IT IS NOT IF, BUT WHEN: ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEADERSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE UPCOMING DEMAND FOR EXPANDED DL PROGRAMS AND THEIR ARTICULATION

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ABSTRACT

Within a policy climate that is permissive to Dual Language (DL) programs in California and within the social context of the ongoing gentrification of those programs, this case study explored the leadership and organizational structures required to expand DL programs beyond the elementary years. We asked: (1) What organizational arrangements may favor educational success in expanded K-12 pathways? (2) What leadership moves promote the development of cohesion and coherence within and across DL programs? Data collection included interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations with administrators, teachers, parents and students across all 8 DL schools in a large urban school district in California. The primary organizational issues that impacted the program's success were a lack of articulation, a problematic DL middle school experience, weak relational trust, and an absence of professional learning and collaboration opportunities. In anticipation of an increased DL program demand, recommendations based on social justice and programmatic coherence are offered and discussed.

Keywords: *Dual language education, K-12 Dual Language program organization, secondary Dual Language, leadership, program coherence*

Introduction: Grounding Equitable Multilingual Aspirations on Experience

Proposition 58's passage in California in 2016 marked a new era of opportunity for hitherto restricted primary language educational programs. Until that moment, Proposition 227 had established English as the sole means of instruction and imposed accessibility obstacles on bilingual education, particularly for linguistically-minoritized populations. The combination of that "language as a problem" (Ruiz, 1984) policy with the stringent accountability policies heralded by No Child Left Behind Act (2002) resulted in a forceful reduction of the number of bilingual programs and a push for their limitation to the lower elementary grades (Crawford, 2007). The effects of this restrictive ethos soon spread to other states in the nation, seemingly striking a widespread sentiment of nationalism (Ulanoff, 2014).

Proposition 58's reversal and repudiation of California's English-only restrictions created the legislative and regulatory conditions for the propagation of increasingly popular Dual Language (DL) programs (California Department of Education, 2018). However, the U.S. public educational system has historically struggled with the educational needs of language minorities, under the premise that English was the target language for the development of Americanness (Flores & Rosa, 2019). The issues have been structural (e.g., resources, curricular design, educator, or leadership capacity) but rooted in the nation's political and ideological antinomies. In this context, DL programs presented a bypass to the conflicting ground of bilingual education in the U.S. (the "b-word" see Muñoz-Muñoz, Poza, & Briceño, in press): a pathway to equity for linguistically minoritized populations while conveying additional capitals to the entire population. Accordingly, this demand for--and gentrification of--Dual Language (DL) programs is partly a result of interest convergence between white and Latinx families around DL education (Morales & Maravilla, 2019; Valdez, Delavan, & Freire, 2016). In light of this state of affairs and interests, considerable pressure may be exerted in the foreseeable future to expand the number and scope of DL programs.

As DL programs and districts move to expand from traditional elementary settings to secondary settings, they will likely aim to resemble and learn from the arrangements and experiences from the still limited DL K-12 programs in the country ("mimetic isomorphism," see DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Since the title offers what the authors conceive as a felicitous prediction, this article aims to respond to the following questions: What organizational arrangements may favor educational success in expanded K-12 pathways? What leadership moves promote the development of cohesion and coherence within and across DL programs? This article undertakes these questions in the empirical context of a case study on the DL programs carried out at San Pedro Unified School District (SPUSD), an urban district in California with a K-12 DL pathway. The article will assess the knowledge in the extant literature, provide an analysis of context-specific findings, and elaborate on implications that researchers and practitioners are invited to transfer to their settings. In doing so, this case study and its implications contribute conceptually to establish connections between the general organizational literature and the burgeoning field of DL education in the U.S. Based on this article´s predictions, expanding DL programs (both self-contained or across sites) and their communities, may find the conclusions transferable to their contexts.

Literature review: Organizational Leadership Meets Dual Language Programs
Dual Language Programs: Scope and Organization

The wave of English-only legislation in the 1990s did not prevent the field from engaging in research about the organization of bilingual and DL programs. During this period, leadership-

focused articles can be found that already emphasize the importance of vision clarity, informed leadership, and meaningful stakeholder engagement for DL education to deliver "its promise" (Aguirre-Baeza, 2001; Howard & Christian, 2002; Kirk Senesac, 2002; Montecel & Danini, 2002; Palmer, 2007). However, the conflicted ideological space and the programs available contributed to reinforcing an elementary education lens on bilingual education research. For example, amidst the staunch English-only accountability imposed by the NCLB+Prop227 binomial, Gold (2006) published his "Successful Bilingual Schools" report with a strong emphasis on capturing leadership and organizational characteristics behind its six cases studies. A daring example of bilingual education defense in this context, it capitalized on the academic benefits of bilingualism with examples of schools predominantly following a K-3 bilingual transitional model. This, at times self-imposed, limitation on the scope of bilingual program research lingers to this day.

Similarly, the equity and social justice imbalance of dual language education remains unresolved. Heralding the gravity of this contention, Valdés (1997) issued a prescient cautionary note about the equity implications in DL programs' organization. One consequence of the greater numbers of white students and families in programs that have traditionally served primarily minoritized students is a need for structures and leadership practices to maintain the social justice perspective for which DL programs are known (Henderson et al., 2018; Palmer et al., 2019). However, there is little research on secondary DL programs, and little is known about how to implement well-articulated, coherent DL programs past the elementary years (Terry et al., 2017).

Narrowing down the focus to recent secondary bilingual program literature, de Jong and Bearse (2014) showed traditional middle school structures made it difficult to enact equal status between the two languages and maintain bilingual spaces and perspectives. With no curricular crosslinguistic connections and no collaboration, an outcome was a pervasive monolingual perspective in the DL program. Another consequence of a lack of coherence was the added burden DL teachers have of translating and adapting curricular materials, which is not compensated and can lead to burn out and turnover (Amanti, 2019).

Currently, DL programs have limited guidance. The Center for Applied Linguistics' *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education* (Howard et al., 2018) provides three core goals for DL programs: (1) bilingualism and biliteracy, (2) academic achievement, and (3) sociocultural competence. Palmer and colleagues (2019) suggested a fourth goal, arguing that critical consciousness "enables educators and other members of school communities to develop political and ideological clarity about the purpose of schooling, interrogate the status quo, disrupt deficit thinking about minoritized groups, and consider alternative explanations for student underachievement" (p. 123). Nowadays, practitioners count on the Guiding Principles as the target (i.e., the "what"). Still, there is an urgent need for research on organizational and leadership processes to expand the traditional DL grade scope (i.e., the "how") in the present educational and sociological moment. Next, we will discuss how the literature on leadership and coherence can inform the field of DL education.

Lessons from Coherence and Collaborative Leadership

Promoting a bridge between the leadership and organizational literature and DL education is one of the expected intellectual contributions in this article, particularly as it concerns the upcoming need to consider a widespread expansion of the DL programs grade span. *Coherence* (2016) by Fullan and Quinn has been seminal in analyzing the SPUSD case study and offers promise to the DL field. They define coherence as "the shared depth of understanding about the nature of the work" and "not simply alignment of alignment of goals, resources, and structures,

although that may help" (Quinn & Fullan, 2016, p. 30). This definition overlaps significantly with a much-needed articulation within DL programs. Thus, an effective realization of a DL program entails not only an intimate, communal understanding of the stakeholder´s shared educational principles, but also the added dimension of their multilingual praxis. In other words, the stakes for coherence could be said to be higher in DL since the educational fitness of this model is predicated on the concerted linguistic vision and efforts of educators across the grades and anchored in the evolving sociopolitical and sociolinguistic context of California. The interaction of the four change leadership dimensions of coherence (focusing direction, cultivating collaborative cultures, securing accountability, and deepening learning) may help focus the work of articulation at DL school sites in their way to "collective efficacy." SPUSD´s case study illuminates the challenge to attune these dimensions, as leaders and teachers share a multilingual vision and commitment but struggle to define the nature of their local collaborative culture in which learning is multidirectional and involves all agents.

Fullan and Quinn's ideas can be complemented and elevated to a higher level of systemic complexity with the work of Johnson and colleagues' (2015) *Achieving Coherence in District Improvement*. Based on their study of five school districts, this work illuminates central office and school site relations' challenges and the dynamics between centripetal and centrifugal change forces. The book addresses a critical question that rings familiar to SPUSD and other districts launching DL programs: "Where should decisions be made, in the schools or at the central office?" (p. 5). Johnson and colleagues articulate the notion of coherence beyond a single organizational construct or unit to specifically highlight the dynamic interplay between these two codependent substructures inside school districts. In the case of SPUSD, concerned with coherence among several DL programs within its organizational boundaries, considering the dialectic between central and peripheral leaders became essential to conceive the prospects of future cross-district coherence. While offering a coherence framework model of their own, the authors highlight the elusiveness of attaining productive relationships that appear balanced and inspire trust to stakeholders, which rings true from the findings in this case study. A common strand across this literature emphasizes collaborative relationships, which this article subscribes and recommends as a critical conclusion to carry forward in the quest for multilingual program coherence.

Methods

Case study methodology was employed to describe and analyze the "bounded system" (Merriam, 2009, p. 40) of San Pedro Unified School District's (SPUSD)[1] K-8 DLI program. Case studies enable researchers to develop in-depth understandings of particular systems (Yin, 2017; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995) and the methodology itself acknowledges that "reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). Since the social worlds of DL programs are intended to differ from monolingual programs, case study research is frequently used in bilingual education research (e.g., DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2020; Freeman, 2000; LaChance, 2017, 2018).

Context and Participants

This study occurred in SPUSD, a large, urban school district in California that serves over 30,000 pre-K through twelfth-grade students in 41 schools. The district houses Spanish/English DL programs in four elementary schools, one K-8 school, two middle schools, and two high schools. Forty-two percent of students receive free or reduced lunch, 53% of students are Latinx,

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[1] Pseudonym

23 percent of students are classified as English Learners (ELs), and 85% of ELs speak Spanish at home. Like many other DL programs, the district's DL schools have been experiencing gentrification recently and are struggling to get sufficient numbers of what they consider to be Spanish-speaking students (Heiman & Murakami, 2019; Heiman & Yanes, 2018; Valdez et al., 2016).

This study intentionally explored a wide range of organizational factors and perspectives in the DL programs. Participants included principals, teachers, students, instructional coaches, and family members for each of the 5 elementary and 3 middle schools. The wide range of perspectives enabled us to identify concerns across constituent groups and focus on structural issues. We were introduced to all principals and instructional coaches through SPUSD's district office. Each principal recruited students, teachers, and families from their schools to participate in this study. Notably, the findings reported in this article reflect organizational issues among educators, but due to space limitations, we do not present the wealth of information obtained about the importance of community and parental engagement in DL programs.

Data Sources and Analysis

The primary data sources were interactional data collected by means of individual interviews and focus groups and DL classroom observations (see Table 1). Interviews and focus groups were conducted following a semi-structured protocol (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) modeled after the descriptors found in the Guiding Principles for Dual Language Immersion (Howard et al., 2018). A total of 13 focus groups and seven individual interviews were conducted, totaling approximately 22 hours of recordings. In addition, district documents were analyzed and classroom visits were conducted. Instruction in all middle schools and most elementary DL classrooms was observed using a protocol based on the Guiding Principles.

Table 1. Data Sources

Population	Data collection	Duration (minutes)	Number of participants
Principals	Focus group, interviews, and surveys	55 - 75	7
Coaches	Interviews, focus group	50 - 70	3
Teachers	Three focus groups	60-90	15
Students	5 Focus groups	40 - 50	30
Families	3 Focus groups, interviews	70 - 90	15

Interview and focus group information was cross-referenced with district-provided and publicly available documents about the DL programs in SPUSD and classroom observations. Further validity of the results was reinforced by secondary sources such as data from administrator surveys and member checks with district administrators who manage DL programs.

Analysis of the data was based on pattern coding (Saldaña, 2012) and iterative parsing of the information to identify salient themes, either by repetition or relative strength of the data. A

constructivist approach was used to interpret the data and evaluate the program's organizational and leadership strengths and challenges through holistic, empirical, interpretive, and emphatic lenses (Stake, 1995). The researchers engaged in frequent interactions to verify preliminary conclusions based on the analysis and case analysis meetings (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to discuss the school sites both as individual cases and as part of the whole. Qualitative analysis software was used to keep track of emerging themes across data sources.

Analytical Presentation of Findings

This section synthesizes the study's main findings from all constituent groups as a foundation for the discussion of our proposals for next steps. The following sections represent the thematic clustering of data as it emerged from the data sources and analysis described above, upon which a critical interpretive lens has been added.

Articulation as an Issue

Participants' concordance in referencing articulation, or consistency in curriculum, pedagogy, and goals across grades, as an issue makes it particularly salient. Besides the interactional data, a lack of articulation also was evident in instructional observations. One aspect of articulation is alignment, or the intentional congruence of curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Squires, 2012). While there was a substantial level of curricular alignment among the elementary classrooms, there was a disconnect between middle school and elementary (stage-transition) and among middle school teachers (horizontal and vertical, within and across grades). For example, in one Spanish language arts class, a textbook was used to "teach" about gendered nouns and their related articles. This content, typically accomplished in a Spanish 1 course, appeared inconsistent with other DL middle school courses' expectations, including writing narratives, reading grade-level Spanish texts, and completing social studies presentations in Spanish.

Competing demands and different foci across the K-12 pathway revealed that lack of curricular alignment was symptomatic of more profound and abstract differences in pedagogical stances and ideologies. Thus, focus group discussions exposed how middle school teachers appeared to be caught in the disconnect between the elementary and high school Spanish language arts programs' goals. Elementary DL programs promote bilingualism and biliteracy for all, focusing on communicative competence. In contrast, middle school teachers and parents expressed that the Spanish AP test had a more significant focus on grammar. During focus groups, teacher discussions showed how middle school teachers' investment in promoting student performance in high school produces pedagogical friction with their concurrent desire for a more holistic approach to language pedagogy, as generally exhibited by their elementary counterparts.

With a general agreement about the need for alignment/articulation, significant differences emerged in regard as to how to accomplish it. The diverging yet potentially complementary angles towards the idea align with the constituencies of our focus groups and interviews: teachers emphasized the importance of professional connections in collaboration and coaches and administrators stressed the importance of curricular comprehensiveness. Similarly, there were differences regarding the scope of articulation, with administrators focusing on a solid K-8 bridge while middle school teachers advocated for recognition of earlier collaboration with their high school colleagues. At the time of the study, the differences in the process had led to significant dissonances, as exemplified by the following teacher:

> In the past, it was always like we want you to know very well where point A is and very well where point B is. About how you get your kids from point A to point B you can be very creative and talk to people and collaborate just as long as you get them from point A to point B, and that's always the way that has been for the past six years and all of a sudden, they are being very rigid, "no I just want you to do with this way because is what we [administrators] want, we want uniformity."

While the previous quote illustrates the dynamics between agency versus structure, context-adaptability versus fidelity of implementation, top-down versus bottom-up reform, there were signs of hope that may make this district a fertile ground for reform. When asked about the types of PD they wanted for their teachers, administrator and coach responses included ideas such as "building teacher leadership from within," "supporting teachers to do vertical articulation, K through 12," and "looking at assessment, but empowering teachers to be part of those decisions." Principals wanted the district to support intra-district collaboration that resulted in "having our DL teachers feel valued."

The remaining challenge is critically reassessing organizational culture, establishing a clear understanding of agency, and redefining inherited professional identity preconceptions. Thus, across different constituencies, elementary teachers were described as "rule followers" who "go with the flow" and "follow the procedures," while middle school teachers apparently needed ongoing reminders about procedures. While elementary teachers were construed as more amenable and aligned with top-down initiatives ("doing what the district tells them to do such as working with students in small groups or individually"), some middle school teachers in the study self-described as less likely to be "rule followers" and were more inclined toward grassroots pedagogical arrangements.

The Bilingual Middle School Experience
The multiple layers of data indicate that the locus of tension is focalized in middle school. While middle school organization and scheduling can generally be complex, DL requires the added layers of having particular courses in Spanish, taught by authorized bilingual teachers, and students having an additional class each day: Spanish Language Arts. In SPUSD, educators at all levels were concerned both by the more technical, inward-looking process of developing DL articulation and by the overall quality of bilingual education for the students, which for the purposes of analysis was termed the "bilingual middle school experience." Such experience was particularly affected and intertwined with structural issues such as the students being spread across three DL demographically distinct sites in SPUSD, course access and scheduling challenges, and teacher recruitment and retention.

Scheduling and middle school teacher retention were closely linked in the current DL structure, as DL middle school teachers stated having as many as five different courses to prepare for daily due to the limited numbers of DL students at each school (i.e., DL student body spread across sites). A higher preparation load and additional "bilingual tasks" compared to English monolingual teachers led to feelings of resentment of unequal workload (Amanti, 2019). As a result of this and perceived leadership issues, the K-8 DL school had lost all of its four middle school bilingual teachers the prior June, and all middle school principals expressed concern about bilingual teacher retention.

Middle school principals expressed concern about how scheduling issues impacted DL students. The reduced enrollment numbers of middle school students at each of the schools resulted

in the need for strict cohorting. In the current model, Spanish language arts was the DL students' elective. Consequently, student, teacher, and principal interviews emphasized resentment toward not having access to other important electives such as science (if they choose to take band or drama) or English reading intervention courses for students who needed them. Exacerbating this instructional equity issue, one principal expressed that there were some very low English reading levels in DL students, but parents tended to opt out of English reading intervention in favor of other electives. DL middle school students agreed when one student forcefully demanded, "DL *needs* to stop counting as an elective!" In trying to provide an equal number of classes and equivalent student schedules in the DL and English-only strands, equity for DL students was lost.

The small numbers of DL students at each school also resulted in middle school students having the same teachers for multiple subjects and across multiple years of the middle school experience. While this could be construed as a benefit when the teachers are experienced and effective, the focus groups exposed that it generated deep frustration and programmatic instability for parents, students, teachers, and administrators in instances when the district had to resort to under-prepared long-term substitutes. Regardless, middle school students expressed concern about the limited number of bilingual teachers and instructional diversity, which led to one student vehemently stating: "We didn't have the time for the really organic, life-changing lessons that kids really should be having."

While all stakeholders laid out similar expectations, the students themselves conveyed the more poignant and straightforward argument for additional student leadership opportunities and ownership of their schooling experience. They expressed frustration with some of the current teaching practices and asked for more relevant instruction, connections to what is going on in the world today, and options in how they show mastery of standards. Currently, they said, "no hay opciones" ("there aren't any options").

Scope and Sequence as a Solution?

Having identified structural and curricular issues in the DL experience and articulation as a core organizational issue at SPUSD's DL programs, coaches and teachers grappled with a scope and sequence guide as a solution. With administrators' support, the coaches envisioned a scope and sequence tool as the logical next step to guarantee the basic degree of curricular homogeneity and comprehensiveness in schools and programs across the district. In order to obtain these desired outcomes, they had worked with some teachers in a small committee. However, some teachers objected to this approach as implemented, which was perceived to be suppressing their agency to develop curriculum and ignoring prior collaboration efforts. The teacher perspective that follows shows one side of this argument:

> "We all came for a meeting in argumentation which is our unit two […] Okay I will go and try to make a plan so that it makes sense and a new teacher can follow so working with a fellow teacher we did that […], we came back to the second meeting, and they had scrapped our work, they gave us back the form that we have been working on the computer, they had, I think the word is populated, they claimed that, "you know guys the work that you have been doing is really good, but now we moved you to week three, and we also added in some standards that you forgot." Well, we didn't forget.

As discussed in the prior section, we have two classic opposing views of reform in the DL program: top-down change towards articulation actively pursued by the administration versus bottom-up collaborative processes advocated by teachers. Their disparate theories of action, either

implicit or explicit, set them apart and have implications for their unfolding relational trust. Critical to the micropolitics of this reform effort (Ball, 1987), the scope and sequence as implemented did not have traction among experienced teachers. The legitimacy of these teachers' experience could be empirically attested and rested in their seniority, established local professional network, and the support from the parent constituency group. This dilemmatic scenario opposes organic teacher collaboration, which lacked mid- and long-term direction, versus a managerial homogenization of practices that feels irrelevant to the professional identity of practitioners and their lived context.

Relational trust

One precondition for any meaningful and lasting change in organizations is relational trust (Coleman, 2012). SPUSD's "managed instruction," or centralized, rigid, curricular scope and sequence, was interpreted by most teachers in the focus groups as a lack of trust from the district's central office. Adding to this perception, one site administrator stated: "We're a *very* managed instruction district," and it feels "stifling." From a reform process perspective, a different principal thought that the shift to managed instruction had reached its climax and that the pendulum would soon start swinging back: "When we swing back, we're ready for more shared leadership." Other principals directly connected managed instruction to a lack of shared leadership. One said, "Right now, shared leadership is limited [...] Lately, my DL teachers have been concerned that decisions are being made without them being a part of it, and they haven't felt valued." Middle school leadership had reasons to be concerned about a lack of shared leadership since they mediated between central office mandates and the teachers. In this context, one teacher portrayed her reaction to the circumstances surrounding a planning event involving teachers from several school sites:

> And this year, we're going to start coordinating just with elementary school, forget your relationship with high school. That's not literally what they said, but they sent an email and they explicitly told us that the high school teachers were uninvited to our planning sessions in June, last June even though, from the beginning, that had always been there. They explicitly said: "do not come," and they told them we are no longer going to score together, so it is just very confusing. And upsetting.

This testimony is explicitly a subjective interpretation of events, but it objectively represents a lack of trust as to the motivations, framing, and communication procedures in the centralized push for a K-8 articulation. Reflecting the other side of the story, this study encountered multiple instances in which leaders empathetically tried to account for frayed relationships and recognized the historical and structural pressures. Thus, one coach stated:

> I think what has happened if we look at the history of our district... It is amazing that they saw the vision of the K-12 model, [but what happened] is that it grew too fast and because it grew too fast it has left holes, and how we can bring that feeling that you see at Holy Oak [pseudonym for the K-8 DL-only school in the district] to other sites where it is split. And when it's split […] It is left with the feeling of us and them.

The theory of action behind the controversial scope and sequence initiative assumes the district needed to involve teachers outside Holy Oak School meaningfully. Still, they seemed to have failed to reach important constituents that would have given the effort legitimacy, traction, and buy-in among the broader professional community. In several instances, the teachers, who

logically are the ultimate implementers of curriculum, expressed distrust to engage in collegial endeavors. Further entrenched in perceptions of professional identities, they characterized the scope and sequence as a process led "by an elementary education mindset" that seems not to validate their upper-grade teachers' expertise. Lack of relational trust thwarted potential remedies to lack of collegiality, thus constructing a vicious cycle. At one point in the focus groups, the researchers probed the teachers about the possibility of establishing cycles of peer-observation as a self-directed route toward articulation. Still, objections were raised based on fears derived from previous observation experiences characterized as "gotcha observations."

Teacher Collaboration and Professional Development

Teachers and principals across the district identified the need for ongoing, DL-specific professional learning opportunities. Generally, principals with a background as bilingual teachers felt comfortable in their knowledge of DL but wanted to learn about the most recent research. In the interviews and focus groups, they specifically wanted opportunities to talk to other administrators (both inside and outside the district) and discuss concrete scenarios and approaches to DL organization.

Administrators declared that the teacher PD they organized for their teachers was the same for DL and monolingual English teachers. The one noteworthy exception was the full K-8 DL school where all teachers implement DL instruction. Administrators stated that they were unsure about the content and frequency of additional PD that the teachers may be getting at the central office and elsewhere. Such uncertainty got in the way of the previously expressed desires for teachers' developed agency and professional growth.

Teachers also expressed a desire for more PD and collaboration, within their school sites, across SPUSD DL programs, and external PD from conferences or visiting other DL programs. As one educator stated:

> I wish that we had more access to professional development that addressed issues of TWBI because I think what we provide at the site is kind of geared toward everyone, it isn't necessarily differentiated … I wish there was more access to outside things. We have to ask permission to do anything that isn't straight from our district.

Additionally, there appeared to be less opportunity for coaching and collaboration among DL teachers. DL middle school teachers tended to feel somewhat isolated at their schools, a feeling echoed in the coaches' empathetic concern that DL teachers were being coached less frequently than other teachers. One coach noted, "I am a district coach. I go to almost all school sites and I can count on one hand how many times I have coached a TWBI teacher, and there is only two of us." Clearly, more support for the district's DL teachers would be helpful as SPUSD attempts to make significant curricular changes.

Implications: From Findings to DL Action

This article started by urging the field to consider the multilevel leadership and organizational implications of a critical transformation that is coming: the increased demand for full K-12 DL programs. The case study of SPUSD illustrates and helps formulate the complex leadership challenges that school districts in California and the rest of the country are already undergoing or will soon undergo. However, in educational institutions, problems and solutions are loosely-coupled (Weick, 1976), implying that intended changes are not felt simultaneously or uniformly across the organization, but rather in a sequential, adaptive way. Accordingly, we urge the leaders across the country inspired by their community needs and multilingual assets to

consider the contextual dynamics of their district in the current day and time, continually fine-tuning to the needs of the contexts and the humans that partake in the DL endeavor.

In proposing empirically-based implications toward **cohesive, well-articulated DL programs**, districts need to consider multilevel agency, collaborative and distributed leadership, concurrency and synergy of initiatives, and, fundamentally, an equity lens. An initiative like SPUSD's scope and sequence may serve districts in their objective to unify and guarantee services across programs. However, ensuring that the initiative is framed to recognize the professional community's assets is critical to avoid reductionist perceptions of the project as merely a top-down process. Based on SPUSD's struggle to bring the scope and sequence to fruition, it seems fit to recommend prioritizing the engagement of pivotal teachers so as to endow legitimacy to the resulting outcomes. Below we list five suggestions that districts can take to align district goals with administrator and teacher implementation and student needs.

The scope and sequence project at SPUSD took on the status of a symbolic battleground between the teachers and district administrators. It, therefore, had to be addressed with urgency if it was to remain viable. In this respect, the researchers first recommend **de-emphasizing uniformity by creating institutionalized "breathing spaces" or purposeful, compartmentalized segments in the scope and sequence where teachers can exercise choice**. Such spaces capitalize on localized teacher expertise and open the way to collaboration and change, which in any case, the teachers were fundamentally opposing. In this regard, leadership moves that recognize and validate existing experiences (e.g., setting up collaboration with high school teachers in planning sessions, asset-oriented reframing of the messaging and content of new initiatives or structures) is of paramount importance.

Second, the inequitable bilingual middle school experience issues resulted from the lack of critical mass of DL students and teachers at the middle schools. Accordingly, leaders and districts in similar situations (either by a demographic imbalance or because programs are in an initial phase of implementation) may benefit from considering **concentrating students in a single DL middle school**. While de Jong and Bearse (2014) identified ways traditional middle school structures could interfere with DL programs, many of the issues related to middle school in this study, such as scheduling and teacher retention issues, have the potential to be solved by having a critical mass of DL students at a school. Such action would logically require strategic sequential implementation, community engagement, and effective messaging of the rationale. De Jong and Bearse's (2014) cautions should be augmented with considerations for equitable choices for program geographical location and their impact on minoritized students.

Third, **intentional and asset-based framing of any scope and sequence initiative is an important step towards developing or restoring relational trust among educators**. Additionally, the creation and maintenance of distributive leadership structures such as site Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) can endow the programs with continuity and historical perspective, besides embodying a distributive leadership model that dignifies the role of all stakeholders (Juracka, 2018). Purposeful design and systemic implementation across the district DL schools may improve communication, create the conditions to avert a crisis, and disseminate the implementation of a consensus-based scope and sequence.

One way to address the issue of relational trust is to create learning communities. Accordingly, as a fourth implication, **DL-specific professional development** is needed for programs to prosper not only to incorporate new pedagogical practices but to increase DL educators' sense of appreciation and relational trust. Recommended in *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education* (Howard et al., 2018), DL-specific professional development has been shown

to improve both teachers' performance and student outcomes (Buysse et al., 2010). Shared professional development also increases "horizontal relationships," which diminish the perception that reform is essentially top-down or vertical. In SPUSD, a point of connection across educators was the desire to extend their DL-focused learning to improve their students' DL experiences, which presents an opportunity to stimulate the educators' identity as lifelong learners, prompt their engagement in "change," and honor their commitment to their district and community.

Last, **developing a collegial, dynamic professional culture may help retain the existing bilingual teachers and attract recruits to the enticing project of a solid K-12 DL pathway.** SPUSD's DL program and other districts could also create a "grow your own" teacher pipeline in collaboration with local universities, as modeled by "teacher residency" programs or by state-incentivized programs such as the Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program (BTPDP) in California[2]. The bilingual teacher shortage was in all interviewees' minds and focus group participants, who conveyed a range of emotions from anxiety to urgency about the need to maintain the integrity and quality of their DL programs.

Conclusion: The Road Ahead

A comprehensive K-12 DL program is elusive in most districts due to structural issues such as curricular alignment and confusion regarding what DL should look like beyond the elementary years. A lack of a clear vision that addresses the program's purpose and goals and explicitly defines the social justice framework (or not) also contributes to confusion regarding how the DL program should be enacted. The constituents in this study had similar concerns around K-8 curricular alignment: the level of managed instruction versus teacher agency, the middle school experience, and the relational trust that was damaged in the process of attempting to develop a scope and sequence. We propose specific solutions to the issues identified and argue that an aligned vision that is well understood by all constituents--site and district administrators, coaches, teachers, students, and families--is needed to develop a cohesive and coherent DL program. While we focus on the K-8 in this case study, PK-12 structures are needed-urgently-as the field races to find solutions that work for DL program success during this window in which the sociological demand and policy climate are in place for success.

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