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The Effects of English Language Learners’ Native Language on Their Attitudes Toward School

Kelly Griffith

University of Mary Washington
Abstract

Annually, the number of English language learners (ELLs) in American classrooms increases. Recent studies have highlighted the benefits of using ELLs’ native language (L1) in the classroom (Slavin & Cheung, 2004). Research on L1 use has focused on three main themes: parental involvement, teacher attitudes, and incorporating L1 into instruction. This study investigated how using ELLs’ native language in the classroom affected their attitudes toward school. ELL students in a fourth grade classroom participated in a project where they represented their native culture through pictures and words. Results from the study included influences on participants' attitudes about school and their L1, level of parental involvement, and use of their L1 for the participants. These results enhance the literature on how acculturative stress affects ELLs’ immigrant ethnic identity and how teachers can help lower this stress in the classroom.

Keywords: English language learners, native language, attitudes
The Effects of English Language Learners’ Native Language on Their Attitudes Toward School

American teachers are seeing more and more culturally diverse students in their classrooms each year. In the past 15 years, the number of English language learners (ELLs) has nearly doubled to approximately 5 million (NEA, 2008). The term English language learner is used to represent students who are currently learning English after acquiring a first or other language (Vardell, Hadaway, & Young, 2006). By the year 2025, it is predicted that almost one out of four students in American public schools will be an ELL (Winke, 2011). A majority of these students are nonnative English speakers (Sheng, Z., Sheng, Y., & Anderson, 2011).

ELLs come from various backgrounds and speak differing languages (Vardell et al., 2006). About two-thirds of ELLs come from low-income families. Three out of four ELLs are native Spanish speakers (NEA, 2008). In addition to the various cultures ELLs bring to school, they face many unique challenges in the academic setting (NEA, 2008). ELLs typically perform lower academically compared to their non-ELL peers. This may be for a few reasons. One, standardized tests assess students in English which is challenging for ELLs because they are expected to master content knowledge before they achieve a certain level of English proficiency. Frequently, ELLs are assessed in reading and math before they are proficient in the English language. Second, many teachers are not equipped with the research-based strategies and resources to teach an ELL population in their classroom. Numerous teachers express frustration over not receiving enough professional development to successfully teach and assess ELLs (Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). With these obstacles, educators need to be aware of techniques which will lead to academic success for ELLs such as the incorporation of their native language into the classroom setting.

Recently, the spotlight has been on the significant role of ELL students’ first language in the classroom. There has been debate and controversy over the inclusion of students’ native
languages in the curriculum (Ferrer, 2008). Many researchers state that it is inappropriate to remove a student’s first language from instruction when a second language is the primary language used in schooling (e.g., Butzcamm, 2003). Brown (2000) classifies a student’s first language as a facilitator of learning rather than interfering with it. When used appropriately, a student’s native language can be beneficial in the classroom (Ferrer, 2008). Schweers (1999) suggests that teachers need to embrace students’ native languages in the classroom. In his study, he found students tended to use their native language for different reasons such as when explaining difficult concepts or when they felt lost or confused. Over the years, researchers have come to discredit the English-only policy in classrooms and lean more toward bilingual education, which would include students’ native languages in classroom instruction (Mattioli, 2004).

This study shed light on how using ELLs’ native languages in classroom instruction affected their attitudes toward school. This study investigated possible benefits of including students’ native languages into classroom instruction (e.g., increased expression, more parental involvement, etc), while focusing on how students’ attitudes were affected with the incorporation of their native language in school. My research question was how incorporating ELLs’ native language into the classroom affected their attitudes toward school. Additionally, my action research study also examined the feelings of ELL parents about getting school paperwork (e.g., newsletters, activities, etc) translated into their native language.

**Literature Review**

Research has focused on three main themes in regards to native language in the classroom: parental involvement, teacher attitudes, and incorporating students’ native language into instruction (Cazabon, Nicoladis, & Lambert, 1998; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Lindholm-Leary
& Borsato, 2001). Within this research study, I asked two questions: 1) How does incorporating ELLs’ native language into the classroom affect their attitudes toward school?; 2) How do ELL parents feel about school paperwork being translated into their native language? Therefore, I looked at the following bodies of literature for my study: parent involvement, specifically ELLs, economically disadvantaged students, and Latino students; teacher attitudes and how they affect ELLs’ academic achievement; and the effects of incorporating students’ native language into the classroom setting.

**Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement is a crucial element for all students’ academic success (Aronson, 1996; Christenson, Rounds, & Gorney, 1992; Columbo, 1995; Tracy, 1995). Parental involvement is positively correlated with students’ academic achievement. Research suggests that the more parents are involved with their child’s education, both at home and at school, the more academic success the child will experience. Recent research has studied the effects of parental involvement on certain subgroups of students such as economically disadvantaged students (Cooper & Crosnoe, 2007), Latino students (Panferov, 2010), and English language learners (Shim, 2013).

Like all students in public schools, ELLs benefit from programs that incorporate family involvement. These programs, in turn, improve their academic success in the classroom (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). However, their parents face unique challenges to becoming more involved in their education. These barriers may include a negative school climate toward immigrant parents, individual barriers (e.g., language proficiency), and logistical barriers (e.g., financial standing of the family; Quezada, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2003). A study conducted by Vera et al. (2012) looked at the relationship between barriers and facilitators of parental
involvement within a small diverse group of immigrant parents of ELLs. Within this study, they found that linguistic barriers were common, as well as unfamiliarity with the U.S. educational system, and parents not wanting to interfere with how teachers manage the classroom. In order to familiarize immigrant parents with the U.S. educational system, research suggests that schools offer workshops which explain how our educational system operates and its expectations for parents (Brilliant, 2001). Also, Vera et al. (2012) stressed the importance of teachers being educated on cultural differences among ELL students and their families rather than viewing parents’ behaviors as not caring about their child’s education.

The effects of parental involvement have also been examined for students living in poverty. Epstein (2001) created a model which highlighted the significance of partnerships among parents, schools, and communities. Epstein discussed six different types of involvement: 1) basic obligations of families; 2) basic obligations to schools; 3) involvement at school; 4) learning activities at home; 5) decision-making, governance, and advocacy; and 6) collaboration and exchange with community organizations. Ingram, Wolfe, and Lieberman (2007) highlighted the importance of parental involvement on the academic success of students living in low-income housing. They proposed a model for parental involvement based on the model of Epstein (2001) which could possibly improve student achievement in schools which served low-income, at-risk student populations. From the data collected through 220 parent surveys, they found that parents with children attending three at-risk Chicago Public Schools commonly tended to participate in Type I (Parenting) and Type IV (Learning at Home) most frequently within this framework. Parenting (i.e., basic obligations of families) involves providing for students’ basic needs (i.e., food, clothing, shelter, health, and safety). Learning at Home (i.e., learning activities at home) addresses how to provide learning opportunities at home (e.g., working on students’
social skills, enrichment, etc). Since these two types of parental involvement were significant in this study, the researchers suggested that schools create parent programs which focus on building positive experiences at home that support student learning. These programs should discuss providing for students’ basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, etc) and incorporating learning activities at home. These programs will build on skills and knowledge that parents are comfortable with utilizing and more likely to use with their children. School personnel can help refine these skills in order to provide the best learning environment at home and at school. In addition, teachers need to educate parents on homework policies and how to help their children with schoolwork in order to establish the best home environment for learning. With more parental involvement through these programs, schools may see an increase in family engagement which will in turn increase students’ academic achievement.

Lastly, recent research has begun to examine the effects of parental involvement on the academic achievement of Latino students (e.g., De Gaetano, 2007). Ceballo, Maurizi, Suarez, and Aretakis (2013) looked specifically at the effects of parental involvement on Latino adolescents’ academic success. Their three research questions were: 1) Which types of parental activities are labeled by Latino adolescents as significant types of parental involvement in education?; 2) What kinds of parental involvement are positively linked with adolescents’ educational experiences, school effort, and values?; and 3) Do the relations between academic-related outcomes and parental involvement vary by adolescents’ immigrant status, gender, or use of respeto? Respeto is a traditional Latino cultural value which focuses on “decorum and politeness, especially toward older individuals and professionals, with the goal of facilitating harmonious interpersonal relationships” (Calzada, Fernandez, & Cortes, 2010, p. 78). Like parents of ELLs, Ceballo et al. (2013) discussed the barriers that Latino parents face (e.g.,
multiple jobs, lack of English proficiency, etc) when trying to become more involved in the public school setting. Their sample was 223 low-income, Latino adolescents. Their study collected data using: demographic characteristics; parental involvement; mother’s educational aspirations; respeto; and academic indicators (i.e., educational expectations, educational values, and school effort). In regards to the first question, the data concluded that six themes were significant: gift/sacrifice (e.g., I want to do well in school so I can help my parents when I get older); future discussions (e.g., my parents want me to think about what I want to be in the future); effort (e.g., my parents tell me that I can become smarter if I try my best); guilt/sacrifices (e.g., I feel guilty that my parents have to work so hard); school involvement (e.g., my parents are involved at my school); and home involvement (e.g., I receive help from my parents when I do my homework). Of the six, gift/sacrifice and future discussions were found to be the most significant to their sample of Latino adolescents. With the second research question, four themes were found to be most important to Latino adolescents: gift/sacrifice; future discussions/academic socialization; school involvement; and home involvement. There were a few different findings regarding the last question. First, gender played an important role in the relationship between parental involvement in school and adolescents’ values about education. Mothers played a large role in females’ values about education; however, males did not have this link with their mothers. The relationships between fathers and their children were not found to have a significant influence over the adolescents’ view of education. The relationship between gift/sacrifice and educational values was stronger with males. Males typically assumed the traditional masculine role (e.g., providing for one’s family and parents through their career and success). Second, students’ immigrant status was a significant factor in the positive link between parental involvement and academic outcomes for the adolescents. The relationship was stronger
for immigrant students compared to nonimmigrant students. The association between parental involvement and academic achievement for adolescents was stronger among immigrant students who endorsed the traditional value of *respeto*. Also, they found that parents’ stories about the struggles they have faced (e.g., poverty) motivated their children to demonstrate more effort in school. More effort in school equated to a better paying job for these students. In turn, students can help support their parents more financially if they have a good paying job. Lastly, the results demonstrated that children who believed in the Latino cultural aspect of *respeto* had stronger connections between parental involvement and academic outcomes for themselves. In conclusion, this study emphasized the assertion that parental involvement does not occur in a vacuum. Rather, the students interpreted their families’ attitudes and messages about education within their own specific situations.

Many research studies point to the importance of parental involvement on ELLs’ academic achievement. Research shows that there is a positive relationship between parental involvement and ELLs’ academic achievement. Along with specific research on the positive relationship between parental involvement and ELLs’ academic achievement, other research has highlighted this same positive relationship among student populations of low-income and Latino students. In order for teachers to give students the most nurturing and supportive academic environment for achievement, they must become comfortable and willing to include parents as important assets in their students’ achievement.

**Teacher Attitudes**

Teachers play an important role in students’ learning. Along with proper training on how to incorporate ELLs into their classroom, teachers’ attitudes also come into play when considering students’ academic success (Garcia-Nevarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005).
Garcia-Nevarez et al. (2005) studied elementary teachers’ attitudes toward ELLs’ native languages and their use in instruction. They emphasized that teachers’ attitudes toward bilingual education typically matched those of mainstream Americans. One commonly held belief in the United States is that we are a monolingual English-speaking country. Therefore, all classroom instruction should be in English as well. These teacher attitudes may develop “teacher behavior that can lead to, or at least sustain, teachers having negative attitudes toward the [ELL students] themselves, which in turn affects their achievement” (Garcia-Nevarez, et al., 2005, p. 296).

Many studies have also found that teachers’ attitudes toward students’ native languages may affect their evaluation of ELL students’ performance and achievement (August & Hakuta, 1997; Cummins, 2000; Diaz-Rico, 2000; Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 2000). “A negative evaluation may result in underestimating achievement for ELLs” (Garcia-Nevarez et al., 2005, p. 296). Ladson-Billings (1995a, 1995b) mentions the significance of teachers’ education and beliefs on the education of a multicultural population. She discusses the importance of teacher education programs which “support equitable and just educational experiences for all students” (1995b, p. 466).

Garcia-Nevarez et al. (2005) also found that the certifications of teachers affected their attitudes toward ELLs. Results showed that there were statistically significant differences in teacher attitudes toward ELLs depending on what type of certification or endorsement teachers held. Teachers who were certified in bilingual education were significantly more supportive of their non-English speaking students when they used their native language in the classroom compared to both general education and English as a Second Language (ESL)-only certified teachers. In addition, they found that teachers who were certified in bilingual education had a higher tendency to use Spanish in their instruction compared to traditional or ESL teachers. This
could be because bilingual certified teachers are more familiar with their students’ native languages. Also, the study showed that Latino teachers typically had more positive attitudes toward ELLs’ native languages compared to non-Latino teachers. In addition to using students’ native language during instruction, this study revealed the attitudinal differences among elementary teachers toward ELLs’ native language. Bilingual-certified teachers had the most positive attitudes toward ELL students’ native language and were most likely to use it in their instruction. They also viewed bilingualism in a positive light (e.g., more employment opportunities and intellectual benefits). General education teachers expressed more negative attitudes toward students’ native languages and typically chose not to incorporate their native language into instruction. ESL teachers recognized that using students’ native language in instruction had positive effects for students, such as student motivation to stay in school and making school more meaningful and enjoyable. Lastly, veteran teachers tended to hold a more negative attitude toward ELLs’ native language. “The more years a teacher has taught, the more negative his or her attitudes toward ELLs’ native languages” (Garcia-Nevarez et al., 2005, p. 312).

**Incorporating Students’ Native Language(s) In Instruction**

An ongoing debate in education is bilingual education versus English immersion programs. English immersion programs provide instruction almost entirely in English to ELLs (Rossell, 2004) while bilingual education is any educational program that involves two or more languages in school instruction at any time during a student’s school career (Nieto, 2000). Although there are proponents and opponents to each side, a great deal of research supports the use of bilingual instruction in the classroom. For example, Roseberry-McKibben and Brice (2004) found that students in dual immersion programs (i.e., programs which strive to have students fluent in both languages) had higher academic success compared to students who were
taught in an English immersion setting. In addition, numerous studies have demonstrated that using a child’s first language as a vehicle to learning English leads to benefits for his or her English language development (Greene, 1997; Slavin & Cheung, 2004; Willig, 1985). Crawford (1998) discussed the positive effects of bilingual programs for ELLs including larger gains in English reading and math skills compared to ELL students who were enrolled in an English immersion program or programs that stressed an early transition to English.

Along with academic success, utilizing students’ native language in the classroom empowers and motivates students, which leads to more positive attitudes and perceptions about school. When younger students first learned how to read in Spanish, it empowered them as learners. Their success in one language (i.e., Spanish) drove them to succeed in another language (i.e., English; Wu, 2004/2005). These positive experiences in language development for both languages created positive student attitudes toward school by motivating them as students. With a higher drive to learn more, students come to school excited to discover new things. Hadi-Tabassum (2004) discussed that making connections between students’ language and their life experiences is significant in successful language education. These connections could include linking new vocabulary words to students’ personal experiences at home. Once that anchor is formed, knowledge blossoms and new schemas are formed from preexisting ones. Linking these two concepts together facilitates students’ language education. Successful language instruction creates a positive atmosphere where students feel included and comfortable to make mistakes. Following the creation of a warm, successful learning environment for language development, comes students’ confidence in their ability as learners. This confidence increases students’ attitudes toward school since they believe they will succeed and benefit from language instruction.
In addition, numerous studies have found that secondary students who studied in either a 90:10 or a 50:50 bilingual immersion program in elementary school expressed more positive attitudes toward school and its programs (Cazabon et al., 1998; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2001). Lindholm-Leary and Hadi-Tabassum (2004) found that these secondary students believed that learning in two languages helped them think better and improved their performance at school. Also, Latino students expressed positive attitudes in regards to the program. They felt valued in the bilingual program, were glad they participated in it, and would recommend enrollment to other students. Most of the students thought that the bilingual program was more challenging, built up their confidence, and provided them with a better education compared to the standard monolingual model at schools. These findings highlight the significant influence incorporating students’ native language in the curriculum has over students’ attitudes and confidence in their ability as learners. When students are permitted to freely use their native language most or even half of the school day, their attitudes toward school become more positive and their performance in the classroom improves. All of these positive effects for ELL students show educators the need for the incorporation of ELLs’ native language into the classroom. Lindholm-Leary and Hadi-Tabassum (2004) also mentioned the high dropout rate of Latino students. In one Latino high school, almost one-half of ELLs who were Latino and one-third of native English-speaking Latino students stayed in school partly because of a bilingual program at their school. If students’ native language is included in the classroom curriculum, they are more likely to complete school rather than dropping out. This is likely due to the students’ increased confidence as a learner and the more positive attitudes they have toward school.
A great deal of research has been conducted on the successful implementation of bilingual programs at schools that incorporate students’ native language into classroom instruction. Including students’ native language at school has been shown to have positive effects on aspects of schooling such as school achievement and students’ attitudes toward school.

Method

Research was conducted in my fourteen week spring student teaching internship in a fourth grade classroom. While in my internship, I took the role of both teacher and researcher. Through my methodology, I wanted to understand how the incorporation of ELLs' native language into the classroom affected their attitudes toward school. Additionally, my methodology also examined the feelings of ELL parents about getting school paperwork (e.g., newsletters, activities, etc) translated into their native language.

Setting and Participants

Seven English language learners in a fourth grade classroom served as the participants in this study. All names are pseudonyms. All participants attended the same elementary school in Virginia. The participants and site were chosen due to my student teaching placement in the spring. My purposive sample for this study was elementary-aged ELLs from my spring student teaching placement.

Of my seven participants, three of my participants were female and four of them were male. Spanish was the home language for six of the seven and one of the participants named Twi as his home language. One of my participant’s ethnicity was African American or black and the remaining six were identified as Hispanic. Four of the seven participants were classified as exiting (i.e., scored at a level six on the WIDA scale and no longer received ELL services) and the remaining three participants were labeled as active ELLs (i.e., scored between a three and
five on the WIDA scale and received ELL services at school). See Appendix A for the participants’ WIDA scores. See Appendix B for a further explanation of the WIDA scoring system.

For the second part of my research question, my sample included the ELLs’ parents (i.e., mothers, fathers, and/or legal guardians). The participants for this part of my study were chosen due to the nature of my research question (i.e., parents of ELLs) and their willingness to complete the survey.

**Procedures**

I chose to implement an intervention based on the book called *Flat Stanley* by Jeff Brown. Before implementation of this activity, I sent home a notice to all parents in English (Appendix C) and Spanish (Appendix D). This notice told parents about our upcoming project and what they would need to do to help their child with the project, along with the rubric used to assess the project. For parents of ELLs, I also sent home a consent form, which was in both English (Appendix E) and Spanish (Appendix F). All children were given an assent form (Appendix G) which was explained to them in English.

On the first two days of my intervention, I read *Flat Stanley* by Jeff Brown. See Appendix H for details about the read aloud for this book. On the third day after the read aloud, students were told that they would take their own Flat Stanley home to introduce to their family and culture. After returning to our seats, we brainstormed different activities that Flat Stanley could do at their home. See Appendix I for a full description of brainstormed activities. Students also discussed how they could include Flat Stanley in their native culture and language. Students were told that they were expected to incorporate their native culture into their Flat Stanley project which included three components: a written report, an oral presentation, and photos.
Their native culture could be unique to a certain country, state, or city. This project connected to the fourth grade Virginia Standards of 4.1 The student will use effective oral communication skills in a variety of settings and 4.2 The student will make and listen to oral presentations and reports.

After this discussion, a model of what was expected from the students was presented on the document camera (Appendix J). I went over my Flat Stanley write up. I talked about what Flat Stanley did at my house and how I incorporated my culture and language into my time with Flat Stanley. After I modeled my project, I showed the students the rubric for our project (Appendix K). I asked students to grade my project based on our rubric.

Students were given two weeks to complete the three components of their Flat Stanley. After two weeks, presentations began. My participants went first, followed by the rest of the class. On the due date, they were expected to turn in their Flat Stanley along with the written report describing their Flat Stanley and photos showing their Flat Stanley immersed in their culture. See Appendix L for photos from students’ presentations. During their oral presentation, students discussed how they involved Flat Stanley into their native culture and language.

**Data Collection**

For this study, I utilized field notes, conferences and interviews, surveys, and attitude scales. Two or three times a week, field notes, specifically quick notes, were recorded during the same academic subject of the seven ELLs. Field notes were collected throughout the study. These included my observations of what I saw in the classroom during Social Studies. The notes included ideas, observations, and insights. See Appendix M for a full description of ideas, observations, and insights. Along with the notes, I recorded the date of each observation.
Individual student interviews with each ELL were used during this study. Conferences were conducted before and after implementing the intervention. Open-ended questions were used during these conferences (Appendix N). Five of the seven pre-and post-student interviews were audio recorded.

Surveys were also utilized during this study (Appendix O). They included both closed-response and open-ended questions. Surveys were given to the ELLs before and after the intervention.

In addition to a survey given to the students, I also sent home a pre and post survey to the ELLs’ parents asking about their perceptions of their child’s attitudes about school; and, about their perceptions of their child’s attitudes about using his or her native language in and out of school. This survey was in English (Appendix P) and Spanish (Appendix Q). The participants of this survey were the parents or legal guardians of the ELL students who participated in the study.

Last, five-point attitude scales (Appendix R) were utilized during this study. Some of the statements used were taken from a survey created by Gray (1983) about attitudes toward school. The statements gauged students’ level of agreement or disagreement to them. All seven ELLs participated in the surveys. Surveys were given before and after the intervention.

With the second research question I posed, I used surveys. The participants of this data collection were ELL parents who volunteered to take the survey sent home with their child. The survey was translated into English (Appendix S) and Spanish (Appendix T).

**Data Analysis**

All forms of data collection were categorized as before and after implementation of the Flat Stanley project. The responses in Spanish were translated to English by the researcher. The field notes were coded to reveal any emerging themes in the data, particularly changes in
students’ attitudes and motivation toward school. Using the students’ interviews, I looked at
students’ perceptions of school and how their culture was incorporated at school. The surveys
also provided information about students’ feelings about school and the incorporation of their
native language in their classroom. Both of these forms of data collection triangulated my
findings concerning students’ attitudes about school and the successful incorporation of their
culture at their school. Also, the surveys parents completed about their child’s attitudes about
school further triangulated my findings. In addition to this qualitative data, quantitative data from
attitude scales were also used. This quantitative data was used to make comparisons between
students’ responses before and after the intervention was used.

The parent surveys were sent home before and after the implementation of translations
with school paperwork. The data analysis looked at parents’ feelings about translated school
paperwork sent home.

Results

Using researcher observations, student surveys, student five-point attitude scales, and
individual student interviews, data were collected to find the effects of English language
learners’ native language on their attitudes toward school. The data is organized into four main
themes of the research: attitudes toward school, attitudes about native language, usage of L1, and
parental involvement, as well as by participant.

Attitudes Toward School

When gathering data for students’ attitudes toward school, I used questions one, three,
five, eight, nine, 11, 13, and 14 on the pre- and post-student five-point attitude scale (see
Appendix R). In addition, I used questions one, two, and four on the pre- and post-student survey
(see Appendix O) and questions one and two on the pre- and post-student interviews (see
Appendix N). Last, classroom observations were used when making conclusions about students’ attitudes about school.

**Daryl.** Daryl showed consistency in his positive attitudes toward school through interviews, surveys, and five-point attitude scales. His attitudes only waivered slightly on the five-point attitude scale. On the pre-student five-point attitude scale, he had “no opinion” about the statement “School is just a place where I get in trouble.” However, on the post-student five-point attitude scale, he “agreed” with this statement. In addition, he had “no opinion” to the statement “I will never use what I learn in school” on the pre-student five-point attitude scale. On the other hand, he “disagreed” with this same statement on the post-student five-point attitude scale. Through classroom observations, he was always engaged in classroom instruction. I observed him being hesitant at times, but overall he was an active participant in discussion. During the pre-and post-interviews, he expressed positive feelings about school using adjectives such as “good” and “fun.”

**Jerry.** Jerry showed consistency of negative perceptions toward school through the interviews, surveys, and five-point attitude scales. During the pre-interview, he expressed his negative attitudes toward school after being asked the question, how do you feel about school?

Jerry: I don’t want to come to school because we always have to learn and we get a little break and a lot of work so I don’t really like it because every time I’m learning something new, my head starts hurting because I remember too much.

However, there was a slight change in his attitudes on the five-point attitude scale. On the pre-student five-point attitude scale, he “strongly agreed” with the statement “I would rather go to the doctor or dentist than go to school.” When he responded to this same statement on the post version, he “disagreed” with it.
In contrast, classroom observations showed more positive attitudes toward school. Jerry was always an active participant in classroom discussions and eager to learn. He consistently had his hand raised during classroom instruction.

**Timothy.** Timothy displayed consistent positive attitudes about school through interviews, surveys, five-point attitude scales, and classroom observations. When describing his feelings about coming school, he used adjectives such as “happy” and “excited.” He wrote in his pre-student survey that he was happy to come to school “because I get to learn about different stuff.” During class, Timothy was an active participant in classroom discussion and always excited to learn more about different subject matters.

**William.** William showed positive attitudes about school on the pre-and post-interviews, surveys, five-point attitude scales, and during all classroom observations. When asked how he felt about school during the pre-student interview, he gave the following response with a smile:

William: I feel great!

Miss. Griffith: Why do you feel great?

William: School helps me learn. It will help me go to college.

On the five-point attitude scale, his attitudes increased slightly in regards to school. When responding to the statement “I would rather go to the doctor or dentist than go to school,” he “disagreed.” When given this same statement on the post version, he “strongly disagreed” with it.

**Kayla.** Kayla showed positive attitudes towards school on all pre-interviews, surveys, and five-point attitude scales; however, all of her attitudes increased slightly as shown by the post versions of the survey and five-point attitude scale. She had “no opinion” to the statement “School is fun” on the pre-student five-point attitude scale. However, she “agreed” with this
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same statement on the post version of this scale. Second, she chose “do not know” when responding to the question, “How do you feel about school?” on the pre-student survey. She explained it was “…because sometimes I have good days and sometimes not.” When responding to this same question on the post test, she chose “happy” and explained it was “because I can see my teachers and friends.” On the pre- and post-interviews she gave a similar response. Below is her response to “How do you feel about school?” during the pre-interview:

Kayla: I feel happy and sometimes I feel nervous…Sometimes. When, um, well sometimes when I…well sometimes I’m nervous because, it’s, well when I’m…at the beginning of the school I was nervous because I was going to meet new people in my class and I wasn’t sure if they were going to like me as a classmate.

Miss. Griffith: Okay, that makes sense. Are you nervous now?

Kayla: No, not anymore.

Miss. Griffith: Any other feelings about school?

Kayla: Well, well now that it’s getting closer to the end

Miss. Griffith: Mm…hm…

Kayla: I’m getting like a little more, well a little more happy because of the fun events.

Miss. Griffith: Good.

Kayla: But I also feel sad because the year is ending.

Miss. Griffith: Yeah. Any other feelings?

Kayla: No.

Kayla expressed genuine interest in school during classroom observations; however, she was usually nervous and therefore would not participate in classroom discussion. During group
work or independent practice, she would use all of her strategies and ask questions when needed. She actively took notes and was engaged during instruction.

**Susan.** Susan expressed consistent positive attitudes towards school on her interviews, five-point attitude scales, and surveys. She also showed positive perceptions of school during classroom observations. She used adjectives such as “happy,” “good,” and “excited” to describe her feelings about school. She felt this way “because when I go to school, I learn new thing and learn better.” There was one discrepancy to this perception which may have been due to user error. On the pre-student five-point attitude scale, she “strongly agreed” to the statement “I will never use what I learn in school.” When responding to this same statement on the post version, she “strongly disagreed” with it. From other forms of data which point to positive attitudes, this change in perspective is most likely due to incorrect use of the five-point scale.

Susan was an active participant in class. She sometimes was nervous to participate in fear that she would get the wrong answers, but she was actively engaged in classroom instruction and was very eager to learn more about different subjects.

**Jenna.** Jenna displayed mixed feelings about school on the surveys, interviews, five-point attitude scales, and during classroom observations. She chose “do not know” when responding to how she felt on the pre-student survey. She felt this way “because sometimes I fell [feel] sad and sometime I fell [feel] happy.” She chose this same answer on the post version. When asked how she felt about school during the interviews, she expressed she was both “nervous” and “happy.” She felt nervous because she did not want to get the wrong answers when called on. On the other hand, she felt happy because she was able to learn a lot at school. She responded with “no opinion” to several of the statements on pre-and post-student five-point attitude scales. Two responses did change; one became more positive and one became more
negative. During the pre-student five-point attitude scale, she “agreed” to the statement “I like my teacher and classmates” and “strongly disagreed” with the statement “I will never use what I learn in school.” To the first statement, she “strongly agreed” on the post version. In regards to the second statement, she “strongly agreed” on the post version. The change to the second statement could be due to user error of the five-point scale.

**Attitudes About Native Language (L1)**

When gathering data about students’ attitudes about their native language, or L1, I used questions four, six, seven, 10, and 12 on the pre- and post-student five-point attitude scales (see Appendix R). In addition, I looked at questions three, four, and five on the pre- and post-student interviews (see Appendix N) and question three on the pre- and post-student surveys (see Appendix O). Last, classroom observations were used when making conclusions about students’ attitudes about their native language.

**Daryl.** Daryl showed consistent negative attitudes about his native language. In the pre-student interview, he stated his native language, or L1, as Twi. Twi is a language native to Ghana. He expressed discomfort and embarrassment when using his native language at home or at school on all three forms of data collection:

Miss. Griffith: How do you feel when you use your native language?

Daryl: Hm…embarrassed.

Miss. Griffith: At home, at school, or everywhere?

Daryl: Hm…everywhere.

Miss. Griffith: Everywhere. Okay. Why do you feel that way?

Daryl: Hm…no reason.

Miss. Griffith: No reason. Do you feel comfortable with it?
Daryl: No.

On his post-student survey, he wished that his native language was used less in the classroom because “people make fun of me.” During the post-student interview, we discussed his trip to Ghana:

Miss. Griffith: Did they [friends and family] teach you any Twi when you were in Ghana?

Daryl: No, I just understand it. I don’t know how to say it.

Miss. Griffith: You understand it, but you can’t speak it. That’s good to know. So did they speak to you in Twi in Ghana?

Daryl: Mhm.

Miss. Griffith: And you speak back to them in English?

Daryl: Mhm.

This was the first time that Daryl mentioned using his native language consistently.

One change occurred between the pre-and post-student five-point attitude scale which was likely due to user error. On the pre-student five-point attitude scale, Daryl “strongly disagreed” with the statement “I feel embarrassed using my native language at school;” however, on the post test, he “strongly agreed” to this statement. Although his attitudes were negative about speaking Twi, Daryl responded on his pre-and post-student five-point attitude scales that he “strongly agreed” that his native language was important to him.

In accordance with these negative attitudes, Daryl never spoke Twi during this study. His only forms of communication were done using English.

Jerry. Jerry consistently showed positive attitudes about his native language. During the pre-student interview, he stated his native language as Spanish. He used adjectives such as
“good,” “motivated,” and “excited” when describing how he felt about his native language. Like Daryl, Jerry “strongly agreed” on the pre-and post-student five-point attitude scales that his native language was important to him.

On his pre-student survey, Jerry responded that he wished his native language was included more in the classroom “because my family was born in Mexico and sometimes forbid it.” He elaborated on how interacting with others in Spanish sometimes is negative in his pre-student interview:

Miss. Griffith: How do you feel when you use your native language?

Jerry: I feel like I am in a whole different world like with the Spanish people that are like the people I talk to. Sometimes um when I am still thinking about something else, I feel like everybody is dead when I am speaking Spanish to them.

Miss. Griffith: Okay.

Jerry: Like on a whole pile of people, dead.

Miss. Griffith: Who are you talking about being dead?

Jerry: Mostly everyone.

Miss. Griffith: Everyone who speaks Spanish or English?

Jerry: No, everyone.

Miss. Griffith: Why do you feel like they are dead?

Jerry: Because like um I can hear my parents but I don’t feel they’re dead. I feel like um I am just um imagining in my mind but I am trying not to when my mom is speaking to me and I am thinking about something else. I feel all lonely and the world just ended and now I am on top of the dead people.

Miss. Griffith: So you feel lonely when you speak Spanish?
Jerry: Yes.

Miss. Griffith: And you feel like you have all these negative feelings?

Jerry: Yep.

In regards to speaking Spanish with others, overall he felt more comfortable when speaking Spanish with his classmates and family, than with teachers. Sometimes, he stated that teachers did not understand him while at other times he and his teachers conversed in Spanish with one another.

Classroom observations supported the notion of positive attitudes. He was consistently used as a translator for a student who knew little English. Once when a teacher called him into the hallway to converse with this student in Spanish, he walked out of the classroom with a big smile on his face. He was not afraid to use Spanish during his pre-and post-student interviews and frequently was observed conversing in Spanish with his friends at lunch and recess.

Timothy. Timothy showed positive attitudes about his native language at home. Timothy stated his native language as Spanish in his pre-student interview. He discussed his positive feelings about his native language during the pre-student interview:

Miss. Griffith: How do you feel when you use your native language?

Timothy: Hm…good.

Miss. Griffith: Why do you feel good?

Timothy: Because it reminds me of where I am from.

Miss. Griffith: I like that. Where is your family from, do you know?

Timothy: El Salvador.

Miss. Griffith: El Salvador?

Timothy: Yeah.
Miss. Griffith: Any other feelings?

Timothy: Happy.

Miss. Griffith: Happy? Why do you feel happy?

Timothy: Cause, cause my language. That is the one I was born with.

Timothy also stated that he felt comfortable speaking Spanish with classmates at recess and lunch. Like the above two participants, he also “strongly agreed” on his pre-and post-student five-point attitude scales that his native language was important to him.

In regards to his attitudes about his native language at school, these were more negative. On his post-student survey, he wished that his native language was used less at school “because I think it’s best for people to learn a lot of English here in America.” On both the pre-and post-student five-point attitude scales, he had “no opinion” to the statement “I wish I could use my native language more in class.” When asked how he felt using Spanish with his teachers during his pre-student interview, he expressed some uncertainty:

Timothy: [Using Spanish] with teachers, not so much. But with classmates that need help with English, yes I talk to them in Spanish.

He expressed these same mixed feelings about using Spanish with teachers during his post-student interview:

Miss. Griffith: How do you feel when you use your native language with teachers?

Timothy: Kind of...what’s it called. Not that good.

Classroom observations further supported the conclusion that Timothy was hesitant to use Spanish at school. He rarely spoke with his friends in Spanish outside of class. Usually, he was only observed speaking Spanish to the student in the classroom who spoke little English.
William. William’s attitudes about his native language were neutral in the beginning. He did not show any pride or comfort with the language. In his pre-student interview, he stated that he only knew a little Spanish. In addition, he told me that he does not speak Spanish to his classmates besides the student who spoke little English. On the pre-student five-point attitude scale, he had “no opinion” to the statement “I feel embarrassed using my native language at school.”

His post-data showed more positive attitudes about Spanish. During his post-student interview, he felt “comfortable using Spanish because both people will learn both languages and I can help those who do not know the language.” In addition, he was mostly excited to speak Spanish to friends. On the post-student survey, he wished that his native language was used more in class because “it’s exciting to use new words in the classroom.” Last, on the post-student five-point attitude scale, he “strongly disagreed” to the statement “I feel embarrassed using my native language at school.”

Classroom observations supported these mixed feelings about Spanish. He was not observed using his native language much outside of the classroom; however, he was always very eager to work with the student in our class who knew little English.

Kayla. Kayla had consistent positive attitudes about her native language overall. Her positive attitudes in regards to her native language at school increased throughout the study. Kayla stated her native language as Spanish. She used adjectives such as “happy” and “excited” when describing her feelings about Spanish. In her pre-student interview, she displayed her positive attitudes toward Spanish:

Miss. Griffith: How do you feel about your native language?
Kayla: Well, when I use my native language, like when I talk it to people who already know I actually feel like people are part of my culture. On her post-student survey, she wished her native language was included more in class “so we can all know what we are saying.”

Her post data showed that her positive attitudes about her native language at school increased throughout the study. On her pre-student five-point attitude scale, she “agreed” to the statement “I feel embarrassed using my native language at school.” On the post version of this scale, she “strongly disagreed” to this same statement. In addition, she “strongly disagreed” to the statement “I feel comfortable using my native language in class” on the pre-student five-point attitude scale. However, on the post version, she “strongly agreed” to this same statement. Like all participants, she “strongly agreed” on her pre-and post-student five-point attitude scales that her native language was important to her.

Classroom observations further supported these findings about Kayla. She spoke Spanish to her friends outside of the classroom and to the student who spoke little English in the classroom.

**Susan.** Susan showed consistent positive feelings toward her native language. She stated her native language was Spanish in the pre-student interview. When describing her feelings toward Spanish, she used adjectives such as “excited” and “happy.” On both the pre-and post-student surveys and five-point attitude scales, she expressed her comfort and want to include her native language more in the classroom “because when I talk I want to talk smoothly and teach others,” and “I talked too much about English and want to learn more Spanish.” She also discussed her desire to teach others Spanish:
Miss. Griffith: How do you feel about using your native language with your teachers and your classmates?

Susan: Um…friendly so they can like understand me when I speak it.

Miss. Griffith: So friendly so they can understand

Susan: People talk like Spanish I can tell them how to talk in Spanish.

Miss. Griffith: So you can kinda teach them? Alright.

Classroom observations supported these positive attitudes. Susan did use her native language with classmates outside of the classroom on the playground and at lunch. In addition, she helped the student who knew little English in the classroom, sometimes without even being asked.

**Jenna.** Jenna displayed negative attitudes about her native language because of her lack of knowledge about the language. Jenna stated her native language as Spanish in the pre-student interview. In the post-student survey, she wished her native language was included less in the class “because I get nervous in school.” In addition, she commented during the pre-student interview that she felt uncomfortable with her native language because she cannot say words correctly and makes mistakes. During the post-student interview, she differentiated her feelings about her native language for home and school. At home, she felt comfortable because she could make mistakes with her family. However, at school, she felt “weird” because speaking Spanish at home did not feel the same as speaking it at school for her. With classmates, she consistently commented that she felt “nervous and weird” when speaking Spanish to classmates because she may make mistakes or say the wrong things.

There was a slight positive increase in these attitudes on the five-point attitude scales. On the pre-scale, she “disagreed” with the statement “I feel comfortable using my native language in
class.” When rating this same statement on the post-version, she chose she had “no opinion.”

Also, she “strongly disagreed” to the statement “I wish I could use my native language more in class” on the pre-scale. However, on the post-scale, she rated this statement as “disagree.”

Classroom observations supported this uncertainty with Spanish. She was never observed using Spanish within school, not even with classmates. The only instance she used Spanish at school was for her Flat Stanley project.

Usage of L1

To gather data for this theme, questions three and five on the pre-and post-student interviews (see Appendix N). Also, classroom observations were utilized when looking at students’ usage of their L1. Last, question two from the parent survey about student attitudes was used (see Appendices Q and P).

**Daryl.** Daryl never uses his native language. On his pre-and post-student interviews, Daryl stated that he never used his native language. He only spoke Twi to his parents at times, but not often. In addition, he used Twi in Ghana, but not in the United States. He would be spoken to in Twi while in Ghana, but he would typically respond in English. On the parent survey, his mother stated that he does not use his native language at home.

Classroom observations support the conclusion that Daryl never speaks his native language at school. He was never seen speaking Twi with his classmates or teachers. He did not use Twi in his Flat Stanley project either.

**Jerry.** Jerry consistently used his native language at home but only occasionally at school. At home, he stated he used his native language a lot:

Miss. Griffith: Okay, my next question, how often do you use your native language?

Jerry: Always.
Miss. Griffith: Always, okay. With who?

Jerry: Sometimes my parents and friends, [student’s name]. I usually talk, sometimes, when I am trying to be funny. I come out funny, and then…that’s how I feel about my native language sometimes.

In addition, his mother noted that he does speak his native language at home.

At school, he never consistently spoke with teachers in Spanish. From his interviews, his conversations in Spanish with teachers depended on their willingness to converse with him in his native language. With classmates, he spoke Spanish to them outside of the classroom:

Miss. Griffith: How do you feel speaking your native language with classmates?

Jerry: Oh, kind of fun. Like, my Spanish friends, we talk about jokes in Spanish. Like, he told, cut the chicken. And I said what chicken, and he said right there.

Classroom observations supported his consistent use of Spanish. He is always eager to help classmates who know little English. In addition, he is typically seen speaking Spanish to his friends at lunch or recess. Last, he was seen speaking Spanish a few times with his former second grade teacher.

Timothy. Timothy spoke Spanish about half of the day at home.

Miss. Griffith: How often do you use it at your house?

Timothy: Almost half the day.

Miss. Griffith: Half the day. Do you speak, who lives at your house?

Timothy: My grandpa, mom, dad, sister, and me.

Miss. Griffith: Okay. Is there anyone you speak only Spanish to? Speak both to? Speak only English to?

Timothy: To my grandpa, I speak only Spanish.
Miss. Griffith: Okay.

Timothy: To my mom, English and Spanish.

Miss. Griffith: Okay.

Timothy: My dad, English and Spanish. And my sister, English.

In addition to these comments, his mother also stated that he uses his native language at home.

When using Spanish in class, he stated he only uses it to teach someone English.

Miss. Griffith: How often do you use your native language in class?

Timothy: When I’m teaching someone English.

Miss. Griffith: Okay. Anything else?

Timothy: No.

Whereas, in El Salvador, he spoke Spanish a majority of the time:

Miss. Griffith: Did you speak a lot of Spanish when you were in El Salvador?

Timothy: Oh yeah.

Miss. Griffith: All the time? Any English?

Timothy: I did no English.

Miss. Griffith: You did no English in El Salvador?

Timothy: Oh, that.

Miss. Griffith: So you went to visit, did you speak Spanish all the time?

Timothy: Well, not all the time because my uncle was from the United States but they sented him there.

Miss. Griffith: So you spoke to him in English?

Timothy: Mm, hm.

Miss. Griffith: And everyone else in Spanish?
Timothy: Mm, hm.

Classroom observations supported these findings. He was rarely seen speaking Spanish to his friends outside of the classroom. He was only seen using Spanish at school with students who did not know a lot of English.

William. William uses English most of the day, and he stated that he knows more English than Spanish. The only time William consistently uses Spanish is with his dad. His dad knows very little English, so William speaks Spanish with him. His mom speaks both English and Spanish. In addition, he speaks Spanish mostly to his brother who lives with their grandfather. Last, his mother noted that he sometimes speaks his native language at home.

At school, William does speak Spanish with his friends occasionally during recess or in the cafeteria; however, most of their conversations are in English.

Classroom observations support these findings. William was never seen conversing in Spanish at school besides for his Flat Stanley project.

Kayla. Kayla consistently speaks Spanish at her house, but not at school.

Miss. Griffith: How often do you use your native language?

Kayla: Well, I use it a lot of times at home, on the weekends, the breaks. Sometimes I use it at school when I need to.

The only reason she uses Spanish in the classroom is to help others who do not know English. Sometimes she does converse in Spanish with her friends at lunch or during recess.

Classroom observations support these notions. Kayla is always very willing to help students who do not know English. When asked, she is excited to use her native language in the classroom. She has been seen using her native language with friends outside of the classroom on occasion.
Susan. Susan expressed mixed responses to her usage of Spanish at home. During her pre-student interview, she discussed her lack of using Spanish at home:

Susan: I don’t really talk that much Spanish at home, I usually talk English at home.

Miss. Griffith: Okay. So you speak English at home?

Susan: Yeah.

Miss. Griffith: Okay.

Susan: Only when my parents tell me, when they ask me something.

Miss. Griffith: In Spanish, you answer back in Spanish.

Susan: Yeah, but only to my mom because my mom doesn’t know that much English. So my sister and I talk English to my dad.

When asked how often she used her native language during the post-student interview, she responded that she uses it a lot:

Miss. Griffith: A lot of times, when?

Susan: Uh…when I’m at home.

Miss. Griffith: Home? Okay. Any other times?

Susan: Uh…at school I speak more English than home.

Her mother did note that she does use her native language at home.

At school, she speaks Spanish sometimes, but mostly to translate for others:

Miss. Griffith: Do you speak any Spanish at school?

Susan: Sometimes, when I have to translate to someone.

Miss. Griffith: Translating. Do you ever speak Spanish to friends at like recess or lunch?

Susan: Uh…sometimes.

Miss. Griffith: Sometimes, but not a lot?
Susan: Yeah.

Classroom observations support the findings about usage at school. She was frequently asked to be a translator for a student in our class who speaks little English. On rare occasions, she was observed using Spanish outside of the classroom.

**Jenna.** Jenna consistently uses Spanish at her house. Her mom speaks mostly Spanish, her dad speaks Spanish about half of the time, and her sister and aunt speak English most of the time. Her mother noted that she does speak Spanish at home.

At school, she speaks English sometimes with friends outside of class. She usually only speaks Spanish with classmates if she needs to translate something into English.

Classroom observations support these notions. She is rarely seen speaking Spanish at all in the classroom. She did use Spanish in her Flat Stanley project.

**Parental Involvement**

Information about parental involvement was collected through question two on the pre-and post-student five-point attitude scales (see Appendix R) and the parental surveys, if they were returned. Responses on the parent survey about student attitudes (see Appendices Q and P) were compared to the student responses on the pre-and post-student surveys (see Appendix O). Last, parents’ opinions on translated school paperwork were gathered from the parent survey about translations (see Appendices S and T).

**Daryl.** Daryl had “no opinion” to the statement “My parents help me with my school work.” Math was selected as his favorite subject on both the parent survey and the pre-and post-student surveys. In addition, all three surveys stated that Daryl liked school.

His parents were not satisfied with the amount of paperwork translated into Twi. They wished that his homework would be translated into Twi. Even though they wanted more school
paperwork translated into Twi, they still chose English as their language preference. They believe a benefit of translated paperwork from school would be easier communication.

**Jerry.** Jerry “strongly disagreed” to the statement “My parents help me with my school work.” Social studies was selected as his favorite subject on both the pre-and post-parent surveys and the pre-and post-student surveys. In addition, all four surveys stated that Jerry did not like school.

His parents were satisfied with the amount of paperwork translated into Spanish; however, they wished that his homework and school newsletters could be translated into Spanish. On the pre-parent survey, they selected English as their preferred language; however, on the post-parent survey, they selected both English and Spanish as their preferred languages. They believe a benefit of translated paperwork from school would be for other parents who do not know English.

**Timothy.** Timothy had “disagreed” to the statement “My parents help me with my school work” on the post-student five-point attitude scale. Math was selected as his favorite subject on both the parent surveys and the pre-and post-student surveys. In addition, all four surveys stated that Timothy enjoyed school.

His parents were satisfied with the amount of paperwork translated into Spanish. Their language preference is English. They did not see any benefits to having school paperwork translated into their native language.

**William.** William “agreed” to the statement “My parents help me with my school work.” Social studies was selected as his favorite subject on both the parent survey and the pre-and post-student surveys. In addition, all three surveys stated that William liked school.
His parents were satisfied with the amount of paperwork translated into Spanish. Their language preference is English. They did not see any benefits to having school paperwork translated into their native language.

**Kayla.** Kayla “agreed” to the statement “My parents help me with my school work” on the pre-student five-point attitude scale. On the post-version, she had “no opinion.”

Kayla’s parents did not return the pre- or post-parent surveys. These surveys were given to her parents in Spanish.

**Susan.** Susan “agreed” to the statement “My parents help me with my school work” on her post-student five-point attitude scale. Math was selected as her favorite subject on both the parent survey and the pre- and post-student surveys. In addition, all three surveys stated that Susan liked school.

Her parents were satisfied with the amount of paperwork translated into Spanish; however, they wished school newsletters were translated into Spanish. Their language preference is English. If paperwork was translated, they said they would be able to understand it better.

**Jenna.** Jenna “disagreed” to the statement “My parents help me with my school work” on her post-student five-point attitude scale. Math was selected as her favorite subject on both the post-parent survey and the pre- and post-student surveys. Her favorite subject was math and social studies on the pre-parent survey. In addition, all four surveys stated that Jenna liked school.

Her parents were satisfied with the amount of paperwork translated into Spanish on their pre-parent survey. However, they were not satisfied on their post-parent survey. They wished that report cards, school newsletters, and homework were translated into Spanish. Their language
preference is Spanish. They did see benefits to having paperwork translated into Spanish. They indicated that the translation would help explain things better to parents.

**Discussion**

After analyzing the results of the study, including interviews, surveys, five-point attitude scales, parent surveys, and classroom observations, two main themes emerged: acculturation and acculturative stress, which were then broken down further into their differing components.

**Acculturation**

Zychinski and Polo (2012) define acculturation as “the changes that groups or individuals encounter when coming into contact with a different culture” (p. 567). Mena, Padilla, and Maldonado (1987) further describe it as an “adaptive process of cultural adjustments that takes the individual through several different phrases” (p. 207). With all of my participants having either grandparents and/or parents that immigrated to the United States, acculturation has affected each of them in unique ways.

**Immigrant Ethnic Identity.** Creating a sense of identity for immigrant adolescents is a complex and rapidly moving process (Rogers-Sirin & Gupta, 2012). Phinny, Horenczyk, and Vedder (2001) “postulated that immigrant ethnic identity development may involve two parallel dimensions: ethnic identity, which involves maintaining one’s heritage culture’s values and practices, as well as retaining a sense of belonging, and national identity, which involves accepting the adoptive culture’s values and practices and forming a sense of belonging” (p. 556). All of my participants included cultural aspects of their native country (i.e., aspects of their ethnic identity) in their Flat Stanley projects. Daryl wrote that rice is a popular dessert in Ghana, while Jerry drew the Mexican flag beside his Flat Stanley. Timothy wrote extensively about his trip to El Salvador this past summer. He included details such as common forms of transportation
(e.g., horses, trucks, etc) in El Salvador along with what natives typically eat (e.g., pupusas). Jenna described foods native to Mexico such as tacos, quesadillas, and chilaquiles.

In addition to their ethnic identity, six of them included their national identity which incorporated Virginia and various other states in America. Timothy also wrote about Virginia where he and his family have cookouts on the weekends and play Xbox. Along with Mexican food, Jenna also wrote about typical American food such as pizza and hamburgers. Susan discussed New York and its famous skyscrapers.

Over the course of my research project, all of the participants seemed to become more aware and proud of their ethnic identity. Before the Flat Stanley project, there had been no forum for students to discuss the different cultures they bring to the classroom. My research project allowed students to explore and share their ethnic identities with their teachers and classmates, if time permitted. Much of the research stresses the importance of creating bicultural learners rather than have students assimilate to their new country (e.g., Miller & Endo, 2004; Urrieta & Quach, 2000). As educators, we need celebrate and value both cultures equally rather than alienate a part of who a student is.

**Acculturative Stress**

Acculturative stress is a decrease in the physical, social, or mental condition of a person due to acculturation (Berry, 1990). “The breakdown of ties with family and friends” (Zychinski & Polo, 2012, p. 567) and “anxiety, depression, and somatic symptoms” (Rogers-Sirin & Gupta, 2012, p. 555) are possible effects from acculturation which can lead to acculturative stress. Many of the participants in my study have experienced acculturation, which ultimately led to acculturative stress because of the cultural and linguistic barriers they faced.
Language Shock. Miller and Endo (2004) discuss language shock which explains the anxiety an immigrant has when initially coming to a place where he or she does not speak, or is not proficient with, the dominant language. This phenomenon is common in schools for ELLs who want to speak English fluently but must struggle for several years before they can understand what is being spoken around the school. It is typical for students who are learning English to be mocked for their accents or laughed at when using their native language at school.

A few of my participants experienced this language shock while at school. During my post-student interview with Jerry, I asked him, “How do you feel with teachers when you use your native language?” He replied, “Sometimes, I feel like they don’t understand me. Like what is he saying?” Although teachers did not laugh at him, Jerry still experienced similar negative feelings when using his native language with others. He faced the linguistic and cultural barriers that sometimes appeared when speaking his native language to others. Daryl was laughed at by his classmates when he used his native language for the first time at school. Ever since that one encounter, he has become embarrassed and has not used his native language at school since. His experiences highlight his anxiety about using any other language besides English with people outside of his family.

Another effect of language shock is the desire for students to give up their native language for the dominant language because of the negative associations now attached to it (e.g., teasing). In addition, giving up their native language is connected to becoming an American. Yet at home, they must use their native language with their parents. Typically, their parents are adamant that they use their native language because of its ties to their native heritage. Now, the students are caught in the middle of expecting to use their native language at home while still being pressured to only speak English while in school.
A few of my participants were caught in this battle between their native language and English. Timothy told me in his pre-student interview he spoke Spanish “almost half the day” while at home. However, when at school, he only found it appropriate to use Spanish when “I’m teaching someone English.” In his post-student interview, he further explained his reasoning for such limited Spanish at school. When asked if he felt comfortable speaking Spanish with his teachers, he replied, “Not that good.” When asked why he felt this way, he told me, “Because, they, maybe, from talking too much Spanish, you will say Spanish to the classmates instead of English.” I responded with, “…so like using Spanish more than English in the classroom. Getting into that habit of using Spanish?” He agreed. From our conversations, speaking Spanish conversationally at school appears to be negative for Timothy.

In American schools, it is not uncommon to hear comments such as, “You are in America, so speak English!” (Miller & Endo, 2004). Along with his interviews, Timothy wished that Spanish was used less in the classroom on both of his surveys “because I think it’s best for people to learn a lot of English here in America.” Connecting to this phenomenon, Timothy is equating being an American to English proficiency.

Miller and Endo (2004) also discussed the fact that young people are tying success to being able to speak English fluently. Along with Timothy, William, Susan, and Kayla all voiced their primary reason to use their native language (i.e., Spanish) at school was to help other students learn English. These students are helping non-English speakers so they can succeed in the classroom. Knowing English affects students’ academic achievement in a variety of ways. First, Akresh and Akresh (2009) highlight the fact that all standardized tests are in English. These high-stakes standardized tests in fourth grade are usually equated with academic success to students. Without knowing English, students will not be able to pass the tests. In addition to
these assessments, Olsen (2000) points out that students cannot learn math, science, or social studies without knowing the language of the teacher or the textbook. Without mastery of English, students are stuck looking up words in the dictionary and trying to make meaning out of a class only taught in English. This causes ELLs to fall further and further behind their English-speaking classmates. I observed this gap with my participants. All but two of my participants are below grade level in reading and math because these students have not mastered English and fell far behind their English-speaking peers when they were first acquiring the language.

**Rapid Assimilation of English.** The 1974 court ruling of Lau v. Nichols required schools to provide services to limited in English proficiency (LEP) students. Recently, federal policies have tried to make students “proficient” in English within three years. However, this cap on services contradicts research which found that students need five to seven years of language instruction in order to reach academic proficiency. Because of this quick assimilation of English, ELL students are being mainstreamed into general education classrooms before they are ready and without the needed support from ESL teachers (Miller & Endo, 2004). Akresh and Akresh (2009) found rapid assimilation of English in their participants learning the language. Their Hispanic participants also experienced a rapid loss of their Spanish language proficiency. Olsen (2000) refers to this loss of one’s native language as “language subtractive exchange.” Rather than having English and students’ home language coexist, students typically lose their native language at the price of becoming an English speaker.

Three of my participants displayed this same decline of proficiency with their native language. Daryl commented in his post-student interview that he can understand the language, but he cannot speak it. William stated in his pre-student interview that he only knew a little bit of Spanish. Last, Jenna said in her pre-student interview that she feels uncomfortable when she uses
her native language (i.e., Spanish) because she cannot say words correctly and is nervous about making mistakes. All of these students’ confidence and proficiency levels with their native language were low. This low level may be due to the pressure on students to learn English quickly when entering school. Rather than celebrating both languages, their native languages were pushed aside for English. Because of this quick assimilation of English, these students lost some of their proficiency in their native language.

In addition, I observed language struggles for the participants, who were mainstreamed too quickly. Some of my participants were not given enough wait time and therefore did not have enough time to formulate and verbally provide their answer. Other participants did not have the appropriate words or academic language to create well-thought out answers. Over half of my participants were considered “exiting” the program; however, many seem to have been removed from the program prematurely.

Last, these high expectations to learn English quickly may make students fearful, shameful, and embarrassed (Olsen, 2000). These negative feelings will impact how well a new language will be learned. In a hostile environment, learning English is a painful process. In a study conducted by Olsen (2000), a participant described learning English as a grueling process: “I’d get so tired. My head would hurt. All day I sit in classes and hear English, English, English, and try so hard to understand but I do not understand…” (p. 198). In relation to this quote, Jerry said something very similar about coming to school. When asked, “How do you feel about school?” He responded, “…every time I’m learning something new, my head starts hurting because I remember too much things…so it’s like I have too much things in a folder, too much data…” Jerry did not like school because he felt overwhelmed every day. This may be due to the fact that all instruction is in English. While at home, Jerry shared that he speaks Spanish most of
the day. However, when at school, he speaks English most of the day. Flipping to strictly English at school may be placing him in an unwelcoming environment where he feels overwhelmed.

**Cognitive Load.** With ELLs, it is important for teachers to reduce the cognitive load for these students. This can be done by picking activities which allow students to use their background knowledge and experiences. Teachers must be conscientious when planning lessons so they take into consideration what students bring to the classroom with them. Many ELL students may come to school without much background knowledge for a variety of reasons (e.g., not much schooling, low SES, etc). When teachers know each student’s cultural background, they are able to differentiate instruction more successfully and give their students what they need.

Through my observations, students’ cultural backgrounds were not involved much in instruction. There were many instances where there were references made to school life and to home life through a Eurocentric lens; however, not many connections were made to culturally relevant experiences. Without these significant connections, much of the material may have no relevance to students. Over half of my participants are low in reading and math, so pre-planning these important connections to what they know personally (e.g., customs, cultural experiences, native language) could help these students achieve higher academically. Ladson-Billings (1995b) researched the correlation between culturally relevant pedagogy and student achievement. In eight classrooms she observed, culturally relevant pedagogy had a significant positive effect on academic achievement. “Despite the low ranking of the school district, the teachers were able to help students perform at higher levels than their district counterparts…more students in these classrooms were at or above grade level on standardized achievement tests” (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 475).
**Parental Involvement.** Parent-child relationships are usually affected between ELLs and their parents (Yu, Huang, Schwalberg, Overpeck, & Kogan, 2002). Their parents experience linguistic and cultural barriers in communicating with their children who were born and/or grew up in the United States. In turn, their children may be experiencing two different identities involving cultures and expectations: one for home and one for school. In addition, parents may have trouble communicating with teachers because of the linguistic and cultural obstacles. Last, new immigrants have less flexibility in their schedules because they typically are working multiple jobs and may not have time for school conferences or to volunteer. These work demands may also lessen the time parents have to support their families (e.g., helping with homework, having someone to talk with; Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007).

From students’ pre-student five-point attitude scales, three of them either “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” to the statement, “My parents help me with my school work.” Two of my participants had “no opinion” while the remaining two “agreed” with this same statement. This data indicates that a majority of participants do not receive regular help from their parents on homework. This lack of participation may be due to parents working multiple jobs or the linguistic barriers discussed earlier. In addition to their responses on the scale, sometimes, as a student teacher in the classroom, I could get a sense of whether parents helped on students’ homework or not. I checked my students in every morning which involved looking over their homework. From my participants, it appeared that only one or two students received regular help on their homework from a family member. Since their homework was in English, the linguistic barriers may have prevented parents from working with their child.

**Cultural Brokers.** Although acculturation can be a very stressful process, parents welcome some parts (e.g., translations, paying bills, etc) of it into their lives through the help of
their children (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). One participant commented, “My parents didn’t really have to adapt because of us [pointed to himself]. We are there as their mediator between the two cultures…” (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007, p. 63). Immigrant children can become responsible for using new cultural and language skills to help their families, especially their parents. Without their assistance, many of these children fear that their parents may be taken advantage of in their new culture.

Of my seven participants, five expressed the fact that they speak mostly Spanish to one or all of their family in their native language because they do not know much English. Susan and Jenna both speak to their moms primarily in Spanish while William uses Spanish with his dad. Both Jerry and Kayla use Spanish with all of their family members. In translating for parents, these students may act as the cultural brokers for their families. Many of them probably translate paperwork from English to Spanish as well as help their family adapt to and learn about their new culture in the United States.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. These included weather, student understanding, and cameras. These limitations hindered the progress of the students, as well as the results of the study.

Weather. Weather was a major limitation. Snow and extreme cold caused three 2-hour delays and cancelled nine days of instruction, which pushed back portions of the project, such as the read aloud, presentations, and data collection. Due to the many missed days of instruction, only two of seven participants were able to present their Flat Stanley to the class.

Student Understanding. The age of my participants affected their ability to complete the five-point attitude scale accurately. I had to explicitly explain each statement in regards to the
scale on both the pre- and post-versions for one student. With a more comprehensive scale, I may have received a more accurate representation of my students’ attitudes toward their native language and school.

**Cameras.** My seven participants were not given a disposable camera so they could take pictures of their Flat Stanley immersed in their culture. When the cameras were available to pick up, the students had already turned in their projects. Because of this, many of my participants were not able to submit pictures of their Flat Stanley involved in their culture. The part of the rubric involving pictures became void because of this limitation. In addition, the absence of cameras may have limited the cultural experience that the students gave their Flat Stanley which in turn could have affected the original impact of my intervention on their attitudes toward school.

**Conclusion**

Despite these limitations, the present study enhances the literature on how acculturative stress affects ELLs’ immigrant ethnic identity. First, the findings provide background knowledge on the process of acculturation and how it influences ELL students’ sense of identity. Their identity is usually made up of two parts: an ethnic and national identity. Second, teachers need to be aware of the acculturative stress on ELL students during acculturation. Many stressors may be experienced by students during this time: language shock, cognitive overload, less parental involvement, being cultural brokers, and experiencing rapid assimilation of English. Several of these factors may be influencing students’ performance in the classroom. In order to provide ELL students with the most nurturing environment, teachers need to know of these challenges and provide ways to lessen their stress. These include reducing students’ cognitive load by allowing students to use their native language and English in the classroom context.
# Appendix A

## Participant Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Oral</th>
<th>Literacy</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daryl</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Exiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Exiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>Exiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayla</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Exiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenna</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Home Language</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Native Country(ies)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daryl</td>
<td>Twi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Mexico and Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayla</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Honduras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenna</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### WIDA Performance Definitions

At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce or use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 6- Reaching | - specialized or technical language reflective of the content areas at grade level  
- a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level  
- oral or written communication in English comparable to English-proficient peers |
| 5- Bridging | - specialized or technical language of the content areas  
- a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays or reports  
- oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English-proficient peers when presented with grade level material |
| 4- Expanding | - specific and some technical language of the content areas  
- a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences or paragraphs  
- oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic or interactive support |
| 3- Developing | - general and some specific language of the content areas  
- expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs  
- oral or written language with phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with oral or written, narrative or expository descriptions with sensory, graphic or interactive support |
| 2- Beginning | - general language related to the content areas  
- phrases or short sentences  
- oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one- to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support |
| 1- Entering | - pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas  
- words, phrases or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-, choice or yes/no questions, or statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support  
- oral language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede meaning when presented with basic oral commands, direct questions, or simple statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support |
Flat Stanley: English

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We have read the story called Flat Stanley by Jeff Brown. In the story, Stanley has many wonderful adventures, including being sent in an envelope to visit friends in California. The class has made their own Flat Stanley and we want them to introduce him to their culture. Cultural aspects can include: food, traditions, native language, or customs. In order to accomplish this, I am asking students to submit a written report, bring pictures, and give an oral presentation about their cultural adventures with Flat Stanley. Time will be given in class to edit and revise their written report. Also, disposable cameras will be provided to students if needed. Below is the rubric for what is expected in each three aspects of this project.

**Flat Stanley Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I made eye contact with my audience. I spoke loudly.</td>
<td>I sometimes made eye contact with my audience. My audience could not hear me very well.</td>
<td>I did not make eye contact with my audience. My audience could not hear me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written Report</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My report has been revised and edited and has no grammatical mistakes.</td>
<td>My report was somewhat revised and edited and has a few grammatical mistakes.</td>
<td>My report was not revised and edited and has a lot of mistakes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pictures</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All of my pictures show Flat Stanley involved in my culture.</td>
<td>Some of my pictures show Flat Stanley involved in my culture.</td>
<td>None of my pictures show Flat Stanley involved in my culture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My oral presentation and written report included many aspects of my culture.</td>
<td>My oral presentation and written report included a few aspects of my culture.</td>
<td>My oral presentation and written report included no aspects of my culture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your child’s oral presentation, written report, and pictures are due _________________. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact me at kgriffit@mail.umw.edu or call Hampton Oaks Elementary at (540) 658-6280. You may also contact my University
Supervisor at cclayton@umw.edu. Thank you for your help with this class project. I look forward to seeing what Flat Stanley does with your children!
Estimado padre/madre/tutor:

Hemos leído el cuento Flat Stanley de Jeff Brown en clase. En el cuento, Stanley disfruta de maravillosas aventuras, como viajar en un sobre para visitar a sus amigos de California. La clase ha creado su propio muñeco Flat Stanley y queremos que los niños lo introduzcan en su cultura. Los aspectos culturales que queremos estudiar incluyen, entre otros: comidas, tradiciones, idioma o costumbres. Para conseguirlo, he pedido a los alumnos que escriban una redacción, que traigan fotografías (antes debemos asegurarnos de que todo el mundo tenga acceso a una cámara/móvil para poder hacer las fotos. Si no fuera así, podemos solicitar financiación para comprar varias cámaras desechables) y que hagan una presentación oral sobre sus aventuras culturales con Flat Stanley. A continuación, incluimos una guía de evaluación de lo que esperamos en cada uno de los tres aspectos de este proyecto.

Guía de evaluación de Flat Stanley

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentación</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He establecido contacto visual con mi público. He hablado en voz alta.</td>
<td>He establecido contacto visual con mi público algunas veces. Mi público no podía oírme muy bien.</td>
<td>No establecí contacto visual con mi público. Mi público no pudo oírme.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Redacción</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mi redacción ha sido revisada y corregida y no presentaba errores gramaticales.</td>
<td>Mi redacción ha sido revisada y corregida por encima y presentaba pocos errores gramaticales.</td>
<td>Mi redacción no se ha revisado y corregido y presenta muchos errores.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imágenes</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Todas mis imágenes muestran a Flat Stanley integrado en mi cultura.</td>
<td>Algunas de mis imágenes muestran a Flat Stanley integrado en mi cultura.</td>
<td>Ninguna de mis imágenes muestra a Flat Stanley integrado en mi cultura.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Componentes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi presentación oral y mi redacción incluyeron numerosos aspectos de mi cultura.</td>
<td>Mi presentación oral y mi redacción incluyeron algunos aspectos de mi cultura.</td>
<td>Mi presentación oral y mi redacción no incluyeron ningún aspecto de mi cultura.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Su hijo/a deberá realizar la presentación oral, la redacción y las imágenes para el _______________. Si tuviera cualquier pregunta o duda en relación con este proyecto, póngase en contacto conmigo a través de kgriffit@mail.umw.edu o llámeme a la escuela primaria Hampton Oaks Elementary al (540) 658-6280. También puede ponerse en contacto con mi Supervisor de la Universidad en cclayton@umw.edu. Gracias por su ayuda con este proyecto para clase. ¡Estoy deseando conocer las aventuras de Flat Stanley con sus hijos!

¡Gracias!

Ms. Griffith
Dear Parent/Guardian:

Hello, my name is Kelly Griffith, and I am a student teacher in your child’s classroom. I am currently a graduate student at the University of Mary Washington working towards my Masters in Elementary Education. A requirement of our program is to conduct an action research study in an area related to our studies. I am inviting your child to participate in a research study I am doing. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to have your child participate or not. Below are the details about my study.

I am interested in learning about how incorporating English Language Learners’ native language in classroom instruction affects their attitudes toward school. I will be incorporating their native language through a project in class related to a book called Flat Stanley by Jeff Brown. All students will be required to turn in three components for this project: a written report, an oral presentation, and photos. All aspects of their project will need to incorporate their culture such as their native language. About 2-3 times per week, students will present their Flat Stanley to their peers. With this presentation, students will express their culture and use their native language in the classroom. I am requesting permission to give your student a survey and a five-point attitude scale to complete about his or her feelings in regards to using his or her native language in the classroom. In addition, I am requesting permission to interview and tape record your student about his or her feelings about using his or her native language in the classroom.

The benefit of this research is that you will be helping me understand the influence that incorporating English Language Learners’ native language has on their attitudes about school. The only potential risk is that your child may be uncomfortable being interviewed. This risk will be minimized by interviewing your child in a private place, and the interview will not take away from any classroom instructional time.

Any information I collect about your child will be kept confidential. His or her name will not appear in any papers about the project. All names will be changed to protect his or her privacy. Following the completion of this project, all samples I collect will be destroyed. Participation in this project will not affect your child’s grade in any way. His or her participation in the study is voluntary, and you have the right to keep your child out of the study. Your child is free to stop participating in the study at any time. Your child would still participate in the classroom project, but data for the research would not be collected from him or her.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my University Supervisor, Dr. Courtney Clayton (cclayton@umw.edu), myself (kgriffit@mail.umw.edu), or Mrs. Wobensmith (wobensmithka@staffordschools.net). Please return this form by ________. I look forward to working with you and your child!
Thank you very much,

Ms. Griffith

I have read the above letter and give my child, ________________________________ permission to participate in this study.

______________________________                  ______________
Parent/Guardian Signature                  Date

I give my child permission to be tape-recorded during the interview.

______________________________                  ______________
Parent/Guardian Signature                  Date
Autorización

Estimado padre/madre/tutor:

Hola, me llamo Kelly Griffith y soy estudiante de magisterio en prácticas en la clase de su hijo/a. En la actualidad, soy alumna de postgrado en la Universidad Mary Washington y estoy realizando un Máster en Enseñanza Primaria. Uno de los requisitos de nuestro programa consiste en desarrollar un estudio de investigación dentro de un área relacionada con nuestros estudios. Me gustaría que su hijo/a participara en un estudio de investigación que estoy realizando. La participación en el estudio es voluntaria, así que podrá decidir si desea que su hijo/a participe o no. A continuación, incluyo más información sobre mi estudio.

Me interesa aprender cómo la incorporación en clase de los idiomas maternos de los/as alumnos/as que estudian inglés como segunda lengua afectaría a su actitud hacia el colegio. Dicha incorporación del idioma materno se realizará a través de un proyecto en clase relacionado con el libro Flat Stanley. (Describa brevemente el proyecto para que entiendan qué es lo que les está pidiendo. Haga hincapié en que toda la clase participará en el proyecto). Unas 2 ó 3 veces por semana, los/as alumnos/as presentarán a su Flat Stanley a sus compañeros. Durante esta presentación, los/as alumnos/as harán gala de su cultura y emplearán su idioma materno en la clase. Solicito su autorización para entregar a su hijo/a una encuesta y una escala del uno al cinco que deberá rellenar con sus impresiones sobre el uso de su idioma materno en clase. Además, solicito su permiso para entrevistar y grabar en una cinta de audio a su hijo/a en relación a sus impresiones sobre el uso de su idioma materno en clase.

El principal beneficio de esta investigación es que me estará ayudando a entender la influencia que puede tener la incorporación de los idiomas maternos de los alumnos que estudian inglés como segunda lengua en sus actitudes hacia el colegio. El único riesgo posible es que su hijo/a pueda sentirse incómodo/a durante la entrevista. Este riesgo se verá minimizado, ya que la entrevista se realizará en un lugar privado y, además, no le restará tiempo del horario lectivo.

Cualquier información que pueda recopilar sobre su hijo/a será estrictamente confidencial. Su nombre no aparecerá en ningún documento relacionado con el proyecto. Cambiaré todos los nombres para proteger su privacidad. Tras finalizar el proyecto, se eliminará toda la información recopilada. La participación en este proyecto no afectará a la calificación de su hijo/a en modo alguno. Su participación en el estudio será voluntaria, por lo que usted tiene derecho a mantener a su hijo/a fuera del estudio. Su hijo/a podrá dejar de participar en el estudio en cualquier momento que desee. Su hijo/a seguiría participando en el proyecto en clase, si bien no se recopilará información sobre él/ella.
Si tiene cualquier pregunta o inquietud, no dude en ponerse en contacto con mi Supervisor de la Universidad, el Prof. Courtney Clayton (cclayton@umw.edu), conmigo (kgriffit@mail.umw.edu), o con Mrs.Wobensmith (wobensmithka@staffordschools.net). Le ruego que entregue este formulario antes del ________. ¡Estoy deseando trabajar con usted y con su hijo/a!

Muchas gracias por todo:

Ms. Griffith

He leído la carta y autorizo a mi hijo/a __________________________________________ a participar en este estudio.

________________________________________________
Firma del padre/madre/tutor                               Fecha

Autorizo a que se grabe en una cinta de audio a mi hijo/a durante la entrevista.

________________________________________________
Firma del padre/madre/tutor                               Fecha
Appendix G

Student Assent Letter

I agree to be part of Ms. Griffith’s research project and be tape-recorded when she interviews me. I know no one will be mad at me if I do not want to be a part of her study or if I decide I want to stop.

YES

NO

_______________________________        ___________________
Student Signature                          Date

_______________________________        ___________________
Student Teacher/Researcher Signature      Date
## Appendix H

Flat Stanley Read Aloud

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary Terms and Phrases</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
<th>Reason for Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Politeness, hay**          | 1-2          | **Tier 2**: politeness  
Homophones: hay               |
| **Enormous, flat as a pancake, sighed** | 3-4          | **Tier 2**: enormous, sighed  
**Idioms**: flat as a pancake |
| **Measurements**             | 5-6          | **Technical**: measurements |
| **Try this on for size**     | 7-8          | **Idioms**: try this on for size |
| **Airmail, valuable**        | 9-10         | **Tier 2**: airmail, valuable |
| **Catch the wind, spool of string** | 11-12       | **Idioms**: catch the wind  
**Tier 2**: spool of string |
| **Wedging, cross, half an hour passed, set him free** | 13-14       | **Homonym**: cross  
**Tier 2**: wedging  
**Technical**: half an hour passed  
**Idioms**: set him free |
| **Sneakery**                 | 15-16        | **Tier 2**: sneakery |
| **Expensive, disguise, protested, good sport** | 17-18       | **Tier 2**: expensive, disguised, protested  
**Idioms**: good sport |
| **Managed, furious**         | 20-21        | **Homonyms**: manage  
**Tier 2**: furious |
| **Sighed (review)**          | 25-26        | **Tier 2**: sighed |
| **Clamping, swell**          | 27-28        | **Homonym**: swell  
**Tier 2**: clamping |
| **Toasts**                   | 29-30        | **Homonym**: toasts |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
<th>Reason for Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What are examples of <strong>correct speech</strong>?</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>1. We will list examples of <strong>correct speech</strong> in regards to this book. We will connect this term to the vocabulary term <strong>politeness</strong>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. Where is California?  
3. What is the purpose of brown envelopes?  
4. What does the author mean by **the box on the corner**? | 7-8          | 2. Students may not know where California is geographically. A map will be presented in order to find this state and figure out its distance from Virginia. |
<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I will show students a brown envelope and we will discuss its uses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td><em>The box on the corner</em> is an expression that some students may not be familiar with. We will discuss exactly what box the author is referring to.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>What does <em>this end up</em> mean?</td>
<td>9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Students will discuss what it means by <em>this end up</em> in regards to mail. We will connect this term to the vocabulary terms <em>airmail</em> and <em>valuable</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Raise your hand if you have flown a kite. Turn to a partner and share what happened when you did. (If not enough students have flown a kite, a few of them will share their experiences.) What did Arthur turn Stanley into?</td>
<td>11-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Students may not have experiences with flying a kite, so it is important that students are aware of this activity in order to best understand the book. Connecting past knowledge to what is happening in the book will help students with comprehension.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Why is Flat Stanley wearing a bandana and cowboy hat? Have you ever worn a bandana or cowboy hat? If so, why? If you have worn either of these, give me a thumbs up. Turn to a partner and share why you wore these things. (If not enough students have worn them, a few of them will share their experiences.)</td>
<td>17-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Students need to understand that these terms describe clothing that Stanley is wearing in the book. Different cultures will give students different experiences with clothing attire.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Why do we use bicycle pumps? What do you</td>
<td>25-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Students will understand the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>think will happen when Arthur uses the bicycle pump on Stanley? Why do you think this? Turn to a partner and share your prediction.</td>
<td>function of a bicycle pump in order to predict what will happen.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I

Brainstormed Activities

Read Aloud: 3/9/15-3/10/15
Model and Discussion: 3/11/15

I can take pictures of my Flat Stanley…
-eating different foods with my family.
-wearing clothes that represent me.
-participating in a tradition of my family like a holiday or birthday.
-with my family.
-with my friends.
-with something that represents me like a picture.
-with something that represents my culture like a flag.
Appendix J

Teacher Sample of Project

Name: Ms. Griffith

My Flat Stanley is representing

Wales and Virginia

University of Mary Washington
From Wales to Virginia

By: Ms. Griffith

My Flat Stanley represents my cultures from Wales and Virginia. My past ancestors were from Wales, but most of my family was born in Virginia. My Flat Stanley represents several cultural aspects from Virginia. First, cats and dogs are common pets in Virginia. Like many Virginians, I own two cats. Next, my Flat Stanley is holding Virginia’s flag. Third, Metro is a common form of transportation for people in Virginia. I have used the Metro many times in my life. Last, I am wearing a shirt from the University of Mary Washington. I am a student at this school, and it is also a school in Virginia.

Along with Virginia’s culture, my Flat Stanley also is showing aspects of Wale’s culture. First, my Flat Stanley is holding the flag of Wales. Last, rugby is a very popular sport in Wales. A Wales rugby ball is included with my Flat Stanley.

My Flat Stanley included cultural aspects from both Wales and Virginia. Both cultures are very important to me, and this is why they are reflected in my Flat Stanley.
Flat Stanley Contest Winners - BOYS

Third Grade 1st - Canada
Third Grade 2nd - USA
Third Grade 3rd - Norway

Fourth Grade 1st - Mexico
Fourth Grade 2nd - Belgium
Fourth Grade 3rd - USA

Fifth Grade 1st - Canada
Fifth Grade 2nd - Mexico
Fifth Grade 3rd - Italy
Flat Stanley Contest Winners - BOYS

Kinder 1\(^{st}\) - Australia
Kinder 2\(^{nd}\) - Ireland
Kinder 3\(^{rd}\) - Germany
First Grade 1\(^{st}\) - Germany
First Grade 2\(^{nd}\) - USA
First Grade 3\(^{rd}\) - Columbia
Second Grade 1\(^{st}\) - Canada
Second Grade 2\(^{nd}\) - Scotland
Second Grade 3\(^{rd}\) - Ireland
Appendix K

Rubric for Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I made eye contact with my audience. I spoke loudly.</td>
<td>I sometimes made eye contact with my audience. My audience could not hear me very well.</td>
<td>I did not make eye contact with my audience. My audience could not hear me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written Report</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My report has been revised and edited and has no grammatical mistakes.</td>
<td>My report was somewhat revised and edited and has a few grammatical mistakes.</td>
<td>My report was not revised and edited and has a lot of mistakes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pictures</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All of my pictures show Flat Stanley involved in my culture.</td>
<td>Some of my pictures show Flat Stanley involved in my culture.</td>
<td>None of my pictures show Flat Stanley involved in my culture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My oral presentation and written report included many aspects of my culture.</td>
<td>My oral presentation and written report included a few aspects of my culture.</td>
<td>My oral presentation and written report included no aspects of my culture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix L

Students’ Photos

My Flat Stanley is representing

Ghana and Massachusetts

Daryl
My Flat Stanley is representing

Mexico and V’sing

Jerry
My Flat Stanley is representing

El Salvador and Virginia

This is Me!

Timothy
MY whole family is from El Salvador. Last year, I went to El Salvador. I got to learn a lot about El Salvador. We lived near different types of animals. A lot of people have cows and horses. We usually use horses for transportation. Sometimes when you go to leave the cows at a farm, there are snakes there so you need to bring a machete for protection. You can also ride horses there. You can even ride the back of a truck! There are so many beautiful beaches there. There are little closets where you can put your clothes which is near the pool. You can buy different ocean animal teeth and a snow cone. There are a lot of dogs, pigs, and cats walking without owners. People usually kick them out for food. We sometimes hunt and eat lizards. We use a Salvadorian slingshot, we also eat Purusas. In a part of El Salvador, there is a big volcano. One time, it started to erupt.

Here in Virginia, I usually just play with my little sister or go to my cousin’s house. On weekends, we usually have cookouts. We invite some family to come and eat. Then we play inside or outside. Then our dad’s start playing my Xbox. This is where I am from.

Timothy
My Flat Stanley is representing Bolivia and VA.

William
My Flat Stanley is representing Mexico

Kayla
My Flat Stanley is representing Mexico, Virginia.

People like to walk.

They ride cars.

Taco and pizza.

Church.

Jenna
In Mexico you could eat tacos with different things on top.

You could eat quesadillas and you could put chicken is side of the quesadilla.

Jenna
Appendix M

Ideas, Observations, and Insights

3/11/15 11:45-12:20PM

• Daryl: active participant; sometimes staring off
• Jerry: raises hand for every question; wants to make connections
• Jenna: raises hand at times; gets the wrong answer sometimes and becomes flustered; sometimes has a hard time expressing thoughts; needs more wait time and prompting
• May need to give ELLs more wait time
  o They seem to have trouble expressing their ideas using English
• Revolutionary War: can compare to other iconic battles or wars in other countries?
  o Other countries fighting for freedom?

3/13/15 2:30-3:00PM

• William: raised hand frequently; did not always have the right answer (if not, was prompted); became distracted at times during interactive notes; great partner work
• Low participation from entire class (Friday?)
• George Washington: can we compare this iconic leader to other leaders in different countries?
  o From students’ native countries? More representative of their culture?
• Kayla: had trouble with subject today; unsure of answers and nervous to respond; actively engaged in interactive notes and group work

3/17/15 1:30-2:00PM

• Timothy: engaged; raises hand off and on; productive during partner work
• William: raises hand off and on; sometimes has a hard time expressing thoughts; needs more wait time
• New Nation: documents, government, etc
  o Any similarities between our government and governments in other countries
  o Great connections made between school (e.g., rules in classroom) to subject (e.g., Constitution)

3/19/15 11:45-12:20PM
• Watched Virginia Trekkers today: great visual and virtual field trip component
• All seven participants were actively engaged in video and discussion before, during, and after video
• ELLs: great way to really make the subject come alive for students (may not have been exposed to pictures or actual artifacts)

3/20/15 2:30-3:00PM
• Silly sentences help students remember
  o Example: James Madison took MAD notes.
• Review of documents and authors thus far
• All seven participants were actively participating when called one
  o Timothy, Jerry, Jenna, and Susan raised hand the most voluntarily
• Can we translate any important parts (e.g., right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness) into students’ native language?
  o Liberty-libertad?

3/24/15 11:45-12:20PM
• Connect settlers’ migration to the West to immigration to the United States
• Kayla: very quiet; needs more wait time; actively taking notes and engaged during lesson

• Susan: embarrassed when gets the answer wrong; raises hand frequently; needs more prompting and wait time

3/25/15 11:45-12:20PM

• Jenna: raises hand more frequently now and thinks through answer thoroughly before giving answer; more confident in self
  
  o Practice during I/E times, discussions about confidence during one-on-one time

• Jerry: raises hand frequently (usually the first one in the air); sometimes goes off topic; actively takes notes

• Timothy: more participation in class; leader during group work

• Susan: continues to raise hand frequently; thinks about answer before responding
Appendix N

Pre- and Post-Student Conference Questions

From “The Impact of Collaborative Reasoning as a Form of Critical Literacy on ELL Engagement: A Qualitative Analysis Research Study” by Laura A. Gomez

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question:</th>
<th>Designed to find:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) How do you feel about school?</td>
<td>Personal characteristics: attitudes about school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) What is your favorite thing about school?</td>
<td>Personal characteristics: interests at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) How often do you use your native language?</td>
<td>External and family characteristics: language use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) How do you feel when you use your native language?</td>
<td>Personal characteristics: attitudes toward L1 in general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) How do you feel about using your native language with your teachers and classmates?</td>
<td>Personal characteristics: attitudes toward L1 at school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix O

Pre- and Post-Student Survey

1) How do you feel about school?
   a. Happy
   b. Sad
   c. Angry
   d. Excited
   e. Do not know

   Why do you feel this way?

2) What is your favorite academic subject?
   a. Math
   b. Science
   c. Language arts
   d. Social studies
   e. Do not know

   Why is it your favorite subject?

3) I wish my native language was included in the classroom…
   a. More
   b. Less
   c. Do not know

   Why did you choose this answer?
4) What is your least favorite academic subject?

   a. Science
   b. Social studies
   c. Language arts
   d. Math

   Why is it your least favorite subject?
Appendix P

Parent Survey: Student Attitudes (English)

1) Does your child like school?
   a. Yes
   b. No

2) Does your child use his or her native language at home?
   a. Yes
   b. No

3) What is your child’s favorite subject?

4) Does your child like school? Why or why not?
Appendix Q

Parent Survey: Student Attitudes (Spanish)

Encuesta para padres: Actitud del alumno

1) ¿A su hijo/a le gusta el colegio?
   a. Sí
   b. No

2) ¿Su hijo/a utiliza su idioma materno en casa?
   a. Sí
   b. No

3) ¿Cuál es la asignatura preferida de su hijo/a?

4) ¿A su hijo/a le gusta el colegio? ¿Por qué le gusta o por qué no le gusta?
Appendix R

Pre- and Post-Student Five-Point Attitude Scale

Key: 5=strongly agree; 4=agree; 3=no opinion; 2=disagree; 1=strongly disagree

1) School is fun: 5…4…3…2…1

2) My parents help me with my school work: 5…4…3…2…1

3) School is boring: 5…4…3…2…1

4) I feel embarrassed using my native language at school: 5…4…3…2…1

5) I like my teacher and classmates: 5…4…3…2…1

6) I feel comfortable using my native language in class: 5…4…3…2…1

7) I wish I could use my native language more in class: 5…4…3…2…1

8) I would rather go to the doctor or dentist than go to school: 5…4…3…2…1

9) School is just a place where I get in trouble: 5…4…3…2…1

10) I do not feel like my culture is included in class: 5…4…3…2…1

11) I will never use what I learn in school: 5…4…3…2…1

12) My native language is very important to me: 5…4…3…2…1

13) I do not like my classmates and teacher: 5…4…3…2…1

14) School will prepare me for the future: 5…4…3…2…1
Appendix S

Parent Survey: Translations (English)

1) Do you feel satisfied with the amount of school paperwork that is sent home translated into your native language?
   a. Yes
   b. No

Why or why not?

2) Which forms of paperwork do you wish were translated?
   a. Report cards
   b. School newsletters
   c. Homework
   d. Other _______________________
   e. None-I am satisfied with the amount that is translated.

3) What is your language preference?
   a. English
   b. Spanish
   c. Other _______________________

4) Name one way the school can better communicate with parents.

5) How do you feel about school documents being translated? Do they have any benefits to you as parents?
Appendix T

Parent Survey: Translations (Spanish)

Encuesta para padres: Traducciones

1) ¿Está usted satisfecho con la cantidad de información del colegio que se le envía a casa traducida a su idioma materno?
   a. Sí
   b. No

2) ¿Qué documentos querría que se tradujeran?
   a. Calificaciones
   b. Hojas informativas del colegio
   c. Deberes
   d. Otros ________________________
   e. Ninguno, estoy satisfecho con la información traducida.

3) ¿Qué idioma prefiere?
   a. Inglés
   b. Español
   c. Otro ________________________

4) Indique de qué manera podría el colegio comunicarse mejor con los padres.

5) ¿Qué le parece la información del colegio que se traduce? ¿Les beneficia en algo como padres?
References


