It was discovered through an interview with a classroom teacher. When Ms. Ramirez shared her thoughts on factors at SCES that may be contributing to the success of African American students in literacy, she brought up the amount of support that students receive from resource teachers:

Students get a lot of support from ESL teachers in the school. We also use a coteaching model which helps students learn in both languages. Students get a lot of small group instruction from the [classroom] teachers but also intervention groups when needed.

Some [African American] students are high and some are lower. Students below grade level in Spanish get interventions.

SCES provides not only English language support for English language learners, but the school also provides Spanish language support for Spanish language learners in the form of SSL intervention. During classroom observations in Spanish literacy, a SSL resource teacher picked up an intervention group of native English speakers (African American and white students) for small-group Spanish reading instruction in both third grade (Ms. Ramirez) and fourth grade (Ms. Carter). In Ms. Ramirez’s class four students were picked up from class each day (two African American, one White, and one Latino) at 12:40 p.m., and in Ms. Carter’s class, two students (one African American and one Latino) attended intervention at 9:20 a.m. each day. The SSL teachers pulled students from across various classrooms based on their needs. When asked about the SSL intervention group at the end of the instructional period, Ms. Carter shared that each of these students were below grade level in Spanish literacy and were receiving small-group Spanish literacy and language instruction from a resource teacher. Ms. Carter added that “not all
students being pulled for the SSL intervention are below grade level in English reading, but sometimes they are [in English] as well.”

These SSL interventions are a type of instructional language support that would not normally be offered to native-English speaking African American students in traditional English-only programs. The SSL lessons focus on reading fluency, vocabulary building, and the use of other sheltered instructional strategies that are utilized in teaching language. Students attending these resource groups receive small-group instruction that would not be offered to native-English speakers in a traditional school setting.

**Simultaneous or sequential instruction of literacy.** Both SCES and Crater Elementary had similar approaches to teaching literacy across two languages. While the design differed slightly, teachers in both schools planned to teach literacy skills either simultaneously or sequentially across both languages. Two participants at each school were partner teachers, meaning that they shared the same students and each taught in a different language (English or Spanish). The planning design of literacy across the two languages is illustrated in their classrooms and lesson plans.

Ms. Ramirez and Ms. Sills were partner teachers at SCES. They shared two groups of students, with Ms. Ramirez teaching math and literacy in Spanish and Ms. Sills teaching science/social studies and literacy in English. The lesson plans demonstrate that each week Ms. Sills or Ms. Ramirez taught either primarily whole-group explicit literacy instruction or primarily small-group instruction to reinforce the standards taught to the whole group. For instance, if Spanish literacy fell on a whole-group teaching week, students received additional small-group instruction in English. The small-group instruction reinforced skills from both English and Spanish lessons. During one observation from a small-group week, Ms. Ramirez read texts about
animals with guided reading groups. Students worked on determining the text structure and then using that structure to understand the purpose of the text. Ms. Ramirez asked students, “Cómo organiza el autor para que podamos entender bien?” [How does the author organize [the text] so we can understand it?]. This skill had been taught the week prior in Ms. Sills’ classroom, as evidenced by student posters and reading notebooks. Students in Ms. Sills’ class had been charting different types of text structures, identifiable words in text to find the structure, and the purpose of different text structures.

Another example of this crossover between skills and language is evident in the teachers’ lesson plans. Ms. Ramirez specifically cited skills that had been taught in English to review in Spanish. For instance, in the plans for February 26, she wrote that students would read texts at their level and “fill out a main idea graphic organizer identifying the main idea and supporting details of the text.” The lesson plans included a note from Ms. Ramirez that “[students] have been doing this in English world [the English classroom].”

At Crater Elementary, Ms. Hickey and Ms. Flor were partner teachers, also in third grade. Anchor charts in their classrooms showed evidence of literacy skills being taught across the two languages. Plot graphs that visually displayed the progression of a fictional story were posted in the respective language of each room. Each class had a chart that listed the following progression: introducción [introduction], sequencia de eventos que me lleva al problema [sequence of events that leads to the problem], problema [problem], sequencia de eventos que me lleva a la resolución del problema [sequence of events that leads to the resolution of the problem], final/solución [the end/solution]. Although instruction differed from one teacher to the other, their lesson plans both emphasized making connections across languages. For instance, in late October, Ms. Hickey taught students how to “describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits,
motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.” She used the text Clementine to discuss character feelings and motivations for their actions in a story. In early November, Ms. Flor planned a lesson for students to annotate text using strategies to better understand the text and characters, utilizing the same literacy standard (Common Core R.L.3.3). Thus, even though the two teachers worked with different texts and content, they employed the same standards. On another occasion, students in Ms. Hickey’s class wrote articles using text features based on research they had conducted on animals. The following week, Ms. Flor required students to write poems about these same animals, using the research they had collected during Ms. Hickey’s English instruction.

These teaching partnerships demonstrate that students received instruction and practiced literacy standards in both languages. In interviews, several teachers pointed out this process of viewing literacy skills across languages as another factor in student success. Ms. Carter stated that students “have opportunities to reinforce what they did in one class and use it in another way in another class.” Ms. Yelly made a similar observation, noting that “students see strategies in different content so they have different ways to show information they are learning.” Ms. Hickey noted that teaching in a TWI program requires teachers to plan literacy instruction differently. “You have to plan [for] biliteracy together and use similar strategies [in each classroom],” she noted “We build similar skills in both languages simultaneously.”

Teaching partners. In both TWI programs studied, teachers worked in collaborative pairs, sharing two classrooms of students. The teaching model in these TWI programs differs from most elementary school models, designed for a single teacher to teach multiple subjects throughout the day to the same group of students. Evidence of planning across both classrooms has been detailed above in the section on simultaneous and sequential instruction. This,
however, was not the only case in which teachers planned across the grade level. For instance, all TWI teachers in third grade at Crater had charts titled “Anotaciones de un gran lector” [annotations of a good reader]. In these charts, teachers listed the same behaviors of good readers and detailed how readers make notes in text to increase comprehension.

The teachers interviewed for this study underscored the importance of collaborative teaching. When asked about how TWI instruction differed from traditional classrooms, Mr. Daniels spoke emphatically about the importance of working collaboratively, noting that he meets two days per week with his TWI partner teacher to plan and talk about students. Together, he and his partner utilize Google documents and slides to collaborate and edit plans. Partner teachers “must share common goals for students and instruction,” he said. Ms. Hickey discussed the importance of knowing students’ abilities in both languages. “Communicating with Ms. Flor and knowing guided reading levels in English and in Spanish allows us to know if [a student’s struggle] is a content or language barrier.” Sharing students allows teachers to problem solve around individual students. Ms. Carter made a similar observation, noting that “when you have two groups, you can make changes for [the second class].” Several teachers discussed how working with a partner teacher across languages made them more aware of planning with language instruction in mind. As Mr. Urubamba said, “[Lessons] are planned heavier on vocabulary acquisition and building background because of the language.”

Teachers also found that cooperative teaching encouraged them to plan lessons more thoughtfully and thoroughly. Asked about planning, Ms. Tills said, “I plan at this school like I have never planned before.” She discussed planning with her English counterpart so that she could support students’ work in English Language Arts. She explained:
Whatever they’re doing [in English], we do in Spanish. We do annotations in Spanish and [build] vocabulary. For example, if they are doing cause and effect, we bridge cause and effect [into Spanish].

Planning at Crater occurred regularly and ideally with a connection between the two languages in consideration. Ms. Tills saw this as a unique feature of TWI schools, where the turnover of international teachers is relatively high. “It is more important to have specific planning with unpacked standards,” she noted, “otherwise international teachers are likely to teach what they know and in the way they are used to.”

**Access to on-grade-level texts.** Student access to on-grade-level texts emerged as another commonality across the schools observed. First, while different brands were used and in different ways, each school had access to a basal reader. This allowed for all students to have individual access to copies of on-grade-level texts. At Crater, Ms. Flor, for example, read the text aloud for a shared reading while the students followed along in their book copy. Later, students read the rest of the story in a round-robin format, with each student taking a turn reading a section of the text. She asked questions throughout the reading such as, “Quiénes son las personajes principales?” [Who are the main characters] and “Es ficción o no ficción?” [Is this fiction or nonfiction]. At SCES, Ms. Carter used the basal reader to access a nonfiction text as a shared reading before requiring students to reread the text with partners to build fluency. Ms. Hickey provided students with on-grade-level text as copied articles that they read in partnerships, annotated, and compared.

Teachers also practiced building fluency of on-grade-level text. Four out of five teachers at SCES planned specific goals around fluency in lesson plans. For instance, Ms. Ramirez’s lesson plans reflected that she had students read the same on-grade-level text, “Nos encanta la
musica,” throughout the week to build fluency. Students began with a cold read with a partner and a modeled reading of the text on Monday. Students then moved to reading the text with the teacher on Tuesday and then again with a partner. This shared reading followed by partner reading continued throughout the week, building toward a goal of having students reading 90 words per minute for the selected text. In fifth grade, Mr. Urubamba also selected a text for a fluency focus to be read three times throughout the week. He began the week with a cold read checked by a peer, followed by modeled reading and choral reading. On Wednesday, there was another modeled reading, choral reading, and timed reading checked by a peer. On Friday, there was yet another modeled reading, choral reading, and timed reading checked by a peer. Students then graphed their progress for their timed reading that week.

Having students identify and understand their reading level proved crucial here. The students observed accessed “just right” leveled books. For instance, Ms. Ramirez used leveled nonfiction books by a science text distributor that focused on the same topic but with varying lexile levels to differentiate instruction in small groups. Similarly, Mr. Daniels planned guided reading groups with selected texts that were at the targeted instructional level of the students. Students in Ms. Flor’s class accessed leveled text through an online program called RazzKids. A critical element was that while students accessed texts at varying instructional levels, they also had ample opportunities to tackle on-grade-level text both for fluency work and text comprehension.

**Direct instruction.** Perhaps the most consistent practice across classrooms was that of direct instruction. *Direct instruction* can be defined as straightforward, explicit instruction that is teacher directed and highly structured. Under this model, skills are broken down and taught sequentially and deliberately in small units. Instruction occurs for the whole class or in small
groups led by the teacher. The model structure of direct instruction begins with an instruction, followed with clear, explicit skills taught and modeled by the teacher, then practiced with guided support before being practiced independently and, finally, assessed.

The lesson plan data provided a clear picture of direct instruction in classrooms. One element required of direct instruction is carefully planned lessons in which skills are broken down and clearly defined. All teachers in the study had lesson plans written in advance of instruction, following a basic similar structure across the school. Standards and “I can” objective statements provided a clear purpose for daily teacher instruction.

In lesson plans for SCES, several teachers followed a structure for instruction that was outlined with “I do, we do, you do.” This lesson design began with the teacher modeling instruction for students (“I do”), followed by guided practice (“we do”), and finally independent work (“you do”). For example, in Ms. Ramirez’s lessons on theme, she wrote,

I Do: I will introduce the students using the online Maravillas tool. I will tell students that we will be reading a historical fiction text about a natural disaster and I want them to focus on what the people in the text learn what the author is trying to teach us. We Do: Review the most common themes. Students discuss with a partner what each one means. We will read the text together. I will stop and ask questions about what we are reading. [This continues for three days] You Do: Students will identify the theme and continue filling in information in their graphic organizer. They are to also identify details that support the theme of the story.

Ms. Ramirez followed a direct instruction structure in which students were given an explicit goal and skill. She modeled the skill at various times before the students implemented it independently.
In both writing and math lessons, Ms. Yelly followed the same design in instruction. Each lesson was divided into what she termed “three steps”: whole-group explicit teaching and modeling, guided practice in groups, and independent work and assessment. Ms. Yelly clearly divided math lessons into topic introduction (explicit whole-group instruction), guided math centers (group practice with the skill), and independent assignments to complete the lesson. Ms. Yelly also planned writing instruction in this three-step format. Here, the first step was whole-group, the second was guided group practice, and, finally, independent work or assessment. This lesson plan from Ms. Yelly reflected this process:

Skill Setting – Tone: The first step is to briefly present the concept to the whole class. Discuss the quality of the first sentence and compare it to the second sentence and discuss the writing techniques used in the model text. The second step: students work in collaborative groups applying their knowledge to revise the student challenge. The third step: Each collaborative group shares their revision with the whole class to illustrate the range of possible revisions.

Teachers at Crater School followed a similar lesson plan structure. In Ms. Hickey’s lessons, the structure, which followed a direct-instruction model, was explicitly stated in the margins: “Connect, teach, practice, link.” Ms. Hickey planned a lesson on using context clues as follows:

Readers Workshop: Anchor chart context clues, one type a day [connect]. Model with close reading passage from Stone Fox [teach]. Partner, share, practice on the carpet, practice with context clue cards in partners. Independently practice context clues in independent reading [practice].”
Direct teaching of explicit, specific skills was also evident in classroom observations. Ms. Hickey spent the bulk of one reading period teaching and modeling features of nonfiction text. She reviewed previous learning by prompting students to “turn to a partner and talk about what is nonfiction text.” She modeled nonfiction text as she previewed *Emperor Penguins*. Students began their reading journals by writing the “I can” statement, “I can identify important features in nonfiction text.” Ms. Hickey then modeled on an anchor chart as she previewed the book. Next, she identified the following text features and charted them as students did the same in their notebooks: table of contents, headings, subheadings, varied print, graphic features, index, and glossary. She provided students with explicit teaching on the purpose of each of these features. Thus, as students took notes, they had a resource for guided practice and independent work in the coming days.

Mr. Daniels used technology to assist with direct instruction. He prepared a lesson on the mountain region of North Carolina. He read the information in the teacher-created slideshow on characteristics of the North Carolina mountain region while students followed along on their own electronic device, laptops. He used NearPod to select texts that students would use to add information to their investigation of the mountain region of North Carolina. Students worked in collaborative groups to read additional information in pairs and add it to their classroom notes.

As mentioned in the conceptual framework section of academic success earlier in this chapter, clear objectives for learning are planned in advance and are clear to students in the classroom. This is another key element of direct instruction for students. A precise element for teaching is selected, explicitly taught, and then practiced. Direct instruction requires that a narrow focus for the lesson is selected and then taught. There were no classroom observations in which students began a lesson through exploration. Students were consistently given the learning
objective, taught a skill through modeled reading of text, and then given opportunities to practice with teacher guidance provided. There was no observed evidence of teaching through a constructivist model in which students generate their knowledge through experiences and problem-orientated activities. This is not to say that learning never occurs within the constructivist framework, but if so it appears to be a secondary priority to the larger goal of direct instruction.

Conclusion

Data analysis based on interviews, classroom observations, and lesson plan documents creates a picture of instruction at two TWI school sites in North Carolina to determine what instructional practices contribute to African American students’ experiencing greater success than the state average. The conceptual framework, based on the literature around proven instructional pedagogy for African American students and TWI instruction, provides a structure for analyzing instruction. Table 18 provides a summary of instructional practices from the conceptual framework and the emergent domains found in the two TWI schools featured in this study.
Table 18

*Instructional Practices Utilized by Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Practice</th>
<th>Conceptual Framework</th>
<th>Emergent Domains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear Expectations</td>
<td>SCES: X</td>
<td>Crater: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture of Academic Success</td>
<td>SCES: X</td>
<td>Crater: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration across cultural groups</td>
<td>SCES: X</td>
<td>Crater: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary focus</td>
<td>SCES: X</td>
<td>Crater: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic organizers</td>
<td>SCES: X</td>
<td>Crater: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAS Instruction</td>
<td>SCES: X</td>
<td>Crater: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simultaneous or sequential instruction of literacy skills in both languages</td>
<td>SCES: X</td>
<td>Crater: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and discussing students across DL teaching partners</td>
<td>SCES: X</td>
<td>Crater: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to on-grade-level text</td>
<td>SCES: X</td>
<td>Crater: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct instruction</td>
<td>SCES: X</td>
<td>Crater: X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some elements of instruction practices from the conceptual framework were evident in this study. Classrooms were organized around clear, on-grade-level expectations. A culture of effort and academic excellence was evident throughout both research school sites. Group collaboration for guided practice occurred regularly in classrooms and in planning. Explicit teaching of vocabulary was observed in lesson plans and in classroom environments, and
teachers spoke to the value of a vocabulary focus when students were learning languages. Graphic organizers were posted in classrooms and referred to throughout many lesson plans.

Other elements of the conceptual framework did not appear as often. Rubrics were not identified in any data source. While a few literature sources reflected Hispanic culture, literature reflecting African American culture did not occur in the data collected. The social justice aspect of instruction, in which societal norms and expectations are challenged, was not observed in this study. To be sure, the absence of these elements during observation does not necessarily mean that they never occur. If they were used, however, they did not receive priority for the period under observation.

Of high interest to this study are the emergent domains of pedagogical practices that were not predetermined as domains from the literature encapsulated within the conceptual framework. At SCES, students received small-group language instruction from resource teachers in Spanish if they were not proficient in Spanish language. In addition, from planning documents and interviews, it is evident that students have the opportunity to see skills across both languages and demonstrate use of literacy skills and apply that learning in both languages. Teachers discussed planning in a specific way for a TWI program and the benefits of working with a partner teacher.

In addition, students at both schools had opportunities to access and practice reading on-grade-level text in addition to leveled texts. This was identified in literature selection for lessons and observed during lessons as teachers did shared readings or fluency practice. Finally, a structure for direct instruction with explicit teaching of skills was evident in lesson plans and in classroom observations. Clear and precise objectives were explicitly taught prior to student group work or independent tasks.
In Chapter 5, in addition to research questions being addressed and answered, these emergent domains will be further explored and placed into context with research literature.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Several pedagogical practices occurred regularly across the two two-way immersion (TWI) programs in this study. These practices are research-based and have been shown to be effective instructional practices for students, as displayed in this study and in the previously conducted research included in this chapter. The programmatic structure of the TWI programs creates an environment in which the pedagogical practices examined in this chapter are needed to foster learning of all students in the program.

This chapter discusses the implications of the findings from Chapter 4. The first two sections review the study’s aims and summarize the data collected in the research process. The third section presents the results in relation to the posed research questions. The fourth section explores how emergent domains connect to academic research in the field of education and considers how these domains impact student achievement. The fifth section connects the research findings to literature on closing the achievement gap. The sixth section summarizes the results of the research. The chapter ends with suggestions for implementation and further research.

Purpose of the Study

This study sought to analyze pedagogical practices utilized in TWI classrooms in which the percentage of African American students proficient on the reading End-of-Grade (EOG) exam in Grades 3-5 is at least 5% higher than the state average. The two North Carolina schools selected for this project met this criteria. Research at these sites included the collection of
data and interviews with nine teachers.

**Data Collected**

The nine teacher participants shared their experiences in the TWI program. They also described their educational background and beliefs about why African American students in their schools experienced higher degrees of proficiency. In addition to allowing two to three classroom observations, each teacher submitted four weeks of literacy lesson plans for document analysis.

**Addressing the Research Questions**

This study sought to answer one central research question: What are the pedagogical practices used by dual language (DL) teachers during literacy instruction that contribute to African American students’ improved performance on the EOGs? Several additional questions also guided the process of inquiry. This section will begin by answering each guiding question before turning to the central question of pedagogical practices.

The conceptual framework for this study is built on overlapping DL instructional practices and culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). Three guiding research questions from Ladson-Billings’ (1994) Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Framework informed a conceptual framework for identifying pedagogical practices used by teachers in this study. These practices were divided into three domains created from Ladson-Billings’ work on CRP: (a) academic success, (b) cultural competence, and (c) sociopolitical consciousness. Table 19 provides a summary of all pedagogical practices observed in the study, both from the conceptual framework and emergent domains. Table 19 also identifies researchers whose studies have yielded observations about this pedagogical practice.
Table 19

Pedagogical practices observed connected to literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Framework</th>
<th>Pedagogical Practice</th>
<th>Research Connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear expectations</td>
<td>Howard &amp; Sugarman (2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary instruction</td>
<td>Collier &amp; Thomas (2012); Montecel &amp; Cortez (2002)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic organizers</td>
<td>Tatum (2005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habits for academic success</td>
<td>Covey (2004)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative grouping</td>
<td>Howard &amp; Sugarman (2007); Freeman (1998); Montecel &amp; Cortez (2002); Shade (2004)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-teacher interactions</td>
<td>Brown (1999)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergent Domains</th>
<th>Pedagogical Practice</th>
<th>Research Connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish language instructional support</td>
<td>Cummins (2001); Durgunolu (2002); Foorman &amp; Torgesen (2001)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simultaneous or sequential instruction of literacy skills in both languages</td>
<td>Cummins (2001); Durgunolu (2002); Foorman &amp; Torgesen (2001)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and discussing students across DL teaching partners</td>
<td>Louis &amp; Marks (1998); Rentfro (2007); Supovitz (2002); Supovitz &amp; Christman (2003);</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to on-grade-level text</td>
<td>Kuhn et al.(2006); Stahl &amp; Heubach (2005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct instruction</td>
<td>Siegfried (2007); Hattie (2008); Moreno (2004); Tuovinen &amp; Sweller (1999)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Culture of academic success.** The first guiding question asked how DL teachers build a culture for academic success. The study revealed several practices connected to the literature on best practices for building an environment of academic success, such as the setting of clear and
verbally stated expectations (Howard & Sugarman, 2007). The teachers in this study adhered to this practice, planning lessons around specific Common Core standards and making expectations clear to students by posting these standards in the form of essential questions or “I can” statements during instruction. In addition, each school had a school-wide structure for focusing on effort and academic success. At SCES, the Leader in Me program built specific characteristics and habits for success (Covey, 2004). Crater Elementary implemented a school-wide set of expectations, known as PAWS, that was tied to incentives for students.

Given the consistency of creating an environment focused on academic achievement, this conclusion warrants attention. When objectives and goals are clearly stated, students will rise (and indeed, want to rise) to the challenge. Both school sites clearly articulated and defined expectations. With clear expectations and learning goals, students always knew what they were learning, what their learning goals were, and where they stood (individually) in relation to those goals. Whether they were moving toward a reading level or a fluency rate, students knew their goals and their progress toward them. In other words, students take responsibility for their learning through clearly defined goals and self-monitoring. When objectives are not made clear in this way, expectations can get muddled or even fall through the cracks, and students are left to draw their own—and sometimes erroneous—conclusions. When their expectations are clearly defined, and when they can easily track their own progress toward those goals, they are more motivated and encouraged to meet them.

Nurturing cultural competence. The second guiding question explored how DL teachers nurture cultural competence in classrooms. Evidence of sheltered instruction was evident across both school sites. Teaching vocabulary within content is a key element of sheltered instruction (Collier & Thomas, 2012; Montecel & Cortez, 2002). Teachers explicitly
planned for and taught vocabulary on a regular basis. Tatum (2005) highlighted the instructional strategy of advance organizers, such as semantic mapping, modeled by teachers. Teachers across both schools utilized graphic organizers for reading comprehension, thinking processes, and writing design. Teachers at Crater School used thinking maps, while those at SCES relied on the Frayer Model. While these sheltered instructional practices were observed in classrooms, these are not sufficient to be classified as culturally responsive for students. These instructional practices did not specifically draw from African American students’ cultures. There is an opportunity in this space for TWI teachers to bridge sheltered instructional practices and CRP to create a classroom environment in which African American students can recognize their culture in the classroom.

As numerous studies have shown (Howard & Sugarman, 2007; Freeman, 1998; Montecel & Cortez, 2002), working in pairs or groups enables students to practice language. The teachers observed here made use of this collaborative practice. All classrooms had chairs arranged in a format to promote group discussion and/or partner collaboration (Shade, 2004). Teachers frequently grouped both native Spanish speakers and native English speakers in the same group. This heterogeneous grouping promotes cross-cultural interactions and language modeling.

**Fostering sociopolitical consciousness.** The third question examined how DL teachers foster sociopolitical consciousness through curriculum content and instruction. Studies have found that African American parents and guardians with children in DL schools would like a more culturally inclusive climate that includes more African American learning experiences and activities (Anberg-Espinosa, 2008). While literature resources reflecting Hispanic students’ culture were used at the two sites, literature reflecting African American students’ culture was not observed during the period of study. Seven of the nine classrooms observed use Spanish
language instructional materials. The lack of evidence of text reflecting African American culture leads to further questions about availability of these texts in Spanish language. If lack of resources is an issue, one possibility for more inclusivity could be to select texts reflecting African culture in Latin America.

Of all the teachers included in this study, two were white women, two were Hispanic men, and five were Hispanic women. This leaves open the possibility for a cultural dissonance between the teachers and African American students in these TWI programs. Addressing this cultural dissonance through more exploration of African American culture might ensure that all students feel culturally connected to the classroom environment. In addition, diversifying the teaching staff, to include both African American teachers and black teachers from Spanish-speaking countries, could assist in closing this cultural gap between staff and students.

In addition to this gap, no texts promoting sociopolitical discourse were observed during the period of study. In other words, the selected texts did not facilitate discussion that challenged societal norms. To be sure, TWI programs do not necessarily emphasize social justice. Nor do they necessarily offer a culturally responsive environment for all students. If building understanding of societal injustices and challenging those injustices is an intended goal of a TWI program, however, it would do well to make those expectations explicit and incorporate them into unit planning and curriculum materials. Research shows that these elements would have an impact on all students, including African American students, in the program.

An additional aspect of sociopolitical consciousness that could be explored further is the demographic make-up of students in the TWI programs. The classrooms are diverse, with a majority minority student body. The benefits of a diverse student population is well documented (Wells, Fox, & Cordova-Cobo 2003). Wells, Fox, and Cordova-Cobo argue that students’
exposure to students who are different from themselves improve cognitive skills including critical thinking and problem solving. This exposure provides students with novel ideas and challenges student thinking. In each of these programs, students are exposed to a variety of cultures within the student-body. In addition, teachers from Latin America expose students to additional ideas when sharing their cultures. During Spanish content instruction, native Spanish speakers are the linguistic leaders in the classroom, turning the traditional dominance of white native English speakers on its head. These sociocultural and sociopolitical dynamics differ from traditional English-only classrooms, creating an area for further exploration.

**Summary.** Returning to the central research question, this study identified pedagogical practices used by DL teachers during literacy instruction that may contribute to closing the achievement gap for African American students, with achievement measured by the reading EOG exam. These practices can be divided into two subsets. The first subset includes practices that were a product of the conceptual framework and identified through the interconnection of DL instructional pedagogy and CRP. These instructional strategies include clear expectations, explicit vocabulary instruction, use of graphic organizers, teaching habits for academic success, collaborative grouping, and student-teacher interactions. The second subset of practices, classified as emergent domains, was not initially identified from the literature review. Pedagogical practices identified in this subset include the following components: Spanish language instructional support; simultaneous or sequential instruction of literacy skills in both languages; teaching partners for planning and student discussion; access to on-grade-level texts; and direct instruction.
Connecting Emergent Findings to Existing Research

This section examines the emergent domains and their relationship to existing educational research literature. Specifically, it connects each of the five emergent domains found through the course of the study to existing research, deconstructing each observation and providing a narrative for each finding.

Spanish language instructional support. Students at SCES who needed additional instruction or interventions in Spanish received daily small-group instruction from a resource teacher during Spanish literacy. This small group instruction is termed Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) support. The small groups work much in the same way as an English as a Second Language (ESL) group would for non-native English speakers, where instructional strategies are incorporated into teaching during the instructional period to support students in acquiring Spanish language.

African American students at SCES who are below proficiency in Spanish literacy receive SSL small-group instruction. Foorman and Torgesen (2001) argue that students who are not proficient readers after receiving classroom instruction on phonemic awareness, phonemic decoding, fluency in word recognition and text processing, construction of meaning, vocabulary, spelling, and writing should receive additional instruction on the same components in small-group or one-on-one format (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). These authors found that this support is typically not provided at many schools. At SCES, however, African American and other students receive this small-group support as needed when literacy skills have not been acquired in the classroom instruction.

Scholars have established that instruction in one language can help build up skills in a second language. According to Cummins (1991), children learning one language acquire skills
and metalinguistic knowledge that they can apply working in another language. Durgunoglu (2002) has shown that literacy skills have cross-linguistic transferability when it comes to phonetic awareness, syntactic structure, functional awareness, decoding, decontextualized language and formal definitions, grammar, and comprehension strategies. Durgunolou found that fourth grade Spanish-English speaking students who could analyze and correct syntactic structure in one language were likely to be able to do so in the other language as well. Furthermore, he found that students use strategies from one language to make sense of unknown words in the other language.

Given what we know about the transfer of skills across two languages, it stands to reason that improving literacy skills and building increased proficiency in Spanish language can positively impact students’ English literacy proficiency. In TWI schools, African American students are eligible to receive SSL instruction to build proficiency in Spanish. This additional instruction, which is not otherwise available, can therefore be applied to their knowledge of English literacy and build on their English language skills.

**Simultaneous or sequential instruction.** One of the key aims of TWI programs is to provide instruction in two languages. In both schools, SCES and Crater, students received subject area content in two different languages but learned and practiced literacy skills in both languages, either sequentially or simultaneously. Students were thus able to learn a skill in one language and apply it in the other.

There has been substantial research on the development of language through biliteracy, teaching language explicitly and teaching content and skills across the two languages. Karen Beeman has researched this subject extensively. When interviewed by Amaya Garcia in 2015, Beeman said:
We learned through research that students need both their languages for literacy development. All students, regardless of what language they speak at home, do not turn one language off when learning a second. We always use what we know. And the research has clearly come out now and said the following: Students who understand how their two languages are similar and how their two languages are different do better in school in any language. However, many students on their own don’t engage in those comparisons. If we keep languages separate—if we have Spanish time where no English ever goes in and we have time when no Spanish ever goes into English—students don’t realize that información and information are cognates with the same suffix pattern.

Beeman builds on what we know about language transfer, demonstrating that teachers explicitly instruct students on the similarities and differences across languages. The teachers in this study did this in a variety of ways through simultaneous and/or sequential literacy instruction. Teachers set up anchor charts that were similar across both languages, bridged vocabulary from one class to the other, and focused on language through the study of cognates and word patterns.

This repeated literacy skill instruction is distinctly different from traditional classrooms. Students in the TWI classrooms involved in this study applied literacy concepts and skills across settings. For example, when learning about story plot progression, students took their learning from one context, learned new vocabulary for literary terms, and then applied their learning within a new context and in a different language. This is a fundamentally different approach to that of traditional curriculum that teaches a skill and then moves onto the next concept. Even when skills spiral in a curriculum, it is often within the same subject or content area. Students in both TWI schools, however, transferred skills across science, social studies, and literacy,
applying their learning in both the dominant English language and in Spanish language. This transfer and skill application of concepts across two languages is a higher order skill application.

**Planning and student discussion in coteaching.** Both schools in this study relied heavily on advance planning and grade-level team planning. Written lesson plans included specific details for instruction. Several studies have highlighted the impact that team planning can have on student achievement. The most well-known research on team planning is Rick DuFour’s (1998) work on professional learning communities (PLCs). Schools with strong PLCs have teaching teams that plan curriculum and share teaching duties. Teachers in these sites come to think of their instruction through this cooperative lens, referring to students as “our” students instead of “my” students. This collective approach occurs at TWI programs, as teachers typically share students in two homerooms and work together to identify at-risk students and to design and interventions for them (Rentfro, 2007).

A number of scholars have examined the impact of functional PLCs on student achievement. Louis and Marks (1998) found that schools with strong PLCs tended to have higher levels of student achievement. Similarly, Supovitz (2002) and Supovitz and Christman (2003) found that measurable improvement in student achievement occurred in PLCs that focused on changing the instructional practices of their teachers. In a study of a Missouri school implementing the PLC model, Rentfro (2007) found that within 4 years, the percentage of students with advanced or proficient scores went up by 24.1%.

Working in teaching teams such as PLCs can also foster continuous learning for teachers. A PLC fosters professional development specialized to the needs of both the teachers and their students. Specifically, Hollins et al. (2004) documented teachers working in a PLC involved in efforts to improve literacy for African American students. In this particular case, a facilitator
kept the focus on improving literacy and measures of student achievement. These teachers sought out scholarly articles on culturally relevant teaching to improve their practice for students.

TWI programs lend themselves to this type of collaborative teaching. The coteaching model of TWI and the practice of sharing students necessitate collaboration. Teachers must be on the same page with respect to their students, understanding where students are academically and communicating with one another about their students’ progress in both languages. Here, communication about lesson planning is critical. Everything from curriculum to parent communication must be in sync for the TWI program to work effectively. When teachers in TWI programs plan curriculum together—sharing teaching duties, viewing students with shared responsibility, and planning interventions and teaching practices based on student needs—the effects on student achievement mirror those observed by scholars of PLC work. In addition, sharing students across two teachers allows those students to build relationships with a greater number of adults. Knowing this can be important for administrators in all settings, because while the traditional one-classroom/one-teacher model will not likely disappear overnight, administrators in all settings can emphasize collaborative teaching and strive for better content overlap between subjects.

**Access to on-grade-level text.** Students in both schools in this study were given access to on-grade-level text on a regular basis. SCES teachers regularly used grade-level text across classrooms for fluency work. The district literacy framework included fluency as a foundational literacy skill taught daily in addition to word study, explicit instruction, and print concepts and phonological awareness (in kindergarten and first grade). The work of Kuhn et al. (2006) underscores the value of fluency work. The authors show that fluency instruction, either through
repetition or side-reading fluency, helps students in progressing to the goal of reading text appropriate for the grade level with fluency.

In addition to fluency work, students in both schools had opportunities to grapple with grade-level text on a regular basis. These opportunities came in the practices of close reading, shared reading, and partner reading, among others. The ability for students to utilize strategies in order to comprehend on-grade-level text enabled them to grow as readers and improve reading proficiency. Of course, the notion that ample access to challenging text improves student reading skills is nothing new. Kuhn et al. (2006) found that “increasing the amount of time children spend reading challenging connected text with proper scaffolds will lead to improvements in word reading efficiency and reading comprehension, confirming results of Leinhardt et al. (1981) and Berliner (1981), among others” (p. 382). Stahl and Heubach (2005) examined whole-class reading instruction from grade-level readers. They observed that teachers provided students with a story map for instruction, followed by the teacher reading the text aloud. Students then partner-read a story from the basal text and finished the lesson by independently reading for 20 minutes. Students then took the basal story home to read. Students who were struggling received echo reading (in which an adult read the text while the student followed along) or read a segment of the text repeatedly to foster fluency. With this level of support, students in the study grew 1.77 to 1.88 grade levels each year of the 2-year study. Stahl and Heubach (2005) note that support was a vital component of teaching grade level text to students:

Students were able to benefit from reading material at these lower levels of accuracy because of the higher levels of support they were given for the reading through the routines of the program. In this program, students were supported in their reading by
having multiple exposures to the same material, by having stories read to them, by exposure to the vocabulary prior to their own reading, by reading the story at home one or more times, possibly by echo reading and partner reading (p. 55).

To be sure, research on the benefits of instructing students with on-grade-level text is still highly debated. Allington et al., (2015) reviewed the 70 years of research that followed the publication of Betts’ (1946) criteria for establishing student reading levels. The authors concluded that “progress in developing reading proficiency over a shorter term is best supported by using ‘just right’ texts” (p. 500). Even Stahl and Heubach (2005) note that children at an emergent level of reading, referring to those who cannot read preprimer text independently, do not develop fluency with instruction using only on-grade-level text. Fisher and Frey (2014) reinforce these conclusions, arguing that students do not make large gains using only leveled text. When re-examining research in light of the Common Core Standards, Fisher and Frey (2014) found that the use of leveled text beyond the first years of primary school yielded no achievement gains in students. Most researchers agree with Allington et al. (2015) that additional research is needed to determine the effectiveness of literacy instruction in upper grades using text in which a student has a 95% accuracy rate.

SCES and Crater School looked for a middle ground in this debate. Both schools offered students access to on-grade-level texts. Teachers provided support through choral reading, teacher modeling, pair reading, and graphic organizers. Access to on-grade-level text ensures students have strategies for the types and level of text they will see on EOG exams. Still, neither school eliminated leveled reading instruction. Instead, they provided small-group guided reading instruction based on the students’ reading level. They also offered interventions to students.
SCES offered students access to resource teachers for Spanish and English support, while Crater embedded a specific intervention time into the school day.

Beyond the debate about grade-level text versus leveled text for instruction, scholars have considered text selection in contributing to the reading achievement of African American students. As Tatum (2006) states, “Neither effective reading strategies nor comprehensive literacy reform efforts will close the achievement gap in a race- and class-based society unless meaningful texts are at the core of the curriculum” (p. 47). Tatum points to the importance of cultural relevance in text selections for African American students, which was not observed in this study. However, Tatum also points to the need for teachers to select challenging texts. Casserly (2012) makes a similar case, arguing that the misuse of leveled text in place of grade-level text can hinder achievement in African American male students:

This use of watered-down instructional materials and strategies fails to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in subsequent grades where the content becomes increasingly complex. In addition, the misuse of “leveled” texts can sometimes keep students from accessing more advanced material even if they are ready for it. A variation on this dynamic is sometimes seen with African American students who are also English-language learners. In these cases, students are sometimes placed in remedial reading or special education programs because they are not equipped with the academic vocabulary or language-development skills that would grant them full access to the content being taught. (p. 348)

Providing ample access to grade-level text thus helps to ensure all students are challenged with rigorous texts, limiting the watering down of curriculum for students.

TWI programs benefit from culturally inclusive text. The teachers in this study did not
use text that reflected African American culture during observations. This is not to say that
teachers never select culturally inclusive text for African American students. In general,
however, the dearth of culturally inclusive African American text is a problem with numerous
programs, both TWI and traditional (Anberg-Espinosa, 2000). African American students could
feel more connected, and perhaps excel more, if they felt cultural inclusivity in the classroom
and text selection.

Teachers too often make assumptions about the knowledge that students already have,
assuming the students can draw on that knowledge to relate to the text and make connections as
readers. In these TWI programs, cultural background knowledge is not assumed, as many
students enter the lesson as second-language learners in both English and Spanish instruction.
The teachers observed in this study did not make assumptions about their students’ cultural
background experience. Teachers build strong background knowledge for text before having
students read it for comprehension. Notably, teachers strengthened vocabulary, drew personal
connections to characters, supported reading with graphic organizers, built background
knowledge, previewed text, and engaged in repeated readings. Whether teaching in English or in
Spanish, classroom teachers are language teachers in TWI programs. Selecting culturally
relevant texts for all students and building cultural competence for a variety of texts ensures that
students can make appropriate connections to literature and engage in text comprehension and
discussion.

**Direct instruction.** Both schools observed in this study prioritized direct instruction.
Like the controversy surrounding leveled or grade-level reading texts for literacy instruction,
direct instruction is also a hotly debated topic. Researchers have analyzed and compared direct
instruction and the constructivist model of teaching for many years. Constructivist learning is a
student-driven model in which students construct their understanding of concepts as they work through processes (Glenda, 1996). In contrast, with direct instruction, the teacher guides the student learning through questions and feedback and transmits external information to the learner (Olson, 2003).

In 1968, Project Follow Through conducted a large educational study to determine the best teaching models for at-risk K-3 students. After examining 22 instructional models, the study found that students who received direct instruction had higher academic achievement, higher self-esteem, and higher self-confidence (Siegfried, 2007). Hattie (2008) notes that direct instruction contains the following elements: teacher-defined learning intentions; awareness of success criteria; building commitment and engagement in the task; presentation of the lesson; guided practice; closure; and independent practice. In research that spanned more than 15 years and involved millions of students, Hattie found that direct instruction, when implemented as described above, can yield high student achievement (2008). Similarly, Nadler (1998) found that a Houston school that used the direct-instruction model with what is typically considered to be an at-risk population—a student body with 92% African American students and 7% Hispanic students, and more than 80% of its students receiving free and reduced-price lunch—ranked among the best in the city.

However, a number of scholars have taken issue with this teaching practice. Grabinger (2001) argues that, under direct instruction, students memorize information without learning critical thinking skills or reasoning to use beyond the setting. Johnson et al. (2005) suggest that students who are taught through direct instruction are disengaged and bored.

Recent scholarship has identified direct instruction strategies that mitigate these circumstances. Musti-Rao and Cartledge (2007), for example, identified reading strategies that
work for Urban Readers with reading problems. They found that good reading instruction was explicit, intensive, and systematic. While this form of direct instruction benefited all students in the study, the authors argue that it is essential for students at risk for reading failure (Musti-Rao & Cartledge, 2007). These authors also place importance on small-group instruction that provides differentiated instruction based on students’ ability levels (Musti-Rao & Cartledge, 2007). Musti-Rao and Cartledge (2007) highlight the value of peer-mediated learning environments, or collaborative group and partner work. They write:

Peer tutoring is a research-based strategy in which students are trained to deliver instruction to one another. Students can facilitate classmates' development of reading skills through practicing key activities in dyads or small groups. In such environments, students learn to be responsible not only for their own learning, but also for the learning of their peers. (p. 59)

At SCES and at Crater, instruction includes these elements of direct instruction, small-group work, and peer activities. Teachers introduce a concept, provide direct instruction to students, and allow time for guided practice in small groups and independent or partner practice. Once again, the structure of TWI programs lends itself to this type of systematic instruction. Unlike a traditional self-contained elementary classroom, where students are with the same teacher for 5 hours of instruction, teachers in TWI programs have students for about two and a half hours at a time. This time crunch necessitates efficient instructional time. Even with the debate surrounding constructivist learning and direct instruction, large, expansive research studies over a long period of time have shown the effectiveness of direct instruction (Hattie, 2008; Moreno, 2004; Siegfried, 2007; Tuovinen & Sweller, 1999).
Much of the stigma associated with direct instruction has to do with the way we conceptualize teacher-led questions. Bloom’s Taxonomy breaks teacher questions into several categories, with Higher-Order Thinking (HOTS) questions on top and Lower-Level Thinking (LOTS) questions on the bottom. According to this model, most of the questions observed in this study would constitute lower-level questioning. Labeling these questions this way stigmatizes them, with the assumption being that if the question requires lower-level thinking, it must not be optimal. Given a choice, what parent would not prefer their child engage in higher-order thinking? On the surface, lower-level thinking sounds like a euphemism for dumbed down, whereas higher-order thinking sounds smarter and more appealing. In reality, lower-level thinking is fundamental for student learning, which is not in contradiction to Bloom’s work. It is the building block upon which all learning occurs. The problem with labeling teacher questions as higher-order and lower-level is that it sets up a false dichotomy. In reality, lower-level thinking is as essential to student growth as higher-order thinking.

This perspective explains the success of the TWI schools studied here. Much of the direct instruction questioning at both schools involved lower-level prompting, but the thinking that it fostered among students was anything but lower level. These questions constructed knowledge, curiosity, and understanding. They built skills such as deconstructing text structure and understanding character progression through a narrative text. Teachers in this study used lower-level questions to build toward higher-order assignments such as researching animals and creating compare-and-contrast articles after studying that text structure. The notion of lower-level, as a concept and a term, misleads what is actually being accomplished. Questions considered lower level can actually serve as the building blocks of higher-order thinking that are
necessary as a foundation for grappling with complexities. They equip students with the skills and strategies that they can then draw upon for higher-order thinking tasks.

As educators, we would be better served to challenge this false dichotomy and remind parents, students, and teachers alike of the attributes of both forms of thinking. We can start by changing the way we talk about this type of questioning. We should call these lower-level questions what they really are: “escalating questions” that build toward challenging tasks. The term *escalating* reminds teachers and parents that the questioning is building toward something. It reminds us that questions and tasks don’t have to be designated *higher* or *lower* because they are in fact circular and dialectic. Together, and only together, these questions give students the tools they need for success. Escalating questions foster remembering, understanding, and application. These are the necessary building blocks that give students the skills to analyze, evaluate, and create.

**Instructional Practices in Relation to Closing the Achievement Gap**

In 2000, the National Reading Panel published a report that identified instructional focus areas for the effective teaching of reading (Casserly, 2012). The study identified several instructional practices that significantly impact reading achievement, such as fluency instruction, vocabulary instruction, and explicit, formal instruction in the application of comprehension strategies. However, despite all we know about strategies for teaching reading, an achievement gap persists for African American students in reading proficiency (Tatum, 2012).

As discussed in Chapter 2, Ladson-Billings’ work (1995) provides strategies that can be incorporated into reading instruction to positively impact African American student achievement. These strategies are: “(a) students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical
consciousness through which they challenge the current status quo of the social order” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 160). In this study, only the first of Ladson-Billings’ three propositions, experiencing academic success, was present on a consistent basis.

Other researchers have outlined instructional strategies beneficial to African American students specifically within the context of reading. Husband (2012) divides a set of strategies into three categories: (a) curriculum, (b) classroom context, and (c) school-wide efforts. Husband builds upon the work of Ladson-Billings, arguing that teachers should use culturally relevant texts, text with sociopolitical themes, and real-life themes. Within the classroom context, Hudson (2012) believes teachers must use active literacy strategies, encourage critical literacy approaches, and build on student experience and outside of school literacies. As was the case with Ladson-Billings’s propositions, Husband’s strategies were not observed in this study. Aspects of active literacy strategies were observed during student collaborative work. Moreover, each school in the study had in place school-wide character programs focusing on academic success. Each school also had alternative reading support systems for students.

McKinley (2003) identified 42 strategies that are effective and frequently used in classrooms with high-performing African American students. This study supports the following strategies identified by McKinley: carefully planning for instruction with specific lesson plan structure; designing instruction aligned with curriculum; balancing guidance of student learning with teacher-centered presentations; heterogeneous cooperative student grouping; and developing positive relationships with students.

This study supports the pedagogical practices that previous research has categorized as contributing to closing the achievement gap for African American students. At the same time, it builds on these studies by identifying additional pedagogical practices that may also contribute to
closing the achievement gap. Specifically, it highlights the role of direct instruction (through a combination of escalating and higher-order thinking questions), access to on-grade-level texts with a focus on building fluency, coteaching and coplanning, small-group language instruction, and teaching literacy skills across two languages.

Conclusions

At the core of this study is an examination of the pedagogical practices used by teachers in two TWI schools in North Carolina in which the percentage of African American students demonstrating proficiency was higher than the state average. Several practices from the outlined conceptual framework were evident in the study, and additional practices emerged from the data upon analysis.

This study revealed the following pedagogical practices occurring on a regular basis during the scope of the study: clear expectations planned and set for students; explicit vocabulary instruction; graphic organizers used in the classroom; habits for academic success taught and practiced; collaborative grouping of students; regular student-teacher interactions; small-group support for Spanish language development; simultaneous and/or sequential instruction of literacy skills across languages; teacher planning across the DL team; student access to on–grade-level text; and the use of direct instruction through escalating questions.

In considering factors that contribute to student achievement at these schools, all factors outlined in Chapter 1 should be considered: self-selection through the lottery process; bilingualism’s contributing to increased executive functioning; problem solving; monitoring skills; divergent thinking; and creativity (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Cloud, Genesse, & Hamayan, 2000; Cummins, 1998; Esposito & Baker-Ward, 2013; Schneider & Buckley, 2003). While
these factors may be contributors to the student achievement results, we know that teacher effectiveness and instructional practices are key contributing factors to student success (Rockoff, 2004; Wright, 1997). While many of the factors which may contribute to student success, listed above, are beyond the control of the classroom teacher and school leader, the selection and use of instructional practices are within the sphere of control for teachers and administrators.

These practices are not—and indeed, should not be—limited to TWI programs. All of the practices observed can be implemented across different programs, grade levels, and subject areas. However, in considering the program design, a TWI program necessitates many of these pedagogical practices. For instance, planning is especially important due to high turnover of international teachers, and planning with a teaching team is needed since students are shared across two teachers each day. Vocabulary instruction is of paramount importance given that, in both English and Spanish literacy, about half of the students are language learners. Teachers cannot assume culturally based background knowledge. Students have opportunities to see literacy skills more than once and to apply the skills across two languages and multiple subjects. In addition, students are eligible for interventions and additional instruction based on both English and Spanish proficiency levels. A successful TWI program model therefore necessitates an educational environment in which research-based practices such as the ones found in this study must be implemented consistently. This is why they succeed.

**Suggestions for Educators**

Given that the pedagogical practices found in this study are not exclusive to TWI programs, these practices have implications for both TWI and traditional elementary school teachers. This research validates the need for teacher lessons to be well planned in advance of instruction and to have clear expectations and goals for learning, which can be shared with
students. These expectations build accountability in students. Character expectations should be built upon efforts and habits of success that build life-long skills. Planning lessons in a teaching team impacts student performance. Literacy skills should be seen and applied across a variety of subject areas. In planning, teachers should consider strategies for explicit vocabulary instruction and implementation of consistent graphic organizers.

This research found that students had access to both leveled and grade-level texts, with an emphasis on core instruction for fluency and comprehension of grade-level text through repeated readings, echo reading, and close readings. Teachers should revisit text selection and consider the amount of classroom time students spend in each type of text.

Another area for teachers to examine is constructivist versus direct instruction as a model for teaching. This research found that teachers used a direct instruction model for lessons. Teachers provided explicit teaching, offered guided support, and then gave students opportunities for independent practice. In addition, this study argues that questions traditionally considered lower-level should be viewed as escalating students to higher levels of thinking.

School leaders of any program should consider elements of this research that pertain to instructional program models. For instance, direct instruction should be reviewed and considered for possible implementation in a school seeking to improve student achievement. School leaders may consider how direct instruction can be offered to students in conjunction and dialogue with exploratory learning, instead of viewing the two models as mutually exclusive.

School leaders would do well to consider these effective pedagogical practices. Specifically, they may create a professional development series for teachers in which they have an opportunity to learn about the practice and review the research on impacts of that practice before planning implementation in the classroom. School leaders should consider following
professional development with a guided practice period to offer teachers feedback on implementation of these practices.

Finally, school leaders of TWI programs should consider their student data and determine if their achievement scores match that of the national studies. If not, the program warrants review and consideration of adjustments ranging from programmatic changes to instructional adjustments.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

This project begins the work of examining pedagogical practices in TWI programs that may contribute to closing the achievement gap for African American students. Still, more research is needed in this field. Currently, there are no other studies focusing on the relationship between TWI teaching practices and African American achievement. Future research encompassing a larger scale of school sites is needed to build on the findings of this study. In addition, longitudinal studies following a cohort of TWI students would enable a focus on accessing student growth.

Further research should consider a comparative study that analyzes TWI programs that have and do not have test scores in the African American student subgroup that surpass that of traditional schools. This type of study would highlight any differences in pedagogical practices used in the two programs. A quantitative, or statistical, study would also be valuable in determining the effect of the pedagogical practices on student achievement.

Finally, a comparison of a TWI classroom and a traditional classroom, possibly at the same school site, would be valuable in trying to determine the difference in the effect of some of the factors that occur for bilinguals (e.g., metalinguistic awareness, executive functioning) and that of pedagogical practices as factors that impact student achievement. Such a study might
investigate pedagogical practices across both the TWI and traditional programs and identify differences in student outcomes across the two programs.
## APPENDIX 1: RUBRIC FOR DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Element</th>
<th>No Evidence of Indicator</th>
<th>Basic Evidence of Indicator</th>
<th>High Level Application of Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Plan Assignment</td>
<td>Below grade level</td>
<td>On grade level assignment based on Common Core English Language Arts Standards</td>
<td>Above grade level assignment based on Common Core English Language Arts Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Selection</td>
<td>No cultural relevance</td>
<td>Text connects to students’ culture and/or community</td>
<td>Text encourages sociocultural awareness or engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of Accomplishment</td>
<td>Never occurs</td>
<td>Non-specific praise/recognition</td>
<td>Specific praise directed to student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 2: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION DATA COLLECTION TOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Framework Broad Categories</th>
<th>Observational Data</th>
<th>Categorization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Success</strong></td>
<td>Questions scripted and categorized by the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy framework</td>
<td>Creating, Evaluating, Analyzing, Applying, Understanding, Remembering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal recognition of individual accomplishment and feedback scripted</td>
<td>Positive feedback, Negative feedback, Specific praise, Unspecific praise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rubrics based on Common Core English Language Arts Standards</td>
<td>Below grade level, On grade level, Above grade level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Competence</strong></td>
<td>Grouping and partner structures during literacy block</td>
<td>Heterogeneous groups, Homogeneous groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scaffolding</td>
<td>Background knowledge, Vocabulary, Advance Organizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student-teacher interactions</td>
<td>Positive, Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher proximity</td>
<td>Positive, Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sociopolitical Consciousness</strong></td>
<td>Discussions that challenge societal norms/oppressive systems</td>
<td>Within the text discussion, Beyond the text discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visuals in the classroom</td>
<td>Reflect students’ culture, Do not reflect students’ culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text selection</td>
<td>Connect to students’ culture, Do not connect to students’ culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

• Can you tell me a little bit about your professional and personal background?

• Tell me about your dual language program?

• How are students selected for the dual language program?

• What professional development have you received in the last year?
  o Have you received training on dual language pedagogy? If so, what was it?
  o Have you received any equity training or professional development on culturally relevant teaching?
  o How did you apply your learning from these trainings in your classroom?

• What language of instruction do you provide? What subjects do you teach?

• Tell me about the instructional practices you use in your DL literacy block?

• How do you ensure that all of your students are learning?

• How do you measure literacy learning across two languages?

• Why do you think African American students are performing higher than the state average in your classroom? Why do you think African American students are performing lower than the state average in your classroom?

• How do you plan instruction aimed at closing the achievement gap for African American students?

• How is your planning different or similar to planning for a traditional English-only classroom?

• How does your instructional practice differ from instruction in a traditional English-only classroom?
• What factors impact the academic performance of your African American students in your classroom?
APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Name:

School:

Teaching Position:

Education:

Age:

Race:

Gender:

Years of teaching experience:

Years teaching in dual language programs:

Years teaching in current school:

Teaching philosophy/approach:

Teaching strategies:
APPENDIX 5: INITIAL CODING SCHEMA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRP Codes</th>
<th>DL Principle Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AS – academic success</td>
<td>AC – Academically challenging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AE – Culture of academic excellence/effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CAS – Culture of academic success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC – cultural competence</td>
<td>CCC – Cross-culture collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SI – Sheltered instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TS – Student-teacher interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PC – Personal connection to student experiences in classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC – sociopolitical consciousness</td>
<td>CC Lit – Culturally competent literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CD – Cultural diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SN – Societal norms and expectation challenged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


