

**TEACHERS AND STAFF'S PERCEPTIONS
OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ANTIRACIST
AND DUAL LANGUAGE BILINGUAL PROGRAM
AT AN URBAN SCHOOL**

by

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ABSTRACT
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Under the supervision of Dr Rene Antrop- González and Dr Raji Swaminathan

This study was conducted in an urban school in the Midwestern region of the United States that implements a two-way bilingual (English- Spanish) and an antiracist program. The focus of the study was to learn about the teachers and staff's perceptions of these two programs. While the study revealed challenges in both programs that can weaken their implementation; most teachers and staff at the school shared a common understanding about antiracist principles. However The school's dual language program was subtractive to minority students (Valenzuela, 1999) since the quality of the Spanish language and culture offered at the school was limited. Highlighting the majority language over the minority language and depriving minority students from developing their language and culture, resulted in the school's perpetration of linguistic racism, contradicting the antiracist values they aim to promote through their antiracist program.

These findings based on the school's teachers and staff insight can help analyze and improve both programs in the school, as well as antiracist and dual language programs in general.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to whom I dedicate all my creations, those who I admire the most, those who have filled with light all the dark corners of my life; my sons Relmu Manque and Antv Ñankv Antinao Soza, also to who rescued me from my childhood and who showed me that the struggle for social justice was necessary; my brother and sister, Nelson and Carolina Soza. And to those who came after us and have created a path for themselves; my bothers Miguel and Alonso and for my nieces and nephews who are ahead of us, as it should be.

I dedicate the long hours I worked, while he cooked, cleaned, droved and loved, to my husband Cristian Munoz. I also dedicate it to the friends that put up with me and believed I could do this when I did not; Sue Pezanoski-Browne, Anne Mansfield, Dale Wise, Dinorah Marquez, Naomi Lara, Fernando Cañizaris, Ed Weinstein and Marci Valdivieso and, to Natalia Lagos just for being there, like she always has.

I dedicate this work to all the students that have taught me to be a teacher and the teachers that allowed me to be myself in their classrooms. Also to all of those that knew what they knew because they never went to school teaching me more than I ever learned in the formal education system and to those that fight around the world in fierce protests for quality education for all. This work is also dedicated to *Aprendamos*' families and students.

Finally, I dedicate this work to myself, as proof that I can challenge life and its bad omens.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Introduction

This study was conducted in a bilingual urban school in the Midwestern region of the United States during 2010 and 2011. *Aprendamos* (school pseudonym) implemented a two-way bilingual program (English- Spanish) and an antiracist program. The focus of the study was to learn about the teachers and the staff's perceptions of these two programs that were implemented at their school.

Aprendamos

Aprendamos is a bilingual school located in an urban area of the Midwest United States. The school's bilingual program is a two-way bilingual dual language program, partially emergent, in which the students are taught literacy in both their native and second language, either English or Spanish. All other subjects, such as math, science and social studies are taught in Spanish.

Aprendamos has been deemed by nationally recognized political organizations that focus on education as a school involved in issues of social justice. Some of the staff at this school are founding editors of a well-established prestigious national magazine and publishers of critical educational articles, some articles of critical pedagogy, antiracist education, gender issues and issues of social justice that are distributed to the staff periodically. *Aprendamos* was one of the first schools to implement a dual language bilingual program in the school district of which the school is a part of. Since there are not many schools with a program like this in the Midwest, the school's

programs have frequently been the subject for studies and the site for many visitors.

Aprendamos' populations involve mainly Latino/a students, some that speak and some that do not speak Spanish. There is also a large population of African Americans, some White and a few Asian students. The teachers and staff are mostly White, some Latino/a, that speak or do not speak Spanish, and a few Staff that are African American.

Research Problem, Purpose, and Significance of the Study

While much research suggests (Banks 2002, Lewis 2007, Kailin 2005, Antrop-Gonzalez 2001, Hartlep 2010, Krauss 1999, Sleeter 2005, Lynn 2004) that US based schools engage in acts of subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999) by marginalizing and discriminating against students' cultural, racist and linguistic background. Very little has been written on the perceptions of teachers and staff, at schools with antiracist programs, with regard to challenging racism and honoring students' first language and culture. As a researcher, I am trying to understand the implementation of an antiracist and a dual language program at an urban school, both of which strive to engage in acts of additive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999), as seen through the eyes of the participants, who interpret their own knowledge of reality (Walsham, 1993) which is reflected in the larger society. Hence, this study will document and make sense of how teachers and staff at an urban school such as *Aprendamos* perceive the implementation of an antiracist and a dual language bilingual program. It can provide the great insight from the teachers and staff's that have had experiences in this type of school and in relation to this type of programs.

Antiracist education programs are identified by some scholars (Carr and Klassen, 1996, Gorski, 2007, Kailin 2005, Solarzano, 2001) as an action-oriented, educational strategy to seek institutional and systemic change, focused on issues of racism and discrimination. A program like this could challenge the daily acts of racism that occur in the school by developing in the students, teachers and staff a critical view of racism and racist beliefs, in order to contribute to the construction of a fair society. The curriculum of an antiracist program should include the examination of inequalities in the present and throughout history, such as: slavery, colonialism, immigration policies and laws, unfair relations of the hierarchical structures of power, negative attitudes and assumptions about race, racial stereotypes, institutional racism and discrimination (Kailin, 2005, Solarzano, 2001). An antiracist education program that examines all of the above is an opportunity to challenge racism and question the system of domination. The damaging consequences that racism has had and continues to have on people of color (Omi and Winant, 1994), calls for a deep change in the racist structures of power.

Two-way dual language programs (English- Spanish) that have been implemented in the United States have been shown to have positive results when implemented in schools with a population of middle class students. Students seem to learn a second language, developing bilingual skills (Christian, 1994, Krauss 1999). These types of programs have also been implemented in urban schools with high rates of poverty and the results have not been as good (Krauss, 1999). This study at *Aprendamos* can add to the knowledge that those studies have provided, uncovering the implementation of a dual language program in an urban setting, through the eyes of the teachers, unlike the series of studies that have concentrated in the perceptions and

experiences of the students (Baker, 1996, Barlett & Garcia, 2011, Christian, 1994, Krauss, 1999, Macarthur, Wright and Taylor, 2000)

. Dual Language provides the opportunity for all children to develop bilingual skills, but this type of programs can be particularly meaningful for students whose language is considered and treated as a minority language, becoming victims of *linguistic outgroup racism*, which can be described as the linguistic attitude, idea or practice that leaves minority students without the opportunities given to Whites (Karn & Ronkin, 1999). This type of program cannot only challenge this form of racism, but help students maintain and develop their native language or the native language of their families.

My study's purpose is to analyze the perceptions of the teachers and staff at *Aprendamos* in relation to their antiracist and dual language program. I decided to conduct this study because I think that antiracist programs are important, since they provide education with a counter-hegemonic strategy for dealing with oppression based on race, class, gender and sexuality, which can become a pedagogical discourse and academic practice (Carr and Klassen, 1996). In addition dual language programs are also important because for native speakers of a minority language, the benefits of receiving instruction in this bilingual model have proven to be greater than the ones that study in an all English program (August and Shanahan 2008, Cummins, 1989, 2009, Crashev, 1991). Both programs present an opportunity to challenge oppression related to race, ethnicity and language. I am interested in the perceptions of the teachers and the staff because they can bring us insight into the implementation of those programs (Seidman, 2006) since they participated directly in their implementation. I believe that

these programs bring social justice to education. Having this insight through the eyes of the teachers and staff could be useful for the implementation of other antiracist and dual language program in other settings, besides *Aprendamos*, and possibly for the improvement of those programs at this particular school.

Two research studies have been conducted in a setting with the same characteristics as *Aprendamos*; Krauss (1999) and Meshulan (2010). Krauss conducted a study focused on English dominant students that came from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Krauss' mixed methods study used interviews and class observations as well as correlation tests to understand the correlation between ethnicity, socioeconomic background and graduation rates. Results showed that the percentage of African American students that graduated from this program was much lower than the percentage that entered the program in K5. It also showed that the needs of African American and low income students were not being met at the school, because they were not learning the second language (Spanish) in order to move on with the dual language curriculum taught at the school. Krauss suggested that this program should be reexamined to find out the reasons why it was not meeting these students' needs and make the necessary changes. Meshulan's (2010) case study used interviews, class observations and document analysis to deepen the discussion about the potential and effectiveness of a strong educational program that focuses on democratic education, seeking to teach a curriculum using critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970, 1989, Giroux, 1987, 1993). He concluded that schools with educational structures that present themselves as an alternative to the models promoted by traditional schools, where a hierarchical structure is predominant among teachers and between teachers and students, have the

potential “in theory” to fulfill this commitment, but that “in practice” they might be held back by the reality and circumstances that each school and community faces (Meshulan 2010).

Both of these studies shared different perspectives about schools similar to *Aprendamos*; in the areas of social justice curriculum and the two-way bilingual program, one focusing on African American students and the others on how a the school’s program based on values of democracy presents itself in paper or/and in reality, but neither of these studies referred to the perceptions of teachers and staff at a school such as *Aprendamos*. This study can contribute to the existing literature by documenting and making sense of the perceptions of teachers and staff who work at *Aprendamos*, regarding their experiences and perspectives of antiracist and dual language programs by including the context of antiracist and bilingual schools as a relevant point of view and meaning.

A Personal Journey; Why I Chose this Research at *Aprendamos*

I am a daughter of the mix, the mix of generations that have lost the trace of their blood. I am the descendent of the Spanish conquerors and the German, perhaps, and the unknown history of absent fathers. Maybe my bones could determine my lineage one day, but for now, I do not know what I am and, I suppose it depends on the corner from which I stand. In my native country of Chile, I am identified by others as White, even though I was not brought up as part of the higher socio-economic class status group as most Whites Chileans are. My light skin, my blue eyes and my red hair give me privilege, *White privilege*(Lipsitz,1999) I never asked for and wished that I did

not have it because it enables me to be the recipient of unearned assets, that other people do not have. In the United States I look White too, but my strong accent and grammatical mistakes when speaking English reveal that I am a “foreigner” (still a privileged one, more so if I keep my mouth shut).

Trying to know who I was, or at least trying to be something, I looked in different places. I joined the Chilean student movement (organized mostly by high school students) and participated in all the ways that were available to my 11 year old self. I was not a regular sixth grader, so a sense of belonging was challenging. At age 14, I moved to Chicago, and enrolled in high school. I finished high school in three years, attending four schools. Perhaps as many Latino/as feel in high school (Antrop-González, 2003; Barlett & Garcia, 2011; Valenzuela 1999) I had never felt so out of place as I did there. I reached out to marginalized groups thinking I could find someone like me there; I volunteered at a Latino/a community center, participated in an African club, pro-choice groups, human rights groups and finally a group of mainly Mexican indigenous people running a Native American church. I did not exactly belong there either, but because they also had belonging issues due to their trans-cultural experience (Soza, 2005), they had no problem welcoming me. After that, I worked on a project organized by Native Americans that included North, Central and South America; the mission of this organization was to visit Indigenous communities, country by country, starting from the farthest corners of both hemispheres. The project culminated in a meeting with indigenous leaders in the Pyramids of Teotihuacán in Mexico on October 12 of 1992, as part of the multiple commemorations for the 500 years of indigenous resistance and survival. At age 17, after visiting indigenous communities and spending

time with them, I wished more than ever that I could belong to something or somewhere. I still did not.

I started my own family with a member of a Mapuche tribe (Chilean Natives). By the age of 23, I had two biracial sons; they could at least trace the history of half of their roots; the other half would remain a mystery. I studied Mapudungun (the Mapuche language) as well as the skills of a *retrafe* (Mapuche metal smith), feeling the strong responsibility of not letting my children's culture be forgotten. My classmates always made remarks about me not belonging there (I probably reminded them of the oppressor); they used to say that I would never learn (even though I accelerated a year in our studies) because I was not Mapuche. They were right, I was not.

Through my adolescence, I was trying to reconcile different parts of my life and different self-labels and abstractions (Harter, 1999), as many adolescents do. This reconciliation was not easy, because for many reasons, the basic requisites for self-construction (Epstein, 1991) were not there: 1- the need to maintain a favorable sense of one's attributes, 2- maximize pleasure and minimize pain, 3- develop and maintain a coherent picture of the world, 4- maintain relatedness with others. Time gave me the opportunity to resolve my internal conflicts and reestablish the social construction of *myself* (Martell, 2005). With time, I also observed what Harter calls the *sense of personal continuity* (Harter, 1990), which meant establishing a sense within myself of being the same over time, once the different parts of me began to come together.

I began studying to be a teacher with a government scholarship (otherwise that would have never happened) when my oldest son entered first grade. In addition to my university studies, I continued to study indigenous languages (I added a class of

Aymara). I intuitively knew the political, economic and social system was being reproduced, marginalizing certain groups, because I could identify social and political inequality, but I did not know how. School partially provided me with theoretical support to explain the observations I had made throughout my life. I had seen the struggle of oppressed groups in many different ways, lived and observed discrimination, in the form of classism, racism and sexism (Bohman, 2005). I had learned about Marxism at a very young age; I knew that society was based on a hierarchical structure that maintained stratification of society in which a dominant class, or oppressor is in continuous conflict with a working class or oppressed (Weber, 1969), but could not apply that understanding to education.

As an undergraduate student in Santiago, I studied Critical Theory, a Marxist inspired social and political philosophy and movement (Antonio, 1982; Bohman, 2005; Kellner, 2001), developed in the Frankfurt School, that claims that the working class has been historically dominated and oppressed by the hierarchical structures of power, established by the dominant class (Giroux, 1997; Geuss, 1981; McCarthy, 2004). These social structures were not set up coincidentally, but rather through a systematic effort to maintain the status quo (Horkheimer 1993). These principles confirmed the ideas I had about social reproduction and, helped me to understand that school was a major part of that (Freire, 1970, 1989; Giroux, 1987, 1993) As Apple (1971, 1977, 1982) suggests with his hidden curriculum theory; every measure, every part of the curricula, every design, every rule and every conscious or unconscious gesture of the teachers was a political act. I believed firmly (and still do) that the structures of power needed to change, and that schools changing as an isolated part of society would not be enough to

bring social justice. Critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970, 1989, Giroux, 1987, 1993) gave me the hope that education could be an instrument of liberation and social change.

I understood about structural violence as a set of discriminatory laws and asymmetric structures of power (DuNann & Leighton, 1999) and, symbolic violence as the “unnoticed” domination that everyday social attitudes and relations maintain over time (Foucault, 1979). I was aware of the damage caused to the Indigenous people I was working with on the island of Chiloe, and the damage done to all of those communities I visited. Indigenous groups have as have other racial or ethnic minorities suffered the devastating effects of discrimination and oppression (Levine, Patak, 2004). But it was not until I got to UW- Milwaukee that I found theories that addressed the oppression done through race in a very extensive way. My first classes were “*The Psychology of Race and Ethnicity*” and “*Antiracist Education*”.

Examining racism and its effects led me to understand that it is important to promote a positive idea of *the self* (Harter, 1990), particularly among people of color. Anyon (2005) purports that negative ideas of the self can be paralyzing and prevent people from developing their full potential and interrupt their social participation because despair and negative valuations of the self can immobilize people from participating in social or political movements (Anyon, 2005). As a teacher, it was helpful to confirm that school can play a strong role in bringing back that positive sense of racial identity; by addressing racism and the importance of people of color in social movements or in society in general, helping the students to take pride in their racial and ethnic background, as antiracist education suggests (Kailin, 2005).

As a mixed person, I had always been trying to find out who I was and what or where I belonged. I discovered that I belong to many different spheres, including the arts, the world of teachers, students, my community, and so on - not all of them so well defined. I have accepted that I am the daughter of the mix, the daughter of the unknown. In all areas of my life, particularly as a teacher, I am committed to working so that others do not forget who they are, where they come from, what they have inherited - their language, the language of their ancestors, their multiple identities and their sense of belonging. I see the importance of programs such as dual-language bilingual programs and antiracist education because I identify them as tools to strengthen the identity of minority groups and to challenge the racist structures of power that have weakened those identities in the first place.

This study at *Aprendamos* has given me the opportunity to learn more about the theories that explain issues of race and racism and about how educational programs could challenge them. Anyon (2005) suggests that education should be used to counteract the idea that one's identity is of little value – this is particularly true for racial minorities that are exposed to constant negative remarks. This study takes a close look into a school that implements two programs that could be considered as channels to counteract the damaging perceptions that racism has created. The study I have conducted at *Aprendamos* responds to my personal, professional and political interests and gives me the chance to provide perspectives through the eyes of teachers and staff that can inform us about two programs that can be identified as educational alternatives to the marginalization of minority groups.

How I Found My Way to *Aprendamos*

After moving to Milwaukee and reuniting temporarily with parts of my family, personal struggles made it necessary for me to stay. I desperately needed a job. My sister suggested that I talk to the principal of the school that her kids attended. She said that they were very progressive there, very political - that some of the teachers wrote for a national educational magazine and that they treated their teachers very well. I also needed a school for my youngest son and, a small, progressive, bilingual school sounded perfect for him.

I walked to the corner and asked to speak with the principal. She met with me and I told her that my son needed a school and that I needed a job. She asked about my ideas about education. I talked about Critical pedagogy (Freire, 1989; Giroux, 1997), and that sounded good to her. There were no openings, but she said, “I’ll see what I can do”. My son began second grade that fall and I took the position that opened in first grade when that teacher became the school’s librarian on November of the same year, 2005.

Conclusion

My own personal search led me to find my way to education. My experiences and those of my children and the people I found along my path led me to value individual and collective cultural identities and practices and reject all forms of discrimination that could prevent those identities from existing. And additionally, to reject the way in which the groups that are not part of the mainstream confront injustice

and discrimination at all levels. I identify education as a vehicle to challenge society's racist structures of power. Programs such as antiracist education and dual language programs have the potential to promote social change and be a concrete response to racial, ethnic and linguistic oppression. The study I have conducted at *Aprendamos* responds to my personal, professional and political interests and gives me the chance to provide perspectives through the eyes of teachers and staff that can inform us about two programs that can be identified as educational alternatives to the marginalization of minority groups.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework and Relevant Literature Review

Introduction

This dissertation focuses on how teachers and staff at an urban school perceive the implementation of an antiracist and dual language bilingual program at their school. This chapter sets the stage of this study by primarily examining: The literature regarding *bilingual education* with particular emphasis on *dual language immersion* and literature regarding *antiracist education*, essential to this study. Studies examining *additive* and *subtractive* bilingualism and schooling (Valenzuela, 1999) have been presented as a way to evaluate the different programs, in relation to what their implementation achieved and meant to the students, the community and society.

Critical pedagogy has been included as a framework to this study because of the way this pedagogy invites one to challenge the status quo through the values of democracy and social justice. It provides support to analyze relationships of power in social and educational contexts offering insight about the role of teachers, who are the main focus of this study. The analysis presented of antiracist education and dual language bilingual programs, show close relations to the values that critical pedagogy promotes.

The Concept of Race

The concept of race will be understood in this study as a social construction, which is used to differentiate ethnic groups (Omi, 2000). This construction represents categories that societies “invent, manipulate or retire when convenient” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2011, pg 8). The concept of race was developed in Europe and brought to the North American continent (Cox, 1948). The concept became a valid justification for racial oppression (Kailin, 2005). Delgado & Stefancic state that “race is a social construction, not a biological reality...we convey to one another that certain people are less intelligent, reliable, hardworking, virtuous and American than others” (2011, p.21). This validation of stereotypes that discredits ethnic and racial minorities was reinforced by the development of multiple theories that were promoted and established in U.S. society (Seldom, 1999).

The existence of race was intended to be proven scientifically but no scientific evidence can be found of it (Augostinos, LeCouteur and McCann-Mortimer, 2004). Races are not physical-biological categories, but social and cultural designations (King, 1981) that have become real in our society, carrying with them a series of stereotypes and racial inequalities. The models of study developed to prove the existence of racial categories and their different values, though inaccurate, were widely embraced, paving the way for scientific claims about White superiority (Ojala, 2009).

Linnaeus (1735) established a classification system that divided the human species in four major groups, according to their physical, mental and social traits (Fluehr-Lobban, 2006). These four groups were: *Homo Americanus*, characterized by

red skin, Black hair, smooth and thick, broad nose, low hairiness, obstinacy, joy and love for freedom; Homo Europaeus, characterized by fair skin, light hair abundant, ingenuity; Homo Asiaticus, characterized by sallow skin, dark hair on, being sad, serious, severe and avaricious; Homo Afer: characterized by Black skin, Black hair, laziness, and immorality (Fluehr-Lobban, 2006). The characteristics associated with each group were passed down from generation to generation (Selden, 1999).

The stereotypes that these racial classifications promote have been rooted in the United States for centuries and persist today, as “racism continues to blight the lives of people of color” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2011, p.11). The effects of the validation of certain “racial” groups over others are manifested in different social problems that affect racial and ethnic minorities. Delgado & Stefancic (2011) explain that these problems include infant death rates among minorities are nearly double than those of Whites, school dropout rates among Blacks and Latino/as worse than those in practically any industrialized country, and the gap between Whites and non-Whites in income, assets, educational attainment” (p.47).

These social problems are often explained by saying that Blacks have disadvantages in relation to Whites, because they lack the willpower to change that situation, and that they rely too much on welfare lacking the motivation to change their way of life and come out of the system of poverty in which they live (Bonilla-Silva, Forman, & Williams, 2003).

The concept of race and the initial classifications that were established by Linnaeus in 1735 are still popularly known as the four races, related to four skin colors. However, Bonilla-Silva (2004) suggests that there is a new racial category - the biracial

children that have been born out of the unions between biracial couples that began to be more common after segregation was absolved. The idea of the existence of a third race is not only related to being biracial, but with the economic status, that an ethnic or racial group can have; for example, he establishes that Asian Americans match the socio-economic status of Whites, surpassing them in areas as education situation, and therefore becoming “honorary” Whites. An important condition to become an honorary White involves the process of assimilation to the White culture. Nevertheless, assimilation is not enough. The possibility of becoming an honorary White still relates to color, because light skin Latinas/os, with European background could be in this group. In the case of Western European immigrants or White Latino/as they could become Whites (Bonilla-Silva 2004), as other groups such as Jews have become White over generations of assimilation and association with economic power (Brodin,1998).

No amount of intellectual debate around issues of race can evade or deny the powerful social and political meaning that race has and has had in our society (López, 2007), particularly for racial minorities who have suffered the devastating effects of discrimination and oppression (Levine & Patak, 2004). The myth of race and everything that it brings, has created race relations based on the asymmetric relation of power that has been created between Whites and racial and ethnic minorities.

Race Relations

The construction of the concept of race and the beginning of slavery established race relations between Whites as the oppressor and people of color as the oppressed (Omi, 2000). The theories and approach to race, the attitudes of superiority and

inferiority have turned into an “institutionalized system of discrimination, of exclusion, and oppression based on color or race” (Daniels, 2002, p.1). Cox (1948) explains that race relations were marked by a relation of power or by the assigning of different value to groups of different origin or what they consider racial difference. These power relations have created hierarchical race relations in which one racial group (White) is on the top and all other groups (Afro-descendants, Asian, Latinas/os and Natives) are at the bottom (Wright, 1998). These categories might be expanded in accordance with today’s demographics and will influence the changes that can be identified in new racial relations. As Bonilla-Silva (2004) suggests, biracial groups that might fit in multiple categories could be part of the ethnic groups that have changed their racial status, such as Jews, who are now identified as White (Brodkin,1998) or as Asian Americans or White Latinas/os might be if they enter the categories of “honorary Whites” (Bonilla-Silva, 2004).

Omi and Winant (1994) suggest that race relations in the twentieth century are influenced by the theory of Robert Park from the University of Chicago who designed a *race relations cycle* that assumed there were four stages in the relation and contact among people or groups of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. These stages are: contact, conflict, accommodation and assimilation (Omi and Winant, 1994). This cycle naturalizes the conflict between different groups but does not explain a system of racial oppression of one group by another.

Racism

Oppression based on racial classifications can be identified as racism. Analysis of this form of oppression is key to this study since it analyzes two programs that challenge racial oppression. This oppression through history has been and still is manifested in different ways. As Delgado and Stefancic (2011) state, “Racism is much more than a collection of unfavorable impressions of members of other groups...racism is the means by which society allocates privilege and status. Racial hierarchies determine who gets tangible benefits, including the best jobs, the best schools” (p.21).

The analyses of racism have taken different directions over the years and have been adjusted to fit different social and political realities that include all the ways in which racism interacts with other forms of oppression and its social and personal dimensions.

Bonilla Silva (1997) identifies different definitions of racism. He borrows from Berghe (1967) who defines racism as a set of beliefs that understand the difference between humans as the presence or the absence of certain socially relevant abilities or characteristics, and from Schaefer (1990) who defines racism as a doctrine of racial supremacy. Both of these views, according to Bonilla Silva (1997), reduce the study of racism to social psychology, which has created a view of racism as being a matter of individuals that can develop prejudice and act on it. An individualist view of racism takes away the social analysis that needs to be made considering that racism has been institutionalized. Institutionalized racism is defined as a mixture of prejudice and power from a racial dominant group that has been institutionalized in all levels of society (Moore, 1970). According to Kennedy (2009), “Racism is part of American life and that

the strategy for those who wish to fight for racial social justice is to unmask and expose racism in all its various forms” (Kennedy, 2009). The social aspect of racism, as much as its roots in the economic and political system have historically privileged Whites and still does.

White Privilege

The United States has been founded and sustained by racist policies and racism; the United States would not be what it is without racism (Bell, 1992), considering that the country’s economic capital and the development of it has been the result of the hard work and cheap labor of minority groups. The proliferation of racist ideologies has made the access to wealth and power be differentiated (Spears, 1999).

This differentiated access to wealth and power has privileged Whites. This access is part of what Lipsitz (1998) defines as *White privilege*, which is a system of benefits and opportunities that White people can take advantage of just by being White (Lipsitz, 1998). Mills (2003) borrows from Harris (1993) to state that “Whiteness has been a stolen property, a collective agreement to share the illicit booty of racially structured exploitation and its proceeds” (Mills, 2003, p. 145)

Even though not all Whites have all the same privileges associated to *Whiteness* and the social status that this ideology brings (Lipsitz, 1998), such as access to education and wealth, they still maintain the constructed idea of superiority. This construction of White superiority does not only have to do with the color of people’s skin, but with a social status. The constructed idea of superiority of Whites has been built through the White power structure (Lipsitz, 1998).

White privilege has created a sense of entitlement in White people that Feagin (2011) defines as the *White racial frame* which operates from the perspective of a White-dominated society, dismissing the experiences of racial groups of color (Feagin, 2010). This White racial frame contains not only a racist ideology, founded in prejudice, but also visual images, sets of emotions, beliefs, terms and language, interpretations and inclinations to discriminate (Otto & Perkins, 2011). Feagin (2010) suggests that this frame is embedded in American minds and institutions, and that it has been an important part of the legitimization of racism.

This framework can be subconscious as well as conscious and its language and structures help normalize and make sense of the way in which society is set up, making Whites feel deserving of their privilege (Otto & Perkins, 2011), without questioning the fact that this privilege might give others disadvantages. The White framework has become, according to Feagin (2010), so institutionalized that the media corroborates what Whites think; that their high morals would not allow them to be racist, independently of communities of people of color establishing that they are discriminated, denying the impact that racism has had in society.

Lipsitz (1998) points out the danger of the idea of White superiority, considering the material consequences, such as deaths, exploitation, genocide and other forms of violence, together with the “symbolic meaning” that the idea of White superiority brings to people of color. Racism is perpetuated and promoted through many channels. People of color have not only been discriminated against in the name of their race or ethnicity, but also the cultural aspects and the language that go with them.

Linguistic Racism

Language is an important target of racism. Linguistic racism is a form of racism that one of the main programs that concern this study, a dual-language bilingual program, aims to challenge. In its strong relation to knowledge, language is a tool that has been used to maintain power and privilege among the elite, marginalizing those who do not have mastery of the mainstream's language and its discourses (Chapman, 2010). The way in which languages are categorized and also placed within a hierarchical scale, in the same way race is, is identified as *linguistic racism or linguistic deprivation* (Yahya, 2011).

Language rights were validated by UNESCO 1996 through the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, but not all countries have adopted this declaration, one that has not being the United States (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1998). The Declaration proclaims that equal linguistic rights should not be attached to the political status of the territory this language is in, or through the distinctions through which they might be categorized, such as official, unofficial, or by the number of people that speak the language (UNESCO 1996).

The Declaration establishes that its purpose is to correct "linguistic imbalances so to ensure respect to all languages and establish the principles of a fair global linguistic peace and equality, as a main factor of social life" (UNESCO, 1996). It also raises cultural diversity to the level of "the common heritage of humanity" identifying the right for groups to maintain their cultural identity as a human right. Language reflects, transmits and promotes cultural and moral values of society. Prejudice and discrimination against the language of any minority mean

prejudice and discrimination against the culture and moral values (Chiodi & Bahomondes, 2001) of the marginalized.

Skutnabb-Kangas and McCarty (2008) define linguistic human rights (LHRs) as individual and collective language rights that every individual has because of being human, in order to be able to fulfill her/his basic needs and live a dignified life. According to Skutnabb-Kangas (1998), a universal declaration of linguistic human rights should guarantee individuals their right to 1. identify themselves with a mother tongue(s) and for this identification to be validated; 2. learn and develop their mother tongue(s) which means they have the right to have their language as a medium to be educated and; 3. use this language in public and be validated in official instances and places. In the case of this mother tongue not being the country's official language, the individuals should have the right to become bilingual or trilingual.

In theory, LHRs are so inalienable that no state or person may violate them, taking into account that these rights extend not only to the communities historically being established in a territory, but also to the rights of linguistic groups and individuals living outside their home community, so it applies to immigrant communities around the world (Skutnabb-Kangas & McCarty, 2008).

According to Skutnabb-Kangas (1998) one step toward the recognition of linguistic rights is to acknowledge that there are minority groups in the United States. When referring to minorities, (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994) refer to:

A group which is smaller in numbers than the rest of the population of a state, whose members have ethnical, religious or linguistic features different from those of the rest of the population, and are guided, if only implicitly, by the will to safeguard their culture,

traditions, religion or language. Any group coming within the terms of this definition shall be treated as an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority. To belong to a minority shall be a matter of individual choice (p.107).

Skutnabb-Kangas (1998) states that this distinction protects minorities by providing them the rights that they are entitled to by their conditions as minorities, and the protection that international laws provide for them. Being recognized as minorities is the only protection they have in international human rights law. Changing the name of minorities just denies reality, because even if they are referred to as something different (not as minorities) they would still be minorities in a society in which they are not part of the mainstream. They are exposed to vulnerability, because their rights as minorities would not be protected. In the case of Linguistic minorities, identifying them as such, gives them the possibility to have their language receive special protection.

Language represents a culture in a profound way. Limiting, purposely marginalizing and exterminating a language equals marginalizing and exterminating a culture (Chiodi & Bahomondes, 2001). Linguistic rights are so important that the consequences of not respecting them, with the risk of having a language be lost have been named by the United Nations as linguistic genocide (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1998). The United Nations definition of linguistic genocide is “prohibiting the use of the language of the group in daily intercourse or in schools, or the printing and circulation of publications in the language of the group” (Article 3, 1).

Depriving minorities from their language makes them also culturally deprived. According to Skutnabb-Kangas (1998), many linguistic and cultural minorities are

forced into a different cultural group when deprived of their right to their own. This practice represents a subtractive practice, because minorities are “forcibly transferred to another group when they have been forced to accept the language and culture of the dominant group” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1998, P.8). A reverse of this subtracting practice would be to allow minority children to “learn another language in addition to their own” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1998, P.8).

There have been attempts to create alternatives to the deprivation of language in education in different scenarios and levels in the same way that there have been attempts to create types of education that challenge other forms of racism. Different approaches to bilingual education, intercultural education and antiracist education have been developed and implemented in The United States, Latin America and Europe.

Antiracist Education

Recognizing that educational institutions play a critical role in reproducing or analyzing, critiquing and transforming our understandings of how we have come to view and construct our world (Giroux, 1985), makes it easy to understand that schools are a place where racism and stereotypes against minority groups are promoted. If it is, then the promotion of consciousness against racism should be promoted at school (Kailin, 2005), because this reproduction prevents schools from providing an education based on justice and equity. Antiracist education aims to develop strategies that challenge racial, ethnic and linguistic oppression through educational practices and philosophies in all participants of the school’s community. *Aprendamos* was founded

with the intention of implementing an antiracist program. The antiracist program implemented there has been in place for over three decades. Understanding what antiracist education is, is crucial for this study.

The purpose of antiracist education is to develop the abilities, knowledge, and skills needed within the students, teachers, staff and community members to contribute to the construction of a fair society. According to Kailin (2005), this purpose would be achieved if antiracist education included the examination of inequalities throughout history, such as slavery, colonialism, immigration policies and laws, unfair relations of the hierarchical structures of power, negative attitudes and assumptions about race, racial stereotypes, institutional racism and discrimination. If antiracist education does not question systems of domination and is implemented in a simplistic way that reduces its principles to the incorporation of diverse materials and perspectives to be more inclusive of traditionally underrepresented groups, it might get stuck in the exposition of cultural and racial diversity as folklore and it will not address the asymmetrical race relations promoted by the structures of power (Gorski, 2007). Antiracist education should directly address issues of power and privilege in society as well as in school (Solarzano, 2001).

When the issues of race, race relations, racism and inequality seem to be absent from a school project or educational model, diversity remains reduced to its folk aspects addressing multiculturalism as mere "cultural tourism" (Escribano, 2010). Nevertheless, Pollock (2006) warns that to have a preconceived idea about when it is appropriate to talk about race or not might be harmful, because it might not suit real children in real world situations. Instead, the decisions of whether to bring out issues of

race should be made according to the situation that is faced on a daily basis. To be able to identify these instances, teachers need to work on identifying what she calls “everyday racism.” Pollock (2006) claims that “everyday antiracism in education thus requires that educators make strategic, self-conscious everyday moves to counter these ingrained (racist) tendencies” (Pollock, 2006, p.2).

For Pollock (2006), everyday antiracism in education involves first rejecting false notions of human difference and understanding that racial categories are not a genetic reality. Second, she states that it is critical to acknowledge lived experiences related to the racial divide. Third, educators must understand and build upon diversity in order to bring justice to racialized groups that have suffered from negative classifications. Fourth, educators must be prepared to challenge inequality among racialized groups, observing the opportunities and privilege that some groups have and the arbitrary disadvantages that other groups have. Pollock suggests that these four steps might seem contradictory. She states:

Sometimes being colorblind is quite harmful to young people; *sometimes* a “celebration” of diversity can be reductive and harmful; *sometimes* “recognizing” one aspect of an identity (a student’s or one’s own) detracts from a sense of common humanity (Pollock, 2006, p. 3).

However, if applied according to a specific context and the particular situation of a person, the steps can be successful. For example, she states that being “Black” has both negative connotations, such as the limited opportunities and the historical oppression that are suffered, and positive connotations, such as the bonding that the Black community has done over their oppression, ~~for~~ because of which it is important to

wonder when it is helpful, and when is it harmful, to talk about racial patterns in schools (Pollock, 2005).

Weinberg (1992) borrows from W.E.B. Du bois when he refers to the limitations of educational reform, marked by the fact that teachers have not been educated about race and racism. On the contrary, they have been taught to follow the mainstream's racist discourse, which makes them reproduce racist beliefs in their classrooms and schools. To challenge mainstream's racist discourses can be harder for White teachers, than it is for teachers of color, because their identities and social construction have been very different than that of people of color (Howard, 2006). It is hard to foresee White teachers being able to relate to their students of color, considering the limited interactions that White people have had with people of color (Wise 2001, 2002). Howard (2006) borrows from Nieto (1999) and Sleeter (1994) by saying that too often White teachers are part of multicultural settings, which are realities that are not consistent with their own realities, socialization patterns, views of the world, life experiences and the development of racial identity. In other words, they are expected to be what they have not learned to be (Howard, 2006).

The difficulties that White teachers encounter in an antiracist context can be explained by many causes. Wise (2001) attempts to explain it by pointing out that White people have lived in denial of racism, being ignorant for the most part about the reality that minorities live, partly because of the isolation minorities have lived in, but also because they have been taught to believe what other White people have to say, rather than what people of color say, even if it is about their own lives:

One can only expect this degree of isolation to lead to a skewed perception of what other people experience. After all, if one doesn't know many Blacks, or personally witness discrimination, it is all the more likely that one will find the notion of widespread mistreatment hard to digest. Especially when one has been socialized to give more credence to what members of one's own group say, than what the racial "other" tells us is true" (p.2).

To understand the difficulties that White teachers have to teach ethnic and racial minority children explained previously seems harder when the numbers of children of color at public schools does not correlate with the numbers of teachers of color. The wide majority of teachers in the United States are White (Ladson-Billings, 2008). Howard (2006) questions the relationship that exists between students of color and their failure at school:

In present public education we are faced with three simultaneous statistical realities (1) our teacher force is mostly White, (2) our student population is highly diverse and growing in children of color, and (3) children of color are precisely the students most at risk of being caught on the negative end of the achieving gap" (Howard, 2006, p. 4).

If the numerical disparities are part of the cause of the achievement gap that exists among racial and ethnic minorities and White students, there are several things that can be done including increasing the numbers of teachers of color and the preparation of White teachers for multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural settings. This preparation must consist of a transformation that is based on the need to create inner change in the self as much as in society. As a White educator, Howard (2006) establishes:

If we as White educators are not deeply moved and transformed, there is little hope that anything else will significantly shift....we cannot help our students overcome the negative repercussions of past and present racial dominance if we have not unraveled the remnants of dominance that still lingers in our minds, hearts and habits.” (Howard, 2006, p.6).

Bedard (2000) discusses the need for a decolonizing process for White teachers in order to implement an antiracist praxis into the existing educational system. Without this process, the author feels that White teachers cannot teach within an antiracist framework. This is because racism and institutional racism are so embedded in what it means to be White that there is a need to decolonize White people and create a White identity based on equity and social responsibility (Bedard, 2000).

Wise (2002), without disagreeing with the need for White teachers to challenge their place in society, explains the benefits of being White teaching about racism and antiracism (Wise, 2002). He maintains that for Whites it is hard to hear about issues of race and racism when a person of color is talking, because most of the time, White people feel uncomfortable, guilty or as if they were being blamed. Besides, it is much easier to hear such stories, coming from a person one can relate to; “We are much more comfortable listening to one of our own describe the reality of others” (Wise, 2002, p. 26). Understanding Wise’s perspective, it could be said that everyone in society can take part in the change of that society. Wise (2002) says that most of the recommended books about issues of race that are part of students’ lists at school do not encourage Whites to think about what it means to be White in a White dominant society or to think

that race has anything to do with them. Even more so when talking about racial oppression:

These unfortunate tendencies to think of race as merely a Black or brown issue is at the root of much of the White condition today: one that renders us largely impotent when discussing issues of race, identity, and our place in a White supremacist system. Indeed, it is our inability to conceive of race as fundamentally about *us* that makes it impossible for most Whites to even comprehend that the system is, in fact, White supremacist. We think of White supremacy as something preached by the Klan, skinheads, or neo-Nazis, rather than as the default position of American institutions since day one (Wise, 2002, p. 27).

It is important to keep in mind that lived experiences related to race and racism can evoke many different and often, intense, emotions; still, issues of race and racism need to be discussed, analyzed and understood. As Howard (2006) suggests, it is important to move away from the guilt and the blame, but it is imperative to take responsibility for whatever it is that, we, as collectives, are accountable for and to individually commit to combating inequalities.

Howard (2006) borrows Malcom X's words for his book's title, *We Can't Teach What We Do not Know*, words to which Malcolm so astutely adds "...and we can't guide where we will not go..." Teaching antiracist education demands a commitment to creating internal and social change. The need for analysis and the negotiation of identities extends to teachers of all racial and ethnic groups. Educators, of any race, need tools for analyzing the consequences of their daily practices and behaviors because they may be uncertain of which actions are racist or antiracist (Pollock, 2006).

Escribano (2010) suggests that it is crucial to focus on a concept of race that acknowledges the power of constructing racial differences when working in antiracist political or educational work. It requires that we disassociate negative meanings from race. In this sense, rather than minimizing the concept of race, it should be problematized and disassociated from its negative meanings. Conflict stems from the institutional and social practices that create and sustain injustice and inequality towards groups and individuals based on racial classifications. Highlighting race in a discussion of critical antiracism studies is a political act (Kailin, 2005). That is, the politics of anti-racism demands that race be central in the discussion, even when there are other dimensions of oppression. At the same time, the concept of race and the implications that it carries should be evaluated in every moment (Pollack, 2006).

This study acknowledges the need for antiracist education in schools and examines the implementation of such a program from the point of view of the teachers.

Bilingual Education

Since the right to use, develop and learn in one's language has been identified as a human right (Baker, 2006), bilingual education in its diverse forms and under the characteristics of its different programs, it is identified by numerous scholars (August and Shanahan; 2008, Cummins, 1991; 2009; Harley, 1991;) to benefit minority language students, not only in terms of their self-stem, their relation with their culture, but also, academically.

Bilingual education generally refers to educational instruction that is conducted in two languages or the instruction which involves teaching academic content in two

languages; a native and secondary language. This is a simple definition that does not cover the multiple complexities that it implies and does not take into account the many variables needed to determine the type of bilingual education that suits a particular group (Livieres-Saan, 2011).

The official implementation of bilingual education in the U.S. occurred in the last century. Even though in 1923, the U.S. had enacted laws forcing "English Only" as language of instruction, the civil rights movement in the 1960s advocated for bilingual education and, under the principles of the Civil Rights Act that prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin, bilingual education, was again implemented in 1964 under the fourteenth amendment and Title VI of the Civil Bill of Rights (Baker, 2006). However, this kind of education did not receive special funding until 1968, under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

The skills that bilingual education promotes are hard to define, since the different definitions that can be found of it are very far apart. Part of the debate on these definitions is illustrated by two definitions explained by Bloomfield (1933), Ekmekci (2009), and Hughes (2011) who defined bilingualism as the ability of a person to control two languages as if he or she was a native. Diebold (1961) gives a minimal definition when he uses the term *incipient bilingualism* referring to the initial contact between two languages. These two definitions make it difficult to determine whether somebody is bilingual or not. There is much confusion between using two languages and having the abilities to speak, read or write in two languages (Baker, 2001). Definitions vary from a native control of two or more languages to the minimum

possession of communication skills in a second language or foreign language (Hornberger, 1989).

Another dimension of bilingual refers to being bicultural, which means that individuals can live or interact with two or more cultures, adapting to them, blending different aspects of these cultures (Grosjean, 1996). There seems to be a relationship between language proficiency and the familiarity of the culture related to the language; less fluent bilinguals are often less bicultural as well, in the same way that a fluent bilingual will most likely be more familiar with both cultures, depending on the way the bilinguals have acquired their languages (Kornakov, 2001, Schiffman, 2002). Bicultural elements become more important as a person develops their bilingual ability; an increasingly higher proficiency would be expected to develop into an increasing sensitivity towards the cultural aspects of the language learned (Beardsmore, 1986). Bilingual programs should, according to this relation between language and culture, provide an opportunity for students to develop both aspects.

Drawing conclusions about bilingual education based on generalizations can be risky, because they can distort the overall analysis. Understanding that there are a broad variety of programs of bilingual education that are currently implemented in different contexts, such as dual language or language immersion, calls for particular analyses and evaluations (Hakuta and Gould, 1987; Roberts, 1995). There are many types of bilingual programs; they differ from one another, sometimes in the amounts of each language used in accordance with the program model. Independently of the model, many programs share a common goal and that is to adapt non English speakers to an English speaking society and to enable them to participate in all English classrooms

(Krauss, 1999). In this process some programs more than others make an effort for students to maintain and develop their language and culture while learning a second language and make a transitions towards being bicultural. This option stands in front of a perspective that identifies language and culture as assets and that also identifies them as a representation of identity and rights, meaning that these types of programs aim to provide not only the linguistic and cultural components, but also equity.

Two-Way Bilingual/Dual Language Bilingual Education

In order to understand *Aprendamos'* philosophies and practices, the characteristics and principles of dual-language must be analyzed. This program is generally identified as a program used to help non-native English speakers develop skills in their second language while maintaining and developing skills in their first language. These type of programs have been identified as programs that not only promote benefits in relation to academic achievement of native speakers of a minority language, but also provide benefits in relation to their identity and maintaining their language and culture while transitioning into a new culture and while learning a second language (August and Shanahan 2008; Cummins, 1989, 2009; Krashen,1991). According to Valenzuela (1999), a program that provides the addition of knowledge to one's own knowledge, language to one's own language and culture to one's own culture, would be identified as an additive bilingual program, providing the students the opportunity of gaining a language and a culture, while maintaining and developing their own. The benefits that are mentioned above, are crucial for providing support and validation to students whose language has been categorized as inferior and

discriminated against.

Besides helping non-native English speakers develop skills in their second language while maintaining and developing skills in their first language, these programs have also been considered as a programs of enrichment for English speakers when they are offered the opportunity to learn a second language. Having students from a linguistic minority and a linguistic majority together in the same classroom (Roberts, 1995) should make both groups relatively “equal.” Ideally, there will be a fair exchange of languages in the classroom and students will practice and learn with their peers. In a model like this, students serve as “linguistic models” for one another (Krauss, 1999). The minority language, in this case, is used as a resource (Christian, 1994).

This program provides content area instruction and language development in two languages (Christian, 2011). In this program, bi-literacy and full bilingualism are objectives (Hakuta and Gould, 1987); bi-literacy can be acquired in two languages simultaneously or with an initial emphasis on native language (Baker, 1996). Baker (2006) suggests that students that become bilingual and bi-literate tend to reach higher academic achievement and higher self-esteem. Self-esteem might become higher, because a minority language in such programs is not seen as a disadvantage or a marginalized language. According to Christian (1994), the typical goals for two-way bilingual programs include language, academic, and affective dimensions. In a program like this, students will develop high levels of proficiency in their first language and in a second language, will perform at or above grade level in academic areas in both languages, and will demonstrate positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors.

According to Christian (1994) and based on the studies of Lindholm (1990), some criteria for a successful two way program are: (1) The input that students receive should be an “optimal language input”, which means that this should be a “comprehensible, interesting” input provided by sufficient quantity. A focus on quality language arts should also exist; (2) the target language should be used for 50 % to 90% of the time of instruction; (3) the classroom should have a balanced number of speakers from the minority and majority language, and both groups should participate equally in the activities and lessons; (4) the program should encourage positive interaction among students, providing activities such as “cooperative learning,” and (5) qualified personnel and collaboration between home and school are valued.

Christian (1994) defines qualified personnel as teachers who can understand students and instruct them in both languages fluently. The teachers of dual language classrooms should model lessons in a variety of academic subjects using different strategies and materials. They should also encourage students to use their second language; when students ask questions in their native language, the teacher should try to answer in the second language, hoping to enhance the student’s understanding and aiming to maintain the desirable percentage of the instruction given in the minority language. Cummins (1984) suggests that by receiving adequate exposure and with the right motivation to learn the second language, students will be able to learn in their own language and later transfer that knowledge to their second language, as he establishes in his concept of *Common Underlying Proficiency model* (Cummins, 1984). He also supports Christian (1994) when saying that, for this program to work, there

should be appropriate instruction, meaning instruction given from proficient language teachers.

Some two-way bilingual programs that aim towards bi-literacy have their students begin literacy instruction in their second language as early as kindergarten. Crawford (1989) cautions that premature transition to English may have adverse effects on students' cognitive and literacy development. There are also social and political problems that can influence the success or failure of students in a dual-language program. Krauss (1999) conducted a study in an urban school located in the Midwest of the United States where a two-way dual language program (English- Spanish) was implemented. Krauss' concern, when designing the study, was related to the fact that many of the two-way bilingual programs that had been implemented until then in the United States with good results were in schools with a population of middle class students (Christian 1994, Krauss, 1999). In urban schools with high rates of poverty, the academic achievement of minority students did not seem to be as good (Krauss, 1999). The study that Krauss conducted was a mixed method study that used interviews, class observations and correlation tests to understand the correlation between ethnicity, socioeconomic background and graduation rates.

The results of the study showed that the percentage of African American students that graduated from the program was much lower than the percentage that entered the program in K5, showing that African American students were not persisting through the whole program. It also showed that the needs of African American and low economic background students were not being met at the school, because they were not learning the second language (Spanish) appropriately in order to move on to

the dual language curriculum taught at the school. She suggested that this program should be reexamined to identify the reasons why it was not meeting these students' needs and make the appropriate changes.

While Krauss' and other studies show that dual-language bilingual programs in practice might not work in all school communities, in theory, this type of program, could benefit native speakers of a minority language because the instruction under this model has proven to be greater than when they receive instruction in an all English program (August and Shanahan 2008; Cummins, 1989, 2009; Krashen, 1991). August and Shanahan (2008) discuss the benefits of teaching students in a language that they can understand, supporting the acknowledgement of a child's first language, which in no case "inhibits their ability to develop literacy skills in their second language" (August and Shanahan, 2008). On the contrary, a relationship is identified in the development of the first language and the proficiency skills in the second language.

The implementation of one bilingual program or another can be based on political decisions and points of view; therefore, choosing one model that can recognize and validate a marginalized language and culture would attempt to challenge the way in which these languages and cultures have been discriminated against. The election of a one bilingual model or another could determine the participation of a group in society or its marginalization. Given the literature that underlies the importance of dual-language programs for students, this study examines the implementation of a dual-language program.

Additive Subtracting Bilingualism and Schooling

Additive/subtracting bilingualism and schooling is an understanding that Lambert (1975) and Lorenzen (2005) provided about bilingualism. Later, Valenzuela (1999) developed this understanding not only in relation to bilingualism, but also to culture, defining with this the way in which a school goes about it. Other authors, such as Macarthur Wright and Taylor (2000) have added to these findings and later Barlett and García (2011), among others, have helped this understanding to evolve and be dynamic. These understandings become important to this study because it provides tools to support an analysis as to how bilingualism and biculturalism are implemented in schools.

The terms “*additive*” and “*subtractive*” in education were first used by Lambert (1975) and refer to the curricula, to when curricula adds (additive) the knowledge of a language to the knowledge of a previous language or when it subtracts (subtractive) the knowledge of that previous language in order to acquire the knowledge of a new language, meaning that one language is developed at the expense of the other, respectively (Lorenzen, 2005). According to Valenzuela (1999), “*subtractive bilingualism*” involves more than just the subtraction of the student’s language, but also the student’s cultural identity in relation with what that language represents. This, in turn, fractures the students’ “cultural and ethnic identities, creating social, linguistic, and cultural divisions among the students and between the students and the staff” (Valenzuela, 1999, p.5). *Additive schooling* referring to language or other parts of the educational process manifests interest in the student’s community, this community’s culture, history and their struggle for equality in education and other contexts

(Valenzuela, 1999). Additive schooling pays special attention to the work with community as well as the relationship between schools the families; “when parents and community call for relevant and sensitive curricula, the status quo is sure to be threatened and possibly upset” (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 270). Additive schooling can become an instrument for social change, if it empowers students and families, vindicating their historical and present struggles.

Valenzuela (1999) conducted a mixed study, using qualitative data from observations and open ended interviews, which focused on a Mexican American school community and students’ experiences schooling. Valenzuela states that Latino/a students in the United States can even encounter subtractive schooling in Spanish language classrooms, where their Spanish language and cultural skills are not seen as resources on which to build, but as an unsatisfactory version of the language. If the students’ use of language does not qualify as “standard” Spanish, this dismissal can cause these students to fail (Lorenzen, 2005). Her study showed how students’ bilingualism or proficiency in Spanish is sometimes positioned as a barrier for assimilation or success, because of the perception that native bilingual students “are viewed as deficient English speakers” (Valenzuela, 1999, pg 262).

Valenzuela (1999) suggests that subtractive schooling forces Mexican American youth to separate themselves from their culture, making students’ social capital invisible to the curricula (Valenzuela, 1999). According to her study Mexican Americans could assimilate to become a part of the U.S. society, but through a bicultural process in which the students can build on their bicultural experience without subtracting from it. Being Mexican American means to be part of both cultures - neither of them are exclusive.

In relation to language, subtractive bilingualism is when people learn a second language and their first language skills become weaker with a strong risk of losing them altogether (Macarthur, Wright and Taylor, 2000). Additive bilingualism occurs when two languages are learned and maintained, even if one of them was learned as a second language. This is more likely to occur when two languages are valued and considered to be useful (Macarthur, Wright & Taylor, 2000), in this type of program “one’s language and ethnic identity are assets” (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 270). Additive bilingualism can mean either to expand the linguistic repertoire by learning a second language or a replacement of the first language by the language that is being learned (Schiffman, 2002),

Without dismissing this approach to additive schooling in relation to bilingual education, Barlett and García (2011) explain that the additive bilingual model represented as $L1+L2=L1+L2$ does not reflect the reality of many bilingual schools that try to develop additive bilingualism. They state that, “While this model works to maintain the student’s first language and therefore can more realistically be called bilingual approach, it does not actually model what actually happens for many as they become bilingual” (Barlett & García, 2011, p. 14).

Unfortunately, even programs that have the intention to become additive can turn subtractive when they are implemented without being pertinent to the community it is intended for. In the case of dual language programs that try to promote the use of a student’s first language as much as their second one; they will not be additive if they deprive the students of their culture. Valenzuela (1999) states:

The question of culture is often compromised in bilingual education or dual language program as if simply teaching in the student's tongue is sufficient for the curriculum to be culturally relevant; while language is a necessary step towards relevancy, there is more to culture than language" (p. 269).

Language and culture cannot be separated or relegated to stereotypical assumptions. As Lorenzen (2005) notes, the teaching and learning of the Spanish language can actually contribute to the disablement and underachievement of these language minority students, if "success" means coming to devalue one's own language and culture. Eventually, academic achievement is associated with assimilation into the mainstream culture, and educational opportunities thus come at a high personal and cultural price" (Lorenzen, 2005, p.34).

Barlett and García (2011) suggest that the idea of bilingualism needs to be dynamic, as language itself is. Understanding language in this way, language learners or emergent bilinguals are best served in a bilingual program, one that emphasizes the way in which students adapt their linguistic resources to make meaning of it in different contexts, that provide diverse communicative situations (Barlett & García, 2011).

Barlett and García (2011) conducted a qualitative case study based on four years of observation and interviews, at Gregorio Luperón High School in New York. This study focused on Latina/o newcomer students, mainly from the Dominican Republic. The researchers wanted to see how this school supported the social, academic and linguistic development of recently arrived Latina/o students to the United States who did not speak English.

This research showed that in times where so much pressure was placed on school districts in relation to standardized tests, Luperón High School was trying to accommodate the curricula to serve their students according to their needs (Barlett & García, 2011).

In spite of the requirement for students to take standardized tests in English, Luperón High School created a provision that allowed newly arrived Latina/o students who ~~are~~ were English language learners to take standardized tests in Spanish, which helped them meet the requirements for graduation. Luperón High School also went beyond the norm of the school district where it is located. Their program lasts at least two years, compared to others that only last one year before the students' transition into monolingual classrooms. A criticism that Luperón High School receives from other institution, is that the school isolates itself from other schools by having policies that differ from the ones in the district. This high school has a bilingual program in which the content area instruction is conducted in the students' first language and aligns literacies in the first and the second language. This approach supports a dynamic bilingualism model (Barlett & García, 2011) where students' first language is developed in concert with receiving support in the acquisition of their second language.

In the case of teachers that do not share the same background as their students and/or cannot become honorary members of the culture of their students, they should at least open themselves to learning from their students, rather than trying to teach what they do not know. As Howard (2006) suggests, teachers stand to maximize their effectiveness (Valenzuela, 1999). Acker-Hocevar, Cruz-Janzen, and Wilson (2011) refer to the effectiveness of additive schooling when it becomes part of the educational

process as well as it is part of the schools' principles. These researchers conducted a study in seven elementary schools in the state of Florida, which serve students from low socioeconomic groups, racial and ethnic minorities as well as English language learners. They focused on high academic achievers, even though generally, these students came from groups that statistically tended to have poor achievement (Acker-Hocevar, Cruz-Janzen & Wilson, 2011).

Additive schooling in terms of language acquisition should be understood as a social process that is dynamic and not static, for which the language learning process is never ending (Barlett & García, 2011). The process evolves in this way according to the contexts that a language learner encounters. In terms of community building, additive schooling engages students' educational process with their school community and the community outside of school, identifying value in what the student already brings; rather than subtracting it. Additive schooling does not only mean to add, it also means to try to reverse the effects of subtracting schooling (Valenzuela, 1999).

In relation to the implementation of models of bilingual education, their effectiveness and relevance can be uncovered through the perspectives they promote about the development or maintenance of students' second language and the learning processes of their second language. The definitions of *additive* and *subtracting* bilingualism and schooling (Valenzuela, 1999) have been included to provide information to evaluate how programs can be one or the other.

Conceptual Framework

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy has been included as the framework that informs this study because of the way this pedagogy invites one to challenge the status quo of educational settings through the values of democracy and social justice. The analysis presented of antiracist education and dual language bilingual programs, essential to this study, show close relations to the values that critical pedagogy promotes in its criticism to the asymmetric relations of power through the construction of race and the arbitrary value that has been assigned to racial and ethnic groups and their languages and culture. Critical pedagogy understands all acts of education as political acts, which means that education can be offered as a means to reproduce social, economic and political arrangements of power or to reverse it. As a result critical pedagogy works towards a democratic society through the dismantling of these power arrangements (Giroux, 1993). Its objective as an educational framework is to educate students to question the structures of power that are reproduced at school (Giroux, 1993). Critical educational theories question how school has been structured to benefit the dominant group in maintaining the status quo. Meshulan (2010) borrows from Apple and Weis (1983) to say that the key questions are what school does and who benefits from the way school works; “These questions are central in a broad field that tries to make sense of the relationship between education and differential power in society” (p.15).

Meshulan (2010) states that schools engage in cultural reproduction and in cultural production:

They produce the knowledge of dominant groups and subject-matters that reinforce the cultural form of those groups. However, schools, as sites of struggle, can also participate in the production of alternative or oppositional culture. To some extent, counter hegemonic culture and struggle derive from individual agency and resistance (p.19).

This pedagogy aims to provide an appropriate framework that offers possibilities of empowerment for those involved in educational processes through interactions with asymmetric relations (Freire, 1989, 1993; Giroux, 1997). In the search for presenting alternatives to the reproduction of the asymmetric relations of power that exist at the social, political, and economic levels, critical pedagogy's attempt to challenge those relations can also be identified, in different ways and through different models of education. In the case of this study, I identify critical pedagogy as being reflected in antiracist education and dual-language bilingual programs; because both work towards racial, ethnic and linguistic equality, which challenge the asymmetric value that races, ethnic groups and languages have been assigned by the group in power. The examination of inequalities throughout history that antiracist education promotes challenges the political, economic and social systems of power, just like critical pedagogy does, but with a particular focus on inequalities based on race and ethnicity. Examples include: slavery, colonialism, immigration policies and laws, negative attitudes and assumptions about race, racial stereotypes, institutional racism and discrimination (Kailin, 2005).

Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux are two leading exponents of critical pedagogy. Both theorists believe that the oppressed must become aware of their oppression, and

should fully identify the political, social and economic system into which they are inserted, in order to create the social change and regain their power (Freire, 1993).

Freire (1989) points out how the traditional educational system pretends to fill students with knowledge and information, as if they had empty heads and their previous experience were not valid in what he defines as the *banking model of education* (Freire, 1993). When considering that what students bring is not valid, we could say that under that assumption, students' languages and cultural values might be dismissed by school. According to Freire (1993), critical pedagogy intends to validate students' experiences and invites them to process what they are being taught instead of just storing it. This validation is another way in which antiracist education and dual language programs reflect in critical pedagogy, since both identify racial and ethnic background and what comes from that experience, including appreciation for ways of life, cultural values and languages. In the process of liberation suggested by Freire, language can be used as an instrument of power, transforming reality by promoting a liberating dialog (Freire, 1989). Language as a representation of identity becomes a priority when language can be identified as an instrument of power also.

Henry Giroux (1995) establishes that since the oppressed must be major players in creating the changes that are necessary to achieve justice and democracy, they must experience democracy and learn in democratic contexts. In relation to school, students must learn in a democratic way in order to achieve a democratic society. Teachers and school should reflect on their curriculum, ideas and practices of democratic values. According to Giroux (1995), teachers must have a commitment to education, which is assumed as a commitment to build a just society. In this respect, teachers who

understand their role as a political one must become emancipators of... (Giroux, 1995) role in which they should create conditions that generate a democracy, challenging the educational and social system, rather than accept the given conditions that might promote social injustice. For this, teachers must look at themselves as critical professionals, so they can stop reproducing asymmetrical relations of power in the classroom (Giroux,1983). Teachers' roles as critical professionals suggests that educators should create and recreate theories that can be used to re-design, improve and rethink the meaning of their teaching (Giroux, 1995).

Both Freire and Giroux believe that schools can help society move towards democracy if they abide by the followings principles: teaching as a practice of emancipation, the creation of schools as democratic public spheres, the recovery of progressive values shared in the community, the promotion of equality and social justice, and the establishment of the importance of ethics and commitment at all levels (Freire, 1989,1993; Giroux, 1995, 1997).

Critical pedagogy is not exempt of critiques. Brookfield (2005) refers to the kind of teachers that Giroux and Freire promote as “paternalistic and arrogant” considering themselves as “freedom fighters and emancipators” (Brookfield, 2005, p. 323) who would liberate the oppressed perpetuating the lack of power that the oppressed have.

In a similar critique to Brookfield's (2005), Roberts (2001) refers to Freire 's view as paternalistic. He states that the development of the consciousness that Freire refers to, encouraged through pedagogical interventions, is performed by privileged educators, as if they “know” how the oppressor is oppressed and how the oppressed should be liberated.

According to McLaren (1993), Hooks, like Freire, sees education as the practice of freedom. Even though Hooks' work has been influenced by Freire's ideas, she identifies a sexist discourse in his speech that does not address gender issues, still, Freire's ideas about resistance as a way to redefine reality are for Hooks affirming (Hooks, 1994). She also identifies this fault as part of historical process, considering that in Brazil in the early 20th century, the debate about oppression was related to issues of class and race and not gender (McLaren, 1993). Nevertheless, she recognizes that his work for people of color and other groups that live in the periphery of the political, social and economic system of power in the United States has been significant (McLaren, 1993).

Weiler (1991) claims that Freire's liberatory pedagogy makes assumptions about people having a single kind of experience of oppression, not identifying particular gendered differences (Weiler, 1991). Macedo (1993) raised this issue with Paulo Freire in an interview, stating that oppression or liberation cannot be generalized. As an example, he states that though Black men and women were oppressed by Whites, their experiences were not the same; in the case of women, they also suffered from male domination. Freire himself identifies sexist language in his work, which he attributed to the little knowledge he had about gender issues when he wrote some of his work, such as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

It is with great satisfaction that I admit that my engagement with feminist movements led me to take a sharper focus on the issues of gender, for this, I am indebted to the North American feminists who called gender discrimination to my attention on numerous occasions (Freire in McLaren, 1993, p. 171).

In relation to adult education, Freire is also criticized by Lovett, Clarke and Kilmurray (1983) for over-concentrating on the methods of teaching, without giving attention to content and purpose. According to Coben (1998), this might not help to eradicate class divisions if students are not being educated using some minimal grounds of necessary information and skills (Coben, 1998).

Giroux himself has provided critiques to his own work, or perhaps has adapted his paradigms to new ideas and social contexts. Giroux's work during the 1970s and 1980s concentrated on "educational reform, pedagogy, and the transformation of education to promote radical democracy" (Kellner, 2009, p.2). In Giroux's work, *Border Crossings* (1992), Giroux identifies changes in his work, politically and theoretically (Kellner, 2009). This shift incorporates "new theoretical discourses of poststructuralism and postmodernism, cultural studies, and the politics of identity and difference embodied in the new discourses of class, gender, race, and sexuality that proliferated in the post-1960s epoch" (Kellner, 2009, p.2). These changes demonstrate that Giroux acknowledges the political and social changes within differing contexts and the development of new theories.

Meshulan (2010) conducted a case study that involved two bilingual schools, one in Israel and one in the Midwest of the United States with similar characteristics of my study. The objective of Meshulan's study was to deepen the discussion about the potential and effectiveness of two schools in very diverse communities that have a strong educational program that focuses on democratic education. For this study, he used interviews, class observations and document analysis.

The program of the school in Israel was established by Israeli-Jew and

Palestinian-Arabs of Israeli citizenship, with the objective of providing integrative Bilingual (Arabic- Hebrew) studies. The school in the Midwest of the United States, on the other hand, is a multicultural public school with a two-way bilingual (English-Spanish) located in an inner city, with similar characteristics to those of *Aprendamos*.

Even though these two schools are very different, considering the context, where they are located and the community they serve, these two schools have something in common. Both of them seek to teach a curriculum, using critical pedagogy through an alternative educational structure to that of traditional schools, where a hierarchical structure is not predominant among teachers and between teachers and students. Both of these schools were also developed by politically active scholars.

Meshulan's conclusions indicate that both schools "in theory" have the potential to fulfill this social and political commitment, but that "in practice" they might be held back by the reality and circumstances that each school and community faces, which are influenced by external powers, at a local, national or global level (Meshulan, 2010). By virtue of these external powers, these schools, independent of their ideals, had to adapt to external circumstances that sometimes drew them away from their original purpose, such as budget cuts, which reflected in class sizes. The study also concluded that for the schools to continue to incorporate democratic practices, they would have to examine themselves as institutions, internally (among leaders, teachers and staff) and externally (among the leaders, teachers and the community) in order to create a democratic relationship between them and the community they serve.

As shown in Meshulan's study, the implementation of an educational program and curriculum based on the ideals of critical pedagogy and the values of democracy can be

challenging when inserted into a society in which the educational system is not concerned with emancipation, but with the reproduction of the power relations given by a hierarchical social, economic and political system, still the attempt to challenge these relations of power can be meaningful to students when the implementation of democratic values bring equity at school to students that have been marginalized and discriminated. The practice of democracy and social justice can develop skills in teachers, students, families and communities that begin the path to breaking the status quo and redefines participation and justice.

Synthesis

This chapter has defined key concepts central to the study's analysis and will be useful in establishing a common vocabulary to relay the results and the purpose of this study, such as the concept of race, racism, linguistic racism, race relations, bilingualism and bilingual education.

Due to the nature of this study and considering the site where this study was done, this chapter also examined *dual language bilingual* and *antiracist* education as models of education that attempt to bring justice to race and ethnic and linguistic relations. Antiracist education aims to develop strategies that challenge racial, ethnic and linguistic oppression through educational practices and philosophies and dual language programs have been recognized by improving the academic achievement of native speakers of a minority language and, by providing benefits in relation to their identity and maintaining their language and culture while transitioning into a new culture and while learning a second language (August and Shanahan 2008; Cummins,

1989, 2009; Krashen,1991). Both programs aim to develop the abilities, knowledge, and skills needed within the students and school community members to contribute to the construction of a fair society.

In relation to the implementation of models of bilingual education, their effectiveness and relevance have been uncovered through the perspectives they promote about the development or maintenance of students' second language and the learning processes of their second language. In this line, the studies based on *additive* and *subtracting* bilingualism and schooling (Valenzuela, 1999) have informed my study and have been important to evaluate how programs can be one or the other, additive if it provides the addition of knowledge to one's own knowledge, language to one's own language and culture to one's own culture, would be identified as an additive bilingual program, providing the students the opportunity of gaining a language and a culture, while maintaining and developing their own or subtractive which involves more than just the subtraction of the student's language, but also the student's cultural identity in relation with what that language represents (valenzuela,1999).

Critical pedagogy has been included as the framework that informs this study because of the way this pedagogy invites one to challenge the status quo through the values of democracy and social justice. The analysis presented of antiracist education and dual language bilingual programs, essential to this study, show close relations to the values that critical pedagogy promotes in its criticism of the asymmetric relations of power through the construction of race and the arbitrary value that has been assigned to racial and ethnic groups and their languages and culture. Recognizing, as critical pedagogy suggests, that educational institutions play a critical role in reproducing or

analyzing, critiquing and transforming our understandings of how we have come to view and construct our world (Giroux, 1985), makes it easy to understand that schools are a place where racism and stereotypes against racial, ethnic and linguistic minority groups are promoted. If it is, then the promotion of consciousness against racism in all its forms and stereotypes should be promoted at school (Kailin, 2005), because this reproduction prevents schools from providing an education based on justice and equity. Critical pedagogy also provides insight about the role of teachers in the process of bringing democracy to schools, through a focus on the teachers' perceptions of the antiracist and dual-language program implemented at their school.

Chapter III

Methods

Introduction

This study was conducted at an urban school in the Midwestern region of the United States during 2010 and 2011. *Aprendamos* (school pseudonym) implemented an antiracist program and a two-way bilingual program (English- Spanish), programs that were revised with the implementation of an Antiracist-Language Grant. This study tries to make sense of how teachers and staff at *Aprendamos* perceive the implementation of the antiracist and the dual language bilingual program at their school.

Research Questions

Main Question

What are the perceptions of teachers and staff of an urban dual-language school in relation to the implementation of an Antiracist and dual language program?

Secondary Questions

1. How do teachers and staff perceive these programs in relation to the school?
2. How do teachers and staff perceive these programs in relation to the students?

An Interview Study Framed Within the Critical Paradigm

This study began as a phenomenology study. I had chosen phenomenology because of the importance that it assigns to the meaning participants give to their own

experiences as it analyses the structures of consciousness related to experience viewed from the perspective of the first person (Seidamn, 2006). The ties to existentialism that phenomenology has, made my study seem very abstract, and part of the broader social analysis that this study needed was not being fulfilled. The purpose of my research is to understand particular context more than *local universals* (Willis, 2007) so I thought critical research could help me understand the context and the social implications of it, as it analyzes relationships of power (Creswell, 2008; Guba, 1990; Willis, 2007). Critical research took care of the social analysis, but I also wanted to focus my study on the meaning individuals give to their own experiences. The necessity to incorporate both into the framing of my study led me to choose an interview study framed within the critical paradigm. The interview methods highlight the voices of the participants as it values the meaning participants assign to their perception of a phenomenon (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991) and the critical paradigm takes note of how issues of power are related to that phenomena.

As a researcher, I am trying to understand the implementation of an antiracist program and a dual language program at an urban school, through the eyes of the participants, understanding that these participants interpret their own knowledge of reality (Walsham, 1993) and that this reality is reflected in the larger society.

Critical Research

Critical research reveals social contradictions and the actions and situations that lead them to become what they are. It emphasizes social relationships of power, relationships that involve social inequities, but it also focuses in possible solutions for

those inequities; “a desirable aspect of critical research involves helping those without power to acquire it” (Willis, 2007, p. 82). Willis borrows from Kilgore (1998) to say that critical research begins when a researcher identifies an organization of people whose needs are not satisfied in the political, economic and social system and when that researcher has the will power to put their research findings into practice, trying to empower the ones that are being oppressed; creating social change (Guba, 1990; Willis, 2007).

Even though critical research analyzes broader social and political issues, it also uncovers local instances that reflect universal power relationships (Willis, 2007). My research at *Aprendamos* analyzes a particular context that could be a reflection of what happens in the larger society in relation to situations of racism, antiracist initiatives and in relation to bilingualism. The implications that my study has in relation to education, go beyond the particular school site where the antiracist and dual language program are implemented, because it represents antiracist and dual language program throughout the educational system.

Critical research is interpreted through ideology; when conducting a critical study the focus would not be on the impact of an experience only, but in the experience and the ideology behind the experience, and also in how a particular setting is being used as an instrument for that ideology (Willis, 2007). Guba (1990) establishes that because of this, critical research should receive the name of *ideologically oriented inquiry* since it uses ideology as a guiding principle for research (Guba, 1990).

When conducting critical research it is important to be aware not only of the ideology that guides the phenomena being studied, but also the participants' ideologies

and values, and the personal ideologies and values of the researcher, since critical research is a subjective form of inquiry because it is based on particular ideologies and values (Willis, 2007). For this, when doing critical research it is important to understand what ideology or values prevail in the research; “if values do enter into every inquiry, then the question immediately arises as to what values and whose values shall govern. If the findings of studies can vary depending on the values chosen, then the choice of a particular value system tends to empower and enfranchise certain persons while disempowering others. Inquiry thereby becomes a political act” (Guba, 1990, p. 24).

In relation to methodology, critical research needs to identify a methodology that does not only suit the purpose of conducting the study, but also the purpose of the social change it pursues. If the aim of inquiry is to transform the world by developing conquered consciousness of the participants in order to potentiate their transformation, then “something more than, manipulative, interventionist methodology is required” (Guba, 1990, p. 24). Understanding this tells us that critical research’s main focus is the importance they assign to the study, considering what the social dynamics that the study can unravel; “critical theory is less focused on methodology than it is on the reason for doing the research” (Willis, 2007, p. 84).

My study’s purpose is to analyze the perceptions of the teachers and staff at *Aprendamos* in relation to their antiracist and dual language program. I decided to conduct this study because I think that antiracist programs are important, since they provide education with a counter-hegemonic strategy for dealing with oppression based on race, class, gender and sexuality, which can become a pedagogical discourse and academic practice (Carr and Klassen, 1996). In addition dual language programs are

also important because for native speakers of a minority language, the benefits of receiving instruction in this bilingual model have proven to be greater than the ones that study in an all English program (August and Shanahan 2008, Cummins, 1989, 2009, Crashen, 1991). Both programs present an opportunity to challenge oppression related to race, ethnicity and language. I am interested in the perceptions of the teachers and the staff because they can bring us insight into the implementation of those programs (Seidman, 2006) since they participated directly in their implementation. I believe that these programs bring social justice to education. Having this insight through the eyes of the teachers and staff could be useful for the implementation of other antiracist and dual language program in other settings, besides *Aprendamos*, and possibly for the improvement of those programs at this particular school.

Critical Researcher

Understanding that critical research is charged with ideology and values, researchers must try to be aware of their biases, knowing that their perspective is only theirs, and that it is not necessarily even similar to anyone else's, nor the description of reality. Critical researchers "accept that there is an external reality, but they do not pretend to be objective about how they go about discovering that external reality" (Guba, 1990, p. 83).

In the same way that they are aware of their own bias, the critical researcher must understand that the participants in his or her research have their own biases and that particular ideologies guide them to do what they do and say what they say. According to Guba (1990) researchers enter into the world of the participants, getting to

understand them and the “intersubjective meaning” they give to things. By understanding this meaning, the researcher also identifies the culture “that has been created by all groups of actors in their world”, helping them figure out how “the current social condition became to be what it is” (Guba, 1990, p. 82).

Interview Methods

Hollway & Jefferson (2000) believe that the power of the interviews in an interview research lay in the understanding of “people’s experiences through their own meaning” (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, p. 155). In order to know the perceptions that the actors have about their experience related to a particular phenomenon, interviewing is fundamental (Seidman, 2006).

Seidman (2006) suggests that interviewing is powerful when it comes to gaining insight about education and social issues. Since interviews provide insight through people’s experiences, interviewing the true actors and protagonist of the stories that occur in educational settings would bring significant insight about those settings and the experiences that are lived there. Interviews give the researcher the possibility to learn from a phenomenon or experience firsthand and give the participants a possibility to tell their stories, to gain a voice by knowing that their stories matter and they will be heard by others.

As a researcher I do not consider myself to be the owner of the truth of the experiences of the participants. I believe that they are the owners of the truth of their own experiences, and that my job would be to interpret those experiences in the light of

their perceptions. According to Hollway & Jefferson (2000) bringing the voice of the participants into the research is a democratic act, because it means to validate them as part of the research. Somehow this method avoids asymmetrical relations of power between the researcher and the participants, because even though the researcher is in charge of conducting the research, he or she does not own the participants' experiences and perspectives, these belong to the participants and they choose to offer them to the researcher as part of a mutual agreement. As Hollway & Jefferson (2000) suggest, there is no reason to believe that the researcher's opinions of participants' experiences can be more reliable than the participants' opinions of their own experiences.

My study at *Aprendamos* tries to provide the insight of the teachers and staff's perceptions in relation to the antiracist program and the dual language program implemented at their school. Interviewing the teachers and staff is a method that can provide me with insight on those perceptions.

What the participants of this study bring through their perceptions is not only important on a personal level, but on a collective level too, because they respond to important educational issues, such as an antiracist program and a dual language program.

Validity in Interview Methods

Some of the questions that revolve around the validity in relation to interviewing are related to what Lincoln and Guba (1985) call *trustworthiness*, because when talking about validity, the researcher must prove how valid the information given by the participants and their interpretations are. Validity is challenging to determine

when referring to human experience, because when working with participants, the researcher has to begin trusting that what they are saying is true. The traditional criteria for validity find their roots in a positivist tradition, and to an extent, positivism has been defined by a systematic theory of validity. Within the positivist terminology, validity resided amongst, and was the result and culmination of other empirical conceptions: universal laws, evidence, objectivity, truth, actuality, deduction, reason, fact and mathematical data to name just a few (Winter, 2000). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that when it comes to qualitative research, a change in the vocabulary and the rhetoric should be discussed (Guba and Lincoln, 1985).

According to Hollway & Jefferson (2000) one of the good reasons for believing what people tell us, as researchers, is that when referring to their experiences, the participants are the experts; “who are we to know (about the participant’s lives) any better than the participants when it is after all, their lives” (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, p.3) considering that validates the information provided in the interviews because they reflect the perceptions of those that are being interviewed.

I followed in my interview protocol, a structure that would allow me to obtain information about the participants’ backgrounds, their present situations, and the meaning they gave to their experience. Most of these participants I knew and observed at different levels during a period of at least two years. Previous knowledge about the participants guided me through the interviews.

Besides interviews I am including other sources of data in this study, but keeping the interviews as a main focus.

Changes in the Study

As noted before, the methodology of this study changed in the process, so did the focus of the study. After seeing the opportunity to focus on the school's teachers and staff's perspectives about the antiracist program and about the implementation of the Antiracist-Language Grant, the focus expanded to the dual language program implemented at the school also. This change happened, first, because as noted by the school leader, the antiracist program, since the beginning of its implementation considered the dual language program as a part of it, because of the antiracist principles that a dual language promotes. Second, the Antiracist-Language Grant itself, expanded its focus from issues solely related to the implementation of the antiracist program, but also to the dual-language program; the resources obtained through the grant were destined to create changes to the implementation of both programs.

Description of the School Site *Aprendamos*

Aprendamos is a bilingual school located in an urban area of the Midwest of the United States. The school's bilingual program is a two-way bilingual dual language program, partially emergent, in which the students are taught literacy in both their native and second language; either English or Spanish and all other subjects, such as math, science and social studies are taught in Spanish. Since there aren't many schools with a program like this in the Midwest, the school has frequently been the subject for studies and the site for many visitors. Besides the antiracist program *Aprendamos* has a

dual-language program that makes it a focus of interest.

Aprendamos has been deemed by nationally recognized political organizations that focus on education as a school involved in issues of social justice. Some of the staff at this school are founding editors of a well-established prestigious national magazine and publishers of critical educational articles, some articles of critical pedagogy, antiracist education, gender issues and issues of social justice that are distributed to the staff periodically. *Aprendamos* is one of the first schools to implement a dual language bilingual program in the district of which the school is a part of.

The vision of *Aprendamos* includes some of the following statements:

“A safe and respectful place for all: students, staff, families and community. Inside the walls of this building there is a multicultural, multilingual, antiracist environment...The curriculum is rigorous and is guided by the highest standards of the district, but in addition, the teaching and learning that takes place here is: grounded in the lives of the students, participatory and experiential, culturally sensitive...These high standards apply as well to the staff at *Aprendamos*. They are a dedicated group of well educated professionals, who as Paulo Freire said, *‘live part of their dreams in their educational space’*. With a focus on shared mission and collaboration, their role is to implement our rigorous and visionary curriculum. We are teaching the future citizens of our community. By using best practice, critical thinking, and anti-violence strategies”

The school’s principles demonstrate critical views; the school’s vision talks about antiracist and anti-bias practices, multiculturalism and critical pedagogy. These views are also represented in the *school wide themes* around which different lessons are taught

and school wide celebrations, that since 2006 have been done without interruption during the school year at *Aprendamos*. The school wide themes are:

Theme I. *We Respect* (focused on the students' heritage and the promotion of awareness about the world and its need for peace and equality),

Theme II. *We Are Proud to be Bilingual* (focused on diversity, the strengths of being bilingual and learning to counteract the stereotypes contained in cartoons, books, magazines and the media),

Theme III. *We Can Make a Difference* (focused on African-American history, the contribution of African American people and women to the nation, the need to overcome prejudice and racism and how people of all nationalities have worked for justice and equality), and

Theme IV. *Stories of the World* (focused on the importance of the students families' story and learning about other people through their stories).

The school began when a small, multicultural neighborhood organization mobilized the community to transform the neighborhood school that was going to be shut down or taken over by the school district, after 19 years of existence. This organization saw great potential in the school, understanding that it was located in one of the most racially and culturally diverse and integrated neighborhoods in the city.

In 1987, after a few months of political struggle in which their project was initially rejected, the neighborhood organization made several community efforts to gather and manifest persistently until the central office accepted this proposal. The organization won control of the school building, proposing to create a "new" *Aprendamos*, where parents and teachers could make decisions together and where

students could be taught “progressive, antiracist values in a bilingual, Spanish/English setting and where they would learn through cooperative and innovative methods” (Peterson, 1993, p. 47). The board had other plans for the school, including a school run by the central administration and with a total different philosophy of schooling. The new school was going to have a two-way bilingual whole language, multicultural program, moving from traditional “text centered teacher-talk paradigm to a whole language, activity based paradigm, and from an Eurocentric to an antiracist multicultural approach to teaching” (Peterson, 1993, p. 57).

After the first political struggles, the administration tried other strategies to marginalize the group members for a new *Aprendamos*. The administration attempted to prohibit the group members from being part of the decision making process and also oversaw the requests that the organization made, such as letting the school leaders and teachers provide input about the principal the school should have or giving extra information about the program to teachers seeking for a position in the school as they have explicitly asked. The administration also denied or delayed the necessary support the school needed, limiting supplies and withholding budget information.

During its first five years of existence, the new *Aprendamos* faced difficulties with administration and other challenges that are common in the public school system, such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate facilities, lack of resources and time for teacher’s planning and the work with teachers itself. Additionally, a big challenge was identified in the bilingual program - “providing truly bilingual services is challenging in a society that is English dominant/ chauvinist. There is a natural English pull in our country and placing Spanish on an equal level with English in our country has not been

easy” (Peterson, 1993, p. 57).

During those first years, the school identified itself as a place where community members were invited to participate. At first, they had mostly White middle class parent involvement. In order to change that, they made quotas for the seats in the parent council, to ensure the participation of Latino/a/a and African American families. They also invested part of their budget in hiring two parent organizers; a Mexican American and African American that worked part time. This position lasted until the year 2009-2010, when the budget cuts forced the school to end it. After that, the parents’ council coordinated volunteers to perform some of the job duties that this person used to do, such as organizing events, fundraisers and maintaining the families informed through bulletins and flyers.

Demographics at Aprendamos

The children that attend *Aprendamos* come from very different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds, the racial demographics can explain the racial diversity of the students at the school, but from my experience as a teacher there I can say that the students come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and that their parents have different educational levels and a diverse range of professions. Some parents are politicians, professors at UWM, directors of community organizations, factory workers, salespersons, and some parents are unemployed. For the 2010-2011 school year 73% of the students qualified for free lunch, increasing this number to 78% the following year. Families do not only come from the neighborhood that surrounds the school, but from other neighborhoods as well, mainly the Spanish speakers. The majority of the students

at the school are Latino/a but they and their families are not necessarily native Spanish speakers. During the 2010-2011 school year according to data provided by the school site, the Latino/a population was 59%. There is also an increasing number of African American students that are 18.7 % of the school population. The remaining student population is 12% White students, 1% of Asian and Native American background, and 8.3% of students that are under the category of other, who are mostly biracial students of different ethnicities.

The demographics of the teachers and staff at *Aprendamos* show that the majority of the teachers are White, 49% (14 classroom teachers, 2 special education teachers, 6 supportive staff, 1 head engineer); 18 % of staff are African American; even though this number seems high, out of this percentage there is only one African American teacher (1 teacher, 1 teacher assistant, 3 cooks, 3 engineers); 3% of the staff is Asian (2 teachers) and 30% are Latino/a (7 classroom teachers, 3 special education teachers and 2 teacher assistants, 1 social worker, and 2 secretaries) There are no Native American teachers.

Among the staff population, only 14 people are native Spanish speakers, including the two secretaries, the two teacher assistants, three Special Education teachers, 6 regular classroom teachers, the social worker and the librarian. Of the support staff, only the school psychologist is bilingual.

The Antiracist Program at Aprendamos

The school was founded with the intention of promoting antiracist principles and values. The school manifests that their antiracist program “goes beyond what we call the 3 Fs, facts, foods and faces” (Peterson, 1993, p. 58), incorporating issues of race and power. The program intended to directly teach children about prejudice and racism; “we believe children to be taught to be antiracist, that is that racism is unscientific immoral and that it has been a damaging social disease throughout our nation’s history” (Peterson, 1993, p. 59).

Aprendamos has implemented an Antiracist program for many years in fact, this program was born with the new *Aprendamos* itself. The school recognized that at the beginning of this process, every component of the school community was not in the same place about these issues. They had a yearlong process in which the whole community, including parents, teachers and staff defined what multicultural antiracist education meant. After several meetings and workshops they worked on a common definition.

During the years 2009 and 2010, the school manifested the intention of redefining the antiracist curriculum. At the beginning of the next school year the school applied to an Antiracist- Language Grant, founded through the school district *Aprendamos* received one hundred thousand dollars to carry on the projects included in the proposal. The resources were directed to staff development, antiracist books and materials and to the work of teachers in the design of an antiracist curriculum in each grade level. Teachers were also to participate in a six session workshop about

Antiracist Education with a local professor. Part of the grant money was used for staff to meet and discuss the changes that needed to be made to the dual language program.

The school determined that the school wide themes, mentioned earlier, provided the opportunity to share the experiences of people of color. In these celebrations, as well as in daily activities, the school has tried from the start, to include a wide range of media that comes from racially and ethnic diverse groups and creators. The school maintains that gaining antiracist skills is an important goal for the school in the long and short runs, not only for the changes this can create socially, but also because this understanding also helps to improve the daily relationships that exist in a multicultural community (Peterson, 1993). Approximately every two months, there is a “Theme Celebration” in the gym, where different classes take turns working on a presentation about what they have studied or prepared. Where the whole school gathers and parents are invited.

The Dual Language Program at Aprendamos

The dual language program at *Aprendamos* began in 1987, the objectives of this program were contained in the antiracist program, for which, the language component was seen as an extension of it. *Aprendamos* was the first school to implement such a program in the state. The idea was to have classrooms in which dominant students of both English and Spanish would study at the same time, trying not to separate language groups in order to give meaning and purpose to the acquisition of two languages” (Peterson, 1993, p. 58).

After the first two years of the of this program's implementation, the programs' founders thought that too much English was spoken in the school, which was creating an imbalance between the two languages. To solve this, they began a system in which teachers would partner up and have separate English and Spanish environments, starting in kindergarten. Even though the school staff identified the problems, they still viewed their program as a strength; "It sends a strong message to the students and their families about the equivalent value of Spanish and English and the people who speak them" (Peterson, 1993, p. 58).

In the years of existence of *Aprendamos*, the dual languages program has undergone many changes. In previous years, all subjects were taught in Spanish, except for literacy; which children studied in their native language (English or Spanish). The percentages that *Aprendamos* was aiming for was 80 % Spanish and 20% English from k4 to third grade, and 50 % Spanish; 50% English in fourth and fifth grade, when students were supposed to transition into a full immersion in Spanish or English environments, alternating two weeks with full immersion in each of them.

The implementation of the Dual language program as originally planned was made difficult due to the difference in the number of English and Spanish speakers that were enrolled in the school. The majority of the students were English speakers and that limited the possibility of students speaking Spanish to each other, or at least trying. To solve this, at least in part, in the year 2007-2008, one class each in k5, first and second grade was organized with native English speakers only, receiving the Spanish language as they would in an immersion program. Putting the English speakers together in one class would allow the other three classes in each grade level to have a balanced

class of ideally eight English and eight Spanish speakers. In reality, some classes would have 17 or 18 students and sometimes the Spanish speakers were not really dominant in the Spanish language, still bringing an imbalance in the “balanced” classes.

During the 2010-2011 year, the Dual language Program at *Aprendamos* was modified in most grade levels; dual literacy began to be implemented from k4 to fifth grade. With this new implementation, the lower grade levels (k4-2nd) had literacy in English and Spanish alternating each week in self-contained classrooms (in the same classroom and with the same teacher). The upper grade levels (3rd-5th) had literacy in English and Spanish alternating every two weeks. One of the objectives of this change was to accomplish uniformity in how the program was implemented and to promote the development of reading and writing skills of the students at an early age, because the teachers in the upper grades complained of students coming into fourth and fifth grade without knowing how to write, read and many times, speak or understand Spanish.

Description of the Location

The school location has gone through several changes over the years. Most of those changes have been organized and requested by the school and they have been related to the program. At the very beginning, changes were made inside the classrooms by taking simple steps as changing the desks in order to make the space comfortable for group work and sharing time. The school fought battles against the administration in order to get the school in shape.

During 2005, a whole new wing was added to the school where each SAGE

class (group of 16 students) was going to have their own classroom. A new gym with a climbing wall was added; the gym was used as a cafeteria and as an auditorium because it also had a stage. The new kitchen is spacious and well equipped. A new playground was constructed; it had a set of equipment for children to play, a kickball diamond and a basketball court that the community also uses. Around the fences of the playground wooden murals were painted by students. The school community created a garden and installed rustic fences made by an artist. A parking lot for teachers and staff was also added.

New offices were also part of the new area, and a conference room. An elevator made the building prepared to receive handicapped students, family members and staff. A new space was given to the art room (that used to be in the basement) where high technological equipment was being added, such as a kiln, a smart board, and new computers. The new wing had the new library as a very important focus; *Aprendamos* has a collection that includes more than 8000 titles of Spanish, not including duplicates. The Spanish books at the school are 40% of the total collection. The richness of this collection has given *Aprendamos* the distinction of having one of the biggest bilingual collections in the state.

A Day at Aprendamos

The school day at *Aprendamos* starts at 8:00 for the cooks, 8:30 for the head secretary, 8:50 for the teachers (that are not on before school duty) and, at 9:00 for the students. The doors of the school open at 7:00 for the children that are registered in the

before and after school program (CLC) run by the Boys and Girls Club. Children go to their classrooms escorted by school wide staff, such as the ESL teacher, the art teacher and whoever is not supposed to be in the classroom. By that time, volunteers from the CLC and teacher assistants have brought the students' breakfasts to each classroom.

After hanging their jackets and putting away their things, the students go into the classrooms to have breakfast and clean up 15 minutes later, taking turns to throw away the garbage. Each class has alternative activities organized for children that are not eating breakfast or that finish fast; some read on their own or write in their journals. The morning subjects are organized by grade levels; math is taught in the mornings in some grade levels, literacy in the afternoon and so on. The younger levels have a routine in which everyone has time to review the calendar and have a brief class meeting on the carpet every morning before moving on with their classroom activities.

At 11a.m., lunch begins with the K3 and K4 students eating after a 30 minute recess period. At 11:15, K5 and first grade begin their recess together and move into the cafeteria from 11:45 to 12:15 organized by class. While these two grade levels eat their lunch, second and third graders have recess outside and get ready to eat their lunch at 12:15 while K5 and first grade are walking in lines guided by their classroom teachers either to the bathroom or directly to the classroom. From 12:15 to 12:45, fourth and fifth graders have recess and while second and third graders are moving out of the cafeteria they are coming in. At 1:15, everyone should have eaten lunch and the cafeteria that is also the gymnasium is cleaned and the tables are put away.

Classes follow the afternoon activities according to the schedules that the grade levels have organized, beginning to get ready at 3:15 in the lower levels and at 3:25 in

the upper grade levels. K3 and K4 are the first ones to get out of the door and toward their destinations after sharing a snack. K5 and first graders follows and so forth. Students leaving on buses, walk in a line toward the west side of the school to find their bus or wait for it to come either on the grass or back inside the building. Groups of students that are going to the CLC program or the ones that will be picked up by their families go either to the Gym or the cafeteria to have dinner. Until 3:45, teachers are supposed to supervise the children that are waiting to go home and after that they are free to move on with their day. Most teachers stop by the office to check their mailboxes and either go back to work in their classroom or leave for the day. The second Tuesday of every month, there is a staff meeting in the library where teachers are expected to arrive at 8:00. Grade level team meetings and committee meetings are scheduled differently once a month.

There are six mandatory nights in which the teachers and staff are expected to be at school all day until 7:30p.m.; these are “Open Houses,”: one or two days before school starts, Gallery night in spring and the two nights of parent-teacher conferences in October and in March. Besides these nights, there are several occasions in which parents and teachers are invited to volunteer such as Science and Math Night, Literacy Night, and for the Day of the Dead Celebration.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

The participants of the study volunteered for the most part when they received information about the project. To recruit some of them, I used *purposeful sampling*

(Creswell, 2003) guiding myself through the assumption that the experiences of specific participants could be of relevance for the study, either for their positions or characteristics. Considering that I wanted to guarantee the most diversity possible among the potential participants at *Aprendamos*, I asked some of the participants to participate in the study and they agreed. Most of the participants that have originally accepted to participate in the interviews follow through with this commitment. There were only three participants that for reasons of time and distance could not follow through with their participation.

Sideman suggests that the initial contact that is made with the possible participants is really important, because for the interviewing process, it is necessary that the researcher has a relationship with the participant and the way that the first contact is done can influence this relationship (Seidamn, 2006). In the case of my study, I initially contacted the participants in a context that we shared together for at least a couple of years (depending on the participant). We knew each other professionally and personally to different extents, so, with some of them, there was not a personal introduction necessary, but simply an introduction of the project to which they were being invited to participate. Sideman says that knowing the participants in different contexts can create very uncomfortable situations, which might limit the potential of the interview. In the case of the participants of this study, we shared our workplace context; The contexts that I shared with some of the participants outside the school were personal and did not involve social institutions or groups, such as church. Based on the confidentiality to which the participants and the researcher agreed on, the stories were just known between us.

Sidemen also suggests that selecting participants with which the researcher already has a relationship, might make the process harder instead of easier; in the case of friends, friends might think that “they understand each other” for which the researcher might think that he or she does not need to ask further questions or try to go deeper in a particular subject. In this case, what Ballesteros, Uriz & Viscarret (2006) say about the importance of the researcher leaving aside their preconceived ideas and knowledge about the phenomenon to be studied or in this case the participant become relevant, but is that possible? Sideman suggests that we never fully understand someone else, because we are not them, It is true, but trying to understand others to the best of our ability can be as far as we can get, if we really apply the “to the best of our ability” part. In this sense, I believe that knowing the participants helps to enhance this understanding instead of getting in its way, because whatever is said can be considered in a holistic way, where the individual is approached not only from what he or she is saying, but from who she or he is.

Background of the Participants

All of the participants in this study were working at *Aprendamos* during the 2010-2011 academic year. Some of them do not work there any longer; during the same school year, there were several changes in the school district and the state. The election of a new governor in the state, whose budget proposal included many zero dollar items and deep cuts to education and public services left the school without it's SAGE program (program that maintained a ratio of 16 students/ 1 teacher) so nine teachers lost their jobs, including the art teacher. The librarian position was cut and later reinstated as well

as the SAGE program. Some of the teachers that had been laid off came back to *Aprendamos* after the funds for SAGE were released. Seventeen participants were interviewed.

Ana

Mexican American female, age 60, Early Education Teacher, now Principal. She is a native English speaker, speaks Spanish at an low intermediate level; her bilingual skills have improved in the past years. She is married to a White male and has two kids who attended *Aprendamos* in earlier years. Her relationship with the school is very long; she is known as one of the founders of the program and has worked in the school for more than 30 years. She was a kindergarten and a first grade teacher for many years at *Aprendamos*. At the end of the year 2004-2005 she applied for a principal position in the school and it was approved with a temporary license. She began her studies for a leadership position and started to work at *Aprendamos* as the principal in the school year 2005-2006. Besides her work at the school she has been working for a well-known political education magazine. She is an activist and has very strong political views about education and society. Her office is a welcoming place, full of light and pieces of art and Latin American crafts. She also has many posters and little signs that have quotes that encourage peace and justice.

Kathy

A Puerto Rican female, age 50, Early Education Teacher, native Spanish speaker, grew up in Puerto Rico and moved to the United States later in life. She is

married to a Puerto Rican man and has very strong ties with the Puerto Rican culture and community. She worked at *Aprendamos* as a teacher assistant first and later became the k4 teacher, a position that she has held for 15 years. She enjoys working with young children, but considers the possibility of teaching older children in the future. She thinks her job is very demanding, particularly because the number of children that she has in her class: 26. Due to the many years she has been working in her position her classroom is very well equipped with young children's material. Even though she has a numerous class, her students seem to always be working and ready to work, attentive to the line order and the teacher's instructions.

Karla

A Mexican female, age 36 a native Spanish speaker. She grew up in Mexico and moved to the United States at an early age, she is married to an African American man and has four biracial children. She has been working as a chief secretary at *Aprendamos* for the last two years, but the school was not unknown to her at her arrival. She had worked there two ~~more~~ years before, but had interrupted her stay for another two years. The first time she worked at the school, she did not only worked as a secretary there, but also coordinated a show of two Mexican traditional dances with different students, preparing them for "Cantos de las Americas", a program in which most bilingual schools show songs and traditional dances. She is an expert in this area and knows professionally most of the Mexican folk dances. She also makes traditional Mexican arts and crafts and pastries. She is currently the parent of a K5 student at the school.

Elijah

African American male, age 38, native English speaker. Does not speak Spanish . He identifies himself as Black and says that as an African American, he is currently not very proud of his American side, because of all the problems that are in the United States, in terms of racism and social injustices. He has worked at *Aprendamos* for the last six years as a service helper. He has been in charge of different floors in the building, so he knows pretty much what happens in every floor. His work hours are usually during the evenings, besides the days in which there are no children in the school. He works six hours per day there, so for a long time he has been looking to get a full job position at another school. Most of the times he works two jobs to sustain his family. Besides his regular job he works in his community, where he identifies problems, he works through his church and believes he has to carry himself out as a role model for the youth, especially for young African American males, who in his eyes, are in a great need for masculine role models. He says he tries to live by that idea, not cursing and bringing a healthy image of himself.

Sabrina

Caucasian female, age 54, Doctor in Diversity Studies. English speaker who recognizes but does not speak much Spanish. She usually identifies her limitations in public and in private. She sometimes doubts her right to be at the school because of this issue. She has tried to accommodate herself to a bilingual school in different ways, but has not found it easy. She tries to cope with her limitation still providing accommodations for parents. For example, for parent-teacher conferences she hires a Spanish speaker to translate for

her and also pays for written translations of report if necessary. When having the need of calling a parent she asks someone to call for her or translate for her. She taught first grade during 4 years. During this time she taught English literacy and worked to teach subjects such as math in Spanish, guiding herself with the book series, for other subjects she partnered up with an Spanish speaker co-worker, taking turns or teaching different subjects to give the students as much Spanish as possible. For the last two years she has worked in third and in second grade, being in charge of the English environment classroom, which means she trades groups with a Spanish speaking partner for two weeks in third grade in the mornings, and afternoons in the second grade.

During her fourth year of teaching she had a serious car injury, which left her in bed and in therapy for approximately three months, needing to have a couple of surgeries in her knee and shoulder. For this matter she missed several months of class the first year in which the accident happened, getting close to losing her positions at *Aprendamos*. As a teacher she has coordinated different projects with her class, the first one was a sequence of jewelry and bake sales with the purpose of raising money to send to people in Haiti that were in need after the earthquake. She did it through an organization. The second project was the organization of another sequence of jewelry and bake sales, this time with the purpose of raising money for the purchase of animals for an African community. The jewelry and baking products were made by her class, herself and parents that volunteered. She works on other smaller projects in her class related to gender issues, the civil right movement and slavery. Her classroom is decorated with many arts and crafts and also has many posters and little signs that have quotes that encourage peace and justice. She also has a personal book collection with

many titles that talk about issues of social justice.

Kenya

An Asian American female, age 33, she is native English speaker. Speaks Spanish at an intermediate level; her bilingual skills have improved in the past years. Her mother is Korean and her father is Caucasian. She identifies more closely with the American culture, because she has lived in the United States her whole life and does not speak her mother's language. She is married to a White male and has two daughters at *Aprendamos*. She has been working as a first grade teacher at *Aprendamos* for the last three years, coming back this current year after being laid off and transferred. She began her ties to the school when she was a student teacher in fifth grade. After graduating she became a second grade teacher and left when having her children. She worked at other bilingual schools, but wanted to come to *Aprendamos* for several years. She ~~was~~ became a long term substitute when a first grade teacher had an accident. Besides her work at the school she works in several community and teachers' organizations. She also cooperates with the school district being part of a social justice and social studies committee. She is also the co-editor of a well-known political education magazine. She is an activist and has very strong political views about education and society. She has a personal book, music and poster collection with many titles that talk about issues of social justice and she invites many community members to participate in her class.

Sierra

African American female, age 40. She is the daughter of Nigerian immigrants to the United States, married to a Nigerian man and has two kids. She is a native English

speaker. She speaks Spanish at an advance level. She has a Spanish major and is now an Early Childhood Education Teacher. She has been working at *Aprendamos* for the past four years. As other teachers, she came back this current year after being laid off and transferred. During her first year at the school she was hired late in the summer, before school started to even the number of the ratio of one teacher per every 16 children, that had lost that proportion. She was given the job to teach literacy to a group of second graders in the morning and in the afternoons she would support each first grade classroom for 45 minutes. After that year she became part of the first grade team.

She considers herself to be shy to a certain extent and does not like to talk in public. She is a very reserved person that chooses her friends carefully. She encourages friendship in her class, calling her students “*amigos*” all the time. She is conscious of political issues but does not participate in any political group or organization.

Jennifer

Puerto Rican female, age 58, Early Education Teacher, Librarian and Media Specialist, native Spanish speaker, grew up and attended the university in Puerto Rico and moved to the United States after that. She is married to a Puerto Rican man and has two children and two grandchildren. After raising her children she came back to school and has been studying ever since, she holds a master’s degree in Reading and Learning Disabilities, but is constantly taking classes of different sources for her personal and professional enrichment. She has worked at *Aprendamos* for 15 years, first being a teacher assistant, later a K5 and first grade teacher and is currently the librarian and technology expert at the school. She enjoys books more than anything and has made the

library at *Aprendamos* one of the libraries with the biggest bilingual collections in the state. She selects books carefully trying to purchase Spanish books that are written in Spanish and not translations. She also selects books that talk about themes of social justice and other moral values. She is a poetry lover so she has enriched the library with an important collection of bilingual poetry books. She collects Latin American arts and crafts and also has many posters and little signs that have quotes that encourage peace, justice and the love for reading. She also has a personal book and music collection with many titles that talk about issues of social justice in different genres.

She has recently increased her work in photography and has other hobbies such as traditional Puerto Rican basketry. She is also a spider collector. She travels to Puerto Rico at least two times a year and considers the island her favorite place.

Jamisha

African American female, age 32. Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) she received an associate degree and later a bachelor's degree. She is native English speaker and does not speak Spanish. She has two children; they have never attended *Aprendamos*. She used to work as a CNA in nursing homes and came to work for the school district looking for the health benefits that the position used to offer. She began working at the school as a service helper, a job that she did for one year and later got a position as a CNA at the school, working with Special Education students mainly in the K3 program, but sometimes with K4 and K5 students. Her job description includes changing kids, working with them one on one when they are studying, and getting them to the buses. She also does other things that the school requires due to the lack of extra personnel.

She wanted to get a position as a teacher assistant but did not get it. She plans to leave the school, looking forward to applying for a different position in a different school with people of her same racial background.

She is conscious of political issues, particularly aware of discrimination ~~in~~ on the basis of race and gender. She does not participate in any political group or organization, but is involved in a Baptist church.

Soulja

A Caucasian female, age 39, has a Master's degree in Literacy, Early and General Education Teacher K through 8. She is currently studying to be certified as a Special Education. She is an English speaker, but speaks Spanish at a very advance level, very close to a native speaker. She lived and studied in Mexico where she practiced and improved her bilingual skills. She is married to a Caucasian male and has four children. She has worked fifteen years for the district *Aprendamos* is located ~~at~~ in. She has worked at the school, leaving the school and coming back to it several times. At *Aprendamos* she has worked as a teacher assistant, as a first grade and third grade teacher and now after being laid off, she came back to the school as a Special Education teacher, while getting her certification. Besides working as an Early Childhood, she has worked as a middle school bilingual teacher.

She collects Latin American arts and crafts, particularly Mexican. She also has many posters and little signs that have quotes that encourage peace, justice and the love for reading. She also has a personal book and music collection with many titles that talk about issues of social justice in different genres. She is very conscious of political

issues, particularly aware of discrimination in the basis of race and gender. She does not participate in any political group or organization, but sometimes volunteers for political campaigns.

Mary

A Mexican female, age 63 a native Spanish speaker, grew up in Mexico and came to the United States approximately forty years ago. She is a Teacher's Assistant and also works in the school's after school program. She has been working at *Aprendamos* for over thirty years, she first started as a parent coordinator for one year and has worked as a teacher assistant in different grade levels ever since. During the last years five years she has worked in K4. Currently she works with some students as Special Education assistant, because her position has been funded partially by Special Education funds. She has two kids and one grandkid, all of them had attended the school. Her daughter is actually one of the first generation of fifth graders to graduate from *Aprendamos*. Her daughter is now a substitute teacher in the district where the school is located at and has worked there several times as a long term substitute teacher.

She has very strong ties to the Mexican culture and she usually volunteers to share her knowledge with students, parents and teachers at the school. She has participated in the celebrations of day of the Dead that the school has done and, has taught several Mexican folk art techniques and also traditional Mexican cooking. She has also taught Spanish in the school as part of the City Recreation Program.

Asia

Caucasian female, age 52. She is an art teacher with a philosophy major and is currently finishing her studies to obtain a Master's degree in Art Education. She is married to an African American male and has two biracial children. She does not speak much Spanish, but has tried to progressively learn through the years. Her classes were generally in English, with the exception of some Spanish interventions that she tried to make. She has worked in the school district where *Aprendamos* is located for ten years, nine of which were at *Aprendamos*. She was laid off last year and got a position at a middle school where she has found some of her former students. Before working as a teacher she directed an educational program at the city's art museum and had other similar jobs. She also works in her own summer camp program, which she started with a colleague. She is part of different organizations, such as the District's Art Teachers Association and the art association of the neighborhood where the school and her house is located at. She is a neighbor of the school and gets involved in many community events. With her art, she has supported the community and some political organizations, making murals, posters and buttons. She has also created different installations with her school's students that have been part of several community and art exhibits. Lots of her teaching at *Aprendamos* was done through projects that most of the times were related to other subjects.

As an art teacher she is committed to the creation of high quality art and also with making a political statement.

Lauren

A Caucasian female, age 28, is a native English speaker and speaks Spanish at an intermediate level. She has just finished her Master's degree in Reading and Learning Disabilities. She is married to an Asian-Latino/a male and has two biracial children. Her family is very diverse, because her parents have adopted many children through the years, she has 16 brothers and sisters of multiple races and ethnicities. Some of her siblings have special needs. Her parents are still receiving children as foster and adoptive parents and she plans to do that in the future.

She and her husband were both part of the military, her husband still is in the Service and is also a policeman. As a soldier she worked in Cambodia. She came to *Aprenamos* a student teacher in second grade. After graduating she became part of the first grade team. She has been teaching at the school for seven years. For the last three she had a job share position working at the school part time. This year she is working as a Special Education teacher.

She is conscious of political issues, but does not participate in any political group or organization at the moment, but is involved in a Christian church.

Marin

Puerto Rican female, age 38, Special Education Teacher with a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction. She is married to an African-American woman that works as a police woman. She has one daughter and one granddaughter. She is a native Spanish speaker, grew up in Puerto Rico and moved to the United States in her early twenties. She identifies herself as a Latina and does not consider herself as an Afro

Latina, in spite of her African features. She has worked at *Aprendamos* as a special education teacher and speech pathologist assistant first and later as a k3 teacher, a position that she has held for 5 years. She enjoys working with young children.

She is conscious of political issues, particular racial and gender discrimination, which she has lived personally, but she does not participate in any political group or organization.

She can be outgoing with people she knows, but she does not give her opinion in public much. In her job she is particularly reserved

Rossi

Caucasian female, age 27, Early Education Teacher. She is a native English speaker and speaks Spanish at a advanced level. She is married to a French male. She began working at *Aprendamos* as a secretary for one year, later as a chief secretary for two years and the last two years as a K 5 teacher, where she tried to implement many social justice and antiracist lessons. She was laid off last year and got a position at another bilingual school where she has all Latino/a Spanish speaking students.

She studied Spanish at school and later had a semester abroad in Chile where she developed her bilingual skills. She is now studying French. She loves to travel and values being bilingual and giving children the opportunity to be bilingual too.

Alice

Greek female, age 58, Early Education Teacher. She is native Greek speaker and speaks Spanish at an advanced level. She also speaks Italian and French and believes she understands the process of language acquisition. She is married to a Greek male and has two children. She has very strong ties to Greek culture; she teaches Greek traditional cooking classes with the city's Recreation Department.

She has worked at *Aprendamos* for approximately 25 years. She came to *Aprendamos* as a student teacher in fifth grade. After graduating she became part of the second grade team. She has been teaching in second grade ever since. When working as a partner she was in charge of the English literacy.

She has a strong mind and is very straight forward; she usually gives her opinion in public and argues when she thinks something is unfair at her job or in her community. She ~~is~~ works in her community, organizing her neighbors and also at the Greek Church she belongs to. Besides these organizations does not participate in any political groups, but supports political campaigns when she finds ~~is~~ it necessary. She is conscious of political issues and racial discrimination. She has a personal book collection with many titles that talk about issues of social justice in different genres. She is a poetry and theatre lover, using these to teach her lessons and to work with children to develop their personality and reading skills.

Olivia

Greek female, age 55, ESL Teacher. She is native Greek speaker, but after moving to the United States as a child she speaks mostly English and lost her ability to write in

Greek, a skill that she is now trying to recover. She doesn't speak any Spanish. She began working at *Aprendamos* as a student teacher in fifth grade. After graduating she became part of the ESL team and has been teaching there for 12 years. Before having this job she worked as a sales person at a store, but was always interested in teaching, so she decided to quit her job and began her studies to become a teacher. She enjoys her job very much and is always looking for alternatives to teach her students English in a creative way, being very respectful of their ethnic background. She thinks that if her Greek background had been appreciated when she was a student, her attitude towards the Greek language and culture would be much different and that she would not have lost some of her skills. She is family oriented and maintains some Greek traditions.

She considers herself to be shy and is very concerned with health issues. She is very interested in natural and organic foods and cooking.

Data Collection

Interviews

The data used in this study was mainly gathered through the interviews done with the participants. Interviews were partially structured to allow for interviewees to lead you to issues that they might consider important for your knowledge.

Even though there is some debate about audio recording because this might interfere with what participants will say (Lincoln and Guba 1985, Weiss 1984), I went ahead with audio recording because I believe that audio recording interviews help the researcher to keep the participant's spoken words intact and that that makes this

information more reliable (Sideman 2006). Considering this, and in order to give full attention to the participants' narratives, gestures and expressions of all interviews were digitally recorded. All interviews were audio recorded because all participants agreed to be recorded; the recorder was stopped at certain moments upon their request. The interviews lasted 60-90 minutes in most cases. There were two shorter ones that lasted 60 minutes, only due to scheduling problems. Most of the interviews were done in person; three of them were done via Skype. Three people were interviewed more than once. One of them was interviewed three times because she had held different positions in the school that provided interesting information to the study and because of the follow up in some classroom activities the person was teaching. Two other people were interviewed formally two times, because in side conversations they had provided information that caught my attention and felt they needed clarification. There were two other people that agreed to be interviewed but due to scheduling problems, the interviews were not carried out. Both of the people were reached through internet more than once, being offered the possibility of having a phone interview or an interview via Skype, but I did not get an answer. Most interviews were done outside of school at a time and place of the interviewee's convenience. Most of these places were restaurants and cafes and, in three cases, in the interviewees' houses. Five of them were done at school, after or before school.

Supplementary Data

There is also some background information that I obtained by collecting Supplementary Data. I studied and copied a collection of books that were put together

by the school in the first six years of its existence. These books have written information coming from teachers, parents and students. I also used preexisting documents such as the school's mission, the Antiracist- Language Grant proposal, brochures, pamphlets, materials related to the antiracist and the dual language program's implementation process, social studies, dual language and literacy committee's minutes, staff meetings' minutes, grade level meetings' minutes, and learning team's minutes. I also obtained lesson plans prepared by the teachers as part of the implementation of the antiracist program and the lists of materials and books that each grade level asked the librarian to purchase for their use in antiracist lessons. I also have a list of materials that the librarian decided to purchase for the library in the same context.

I gathered some documents and articles that were given for the staff to read about Dual language and Antiracist programs. I also collected e-files that were posted in the Technological Learning Community TLC by teachers with respect to the implementation of the dual literacy program that was implemented, testing and lessons they shared.

Other Forms of Data

Besides the interviews I took note of items, posters, toys and book collections that the school and the teachers had. I also took note of the school's art work and signs and if they had relation to the values that they were trying to promote with the antiracist program and also with the dual language program. I took note of activities and special events that happened in the classroom and at school as a whole and also took note of the language that was spoken around the school, as a support to provide and understanding

how the implementation of that dual language program works. I also made observations in classes, the lunch room and special programming. Each of the observations lasted 45 minutes. The ones conducted in the classroom were repeated two or three times at different hours and days of the week. The objective of these observations was to see the classrooms and the lessons being taught as well as the activities that teachers were engaging their students in.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data and results have been reported with the use of pseudonyms for the participants and the name of the school. Some of the participants were very concerned about pseudonyms not being enough to protect their identity. For that reason, I separated the information about the participants from the results and the analysis of the data.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim from the audio recording. To keep track of all the material, the interviews were organized by using participants' organization forms, these forms and the consent forms were transferred to a digital format. All digital recordings were labeled and stored in a file together with the forms and the observations where the participant was involved.

The material was analyzed looking for common themes. For this part of the process, I used a grid to organize it. Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Miles and Huberman (1984) suggest that the analysis of the interviews should be done close to the process of interviewing. In other words, a researcher should analyze and interview before

continuing to the next interview in order to look for possible themes that need to be clarified or to create new questions that help to go deeper in a particular subject. On the other hand, Sideman (2006) says that he does the opposite; trying to keep both parts of the process separate in order to avoid imposing meaning to what the participant is saying (Sideman 2006). I also summarized most findings in a chart, in order to provide clarity about the perceptions the teachers manifested. The charts once again try to protect the participants' identity by making categories according to race, ethnicity, gender and language of dominance.

I decided to keep both of these perspectives in mind by making notes of things that caught my attention after the interview, but not deeply analyzing it right away. The notes and the interviews were stored to be analyzed later, after all the interviews were done. Since there were not follow up interviews, in most of the cases, I made arrangements with the participants to call them or write them with any minor questions if necessary. After reading the interview transcriptions, I analyzed the data by identifying points of interest in the text. My analysis was guided by the identification of common themes as previously mentioned; these themes were labeled to make their organization easier. In order to share the information found in the interviews, I created a profile of each participant that helped me to describe the participants' experiences in their own words with the use of narrative (Sideman 2006).

The written material and the notes collected in this study were organized in a similar way, being labeled in parts that are found of interest for the study and looking at common themes that appear in them. The archived documents were labeled and organized in order to support some of the statements of the participants or to provide

explanatory information when necessary.

Ethical Considerations

One of the biggest ethical considerations which I was concerned with respect to this study was about the trust that the participants placed in me when agreeing to participate in the study. Since they were concerned about the privacy of the information they provided, I did my best to keep that privacy intact, not only through the use of pseudonyms, but also through the way I reported the data and the results. Some participants would say to me, “you would need to use two pseudonyms for me” or they would ask me to stop the recorder to tell me something they just wanted to keep between them and I. In response to all of those concerns, I decided to separate the description of the participants from the findings chapter in which I talk about their experiences and opinions and avoid using their pseudonyms as much as possible.

All the data was saved electronically and in paper. Only I have access to it. It was stored in a safe place and it then destroyed once the study was completed. The study would be shared with the participants upon their request.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of the study was the lack of diversity among the *Aprendamos* teachers and staff. There were only seven male teachers at *Aprendamos*, and only one fully participated in the study. There was only one African American

teacher in the school and the number of Latina classroom teachers was also limited. .In spite of the lack of diversity that exists in the school, I was able to interview several Latinas in different positions and White bilingual and non-bilingual teachers providing diverse perspectives to the study.

While I was working on this study, the state where we were residing and working was in turbulent times, suffering major budget cuts and many of the people at the school were involved in protests and movements against the local government. Many teachers at *Aprendamos* were laid off. So between these two things, the teachers and staff were increasingly busy and it was hard to make arrangements for interviews.

Sideman (2006) suggests that there is a process of three interviews which should be conducted with each participant, as described earlier. Because I moved to Spain the year after I conducted the interviews, it was hard to go back and reconnect with people to interview them more than once. Only some of the participants were interviewed more than once and only three of them were interviewed three times.

Even though I knew all of the interviewees and there was a strong familiarity in most cases (which made them seem and act relaxed and confident while being interviewed or observed), many of them were concerned about confidentiality issues. They asked me to turn off the recorder or made jokes about needing more than one pseudonym not to be recognized in the final write-up of the study. So, I assume that if they were worried about no one knowing what they said in the interviews, it is possible that they held some information back, information that could have been valuable to this research.

As a former teacher and parent at *Aprendamos*, I know the research site very well.

That had its pros and cons; the cons can be considered part of the limitations of this study. As a Spanish speaker, I could critically see how Spanish language was taught, spoken and presented to the families both in writing and orally at school wide events. This could have contributed to personal bias in conducting this study. Even though I tried to separate myself as much as possible from the study while designing it and analyzing the data, I felt that I could anticipate the conclusions. I didn't guide them, but I wasn't very surprised with the outcome.

While this study had its limitations, its findings are relevant because the experiences of the participants provide information about the experiences themselves, and also about the phenomena being studied.

Chapter IV

Findings

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the findings for this study. Framed within a critical paradigm, the purpose of this study was to gain insights about the perceptions that *Aprendamos*' teachers and staff had about the antiracist and dual language programs implemented at their school. I used interviews as my primary data collection method with document analysis and observations as supplemental data collection methods. The interviews highlighted the participants' voices, shedding light on the meaning participants made of their perception of a phenomenon (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991) while the critical paradigm helped to frame the power dynamics within the educational programs examined in this study. I analyzed the findings and implications of this study drawing from the perceptions of the participants.

The main research question was: What are the perceptions of teachers and staff of an urban dual-language school in relation to the implementation of an antiracist and dual language program? The secondary questions were: How do teachers and staff perceive these programs in relation to the school? And how do teachers and staff perceive these programs in relation to the students? In order to answer these questions, I present the participants' perceptions throughout the chapter, focusing on the meaning they made of both programs, highlighting the programs' strengths, challenges and providing suggestions for improvement. In order to provide a simplified explanation and the findings of the study, and to provide clarity of the number of participants that shared a common point of view, I created charts for each section, which can be found in the appendices section.

The chapter is divided into two major sections. The first one is dedicated to the reflections of teachers and staff regarding an antiracist program implemented at their school. The second one is dedicated to the reflections of teachers and staff regarding the dual language program implemented at their school. In this chapter, I use pseudonyms. The participants' racial/ethnic backgrounds and job descriptions are hidden, in an effort to protect participants' overall identities. For more details on the participants, please refer to chapter 3. I also prepared charts that summarize the findings and have attached them as appendixes in the appendixes section. In these charts I have avoided using the participant's pseudonyms and I have categorized them instead using gender, ethnicity and dominant language.

Findings

Literature suggests that antiracist programs aim to develop strategies that challenge racial, ethnic and linguistic oppression promoting consciousness against racism in all participants of the school's community (Kailin, 2005). This promotion helps schools challenge racism and provides an education based on justice and equity. The implementation of antiracist programs at *Aprendamos* reflected the school's desire to present itself as an alternative to racist pedagogies and racist experiences at school. This study shows that the antiracist program at the studied site was valued by members of the school community and that antiracist lessons were taught by most teachers. The school established an environment that promoted antiracist values and provided the teachers and the students with books and materials to support antiracist teaching and learning.

Having an antiracist program in place calls for specific needs and arrangements. A school's community members should develop a common understanding of the principles of antiracist education (Kailin, 2005) and have a common knowledge of what antiracism means. Without this common understanding, such programs could potentially lose their consistency and present contradictions if different messages are being promoted. When implementing an antiracist program, teachers should also become aware of their own perspectives regarding issues of racism and discrimination in order to prevent their racist beliefs from transforming into racist attitudes affecting the school community. Teachers must examine racism on a daily basis, in all their practices, including the way they approach issues of race (Pollock, 2006). Hence, in this case, they should also examine the way they approach their antiracist program. This study revealed that many teachers in the school had a personal interest in social justice issues and were motivated to teach antiracist lessons. However, the study also showed that at some point, teachers and staff proved to have different perspectives of what an antiracist program was. In response to this situation, the school's leaders implemented an Antiracist-Language Grant, which provided the resources and the opportunity for the school to re-examine its programs and work on a common vision of the antiracist program. The implementation of this grant created changes in some areas of the antiracist program, but whether the teachers and staff at *Aprendamos* shared a common perspective of the antiracist program was left unclear.

Aprendamos implemented a dual language program, providing instruction in a second language in addition to the one the students already knew, thereby aiming to be an additive bilingual program (Valenzuela, 1999). The attempt to provide this

opportunity to students and validate the cultural and linguistic knowledge they brought, was an attempt to challenge the status quo and fight the discrimination children of minority languages have suffered. As presented by Meshulan (2011), schools that try to present themselves as an alternative to hegemonic power oftentimes find difficulty in making their programs meet their objectives. This study's school site is a good example of that since they encountered several external barriers to implementation of their dual language program, such as the difficulties in recruiting native Spanish speaking teachers and students, and a lack of resources for teaching and assessing Spanish language and literacy. This diminished the quality of the Spanish language being taught at the school, making the implementation of this model not reach the desired outcome and turning out to be subtractive for some students (Valenzuela, 1999). The program had some success in developing Spanish language skills in English-speaking students while also maintaining and developing their skills in English. In the case of the Spanish speakers, however, the program subtracted the students' own language, because through the years in the program, they did not develop the skills in their first language. The limitations presented in the teaching and development of the Spanish language, which was sometimes not used and many times misused, demeaned the Spanish language, while English, was promoted as a superior language. This approach to the first language of Latino/a students can be identified as linguistic racism (Yahya, 2011, Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008). The strong connection that exists between language and culture (Bahomondes and Chiodi, 2001, Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008) points to the fact that by limiting Latino/a students' language acquisition and use, the knowledge of their culture is

also being limited. Learning about these limitations in the dual language program raised doubts about the integrity of the antiracist program the school also implemented, because the fact that linguistic racism was found in the school contradicted the antiracist ideals the school was trying to promote.

Aprendamos

When approaching *Aprendamos* you walk by a community garden with wooden handmade benches and various mural panels hanging from the fence. Walking inside the school, multilingual flags that translate the word peace welcome you. Students' artwork follows; pictures taken by the students in the community and their neighborhoods, posters created by them about different social justice issues, drawings and biographies of leaders that have challenged the political and social system in their time through their struggle and commitment to multiple causes. A long *Quetzalcoatl* faces a long Chinese dragon, bringing together Aztec and Chinese mythology. Political posters are also hanged, evoking the civil rights movement and current local struggles. *Aprendamos* visually suggests that the school is concerned with issues of social justice, a message that they transmit and share with the students and families.

Aprendamos is located in an urban integrated neighborhood in the Midwest of the United States, making the school culturally, racially and ethnically diverse. The school's student population is mainly Latino/a and African American, but there are also White students that come not only from the school's surroundings, but also from other parts of the city drawn by the dual language program. According to demographic data provided by the school, during the 2010-2011 school year, the Latino population was 59%, the African American students were 18.7%, 12% white students, 1% of Asian and Native American background, and 8.3% of students that are under the category of other, who are mostly biracial students of different ethnicities. This demographic composition provides an experience of diversity among them, which seems to be appreciated by most students and staff. The school evokes in many ways racial diversity and

multiculturalism; there is art inspired in traditional art forms from many countries, different people that appear to be from different cultures and countries, doing different activities, practicing rituals and celebrations. In most pieces stereotypes are avoided and respect is promoted.

Aprendamos has been portrayed by educational literature as a progressive school involved in issues of social justice, determined to promote antiracist values, a school that tries to become alternative as a “counter-hegemonic culture and struggle derive from individual agency and resistance” (Meshulan, 2010, pg.19). In fact the school appears to be an alternative to traditional schooling, where banking education (Freire, 1989) is the medium to teach the students. The teachers and staff at *Aprendamos* embed social justice as part of their curriculum and recognize the principals of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970, 1989, Giroux, 1987, 1993) as guidance for their teaching. They prepare lessons and materials that speak about human rights, children’s rights and the rights of citizens to equality and education. The lessons that are taught at *Aprendamos* also encourage critical analysis of the world as a political sphere, covering topics such as: ecology, poverty, homelessness, immigration and AIDS, demonstrating the school’s commitment to issues of social justice (Giroux 1995, 1997). *Aprendamos* identifies the need to examine inequalities throughout history, such as: slavery, colonialism, immigration policies and laws, unfair relations of the characteristics of an antiracist program (Kailin 2005; Price 1993). *Aprendamos’* lessons include all these topics and the activities that the students engage in, do not only happen at school, but in the community in their daily and political lives as well. Every year the students in the upper grades participate in the manifestations that Latino immigrants and their supporters

engage in to demand local, as well as national immigration reforms. Most recently, when the district underwent severe budget cuts, the school organized protests and strikes in which teachers, students and their families marched to the Capitol of the state *Aprendamos* is located in. The students also created posters in their art class that were later distributed to neighborhood business and community organizations. The school also began to display political posters defending public schooling and included these campaigns in their daily work such as meeting agendas to encourage discussion as well as classroom lessons for the students.

The schools' classroom book collections and particularly the school's library collection also supports the teaching of all these subjects with a broad bilingual collection of books that relate to issues of social justice.

According to one of *Aprendamos*' leaders and founders the school was meant to be an alternative to traditional schooling since the beginning of its existence, trying to provide a unique environment for students and the community while implementing a dual language. These programs were meant to make a difference in the district, since schools that taught languages had bilingual programs, not dual language programs, which give emphasis to the students' first language as much as their second language (Larsen, Long 1994). The leaders felt that the implementation of this program also responded to their antiracist program, because it's meaning challenged the discrimination minority language speakers go through:

We saw...this place being the....a place where we could initiate and develop a program that had a really sort of, much more better practices, focus that included a whole language approach, that included community and parents involvement, that

was a dual language program as opposed to the bilingual model, we would do a dual language and then of course the multicultural antiracism component that would be a thread that went through the programs.

The founders also considered the importance of getting the community and the parents involved in the educational process, validating the community, but also the students' backgrounds. The school's mission also reflected the school's commitment to this educational project as well as the application of their idealistic and rigorous pedagogical principles to their individual classrooms:

We are teaching the future citizens of our community. By using best practice, critical thinking, and anti-violence strategies, we are preparing students for a global experience that will challenge them to be the truth-tellers and change-makers of tomorrow.

Aprendamos' Antiracist Program

Aprendamos was founded with the intention of promoting antiracist principles and values. In accordance with the values of critical pedagogy, this educational model also strived to provide an appropriate framework that offered real possibilities of empowerment for those involved in educational processes. This approach did not thwart the possibility for true interactions with asymmetric relations (Freire, 1989, 1993; Giroux, 1997).

Even though the program had been established a very long time ago, during the school year 2008-2009 *Aprendamos'* teachers and staff expressed their concerns about the antiracist program at the school, establishing that perhaps not everyone at the school

was on the same page about the program and, that there was not a common understanding among the teachers and staff about what constituted an antiracist program. Due to this concern, *Aprendamos*' leaders dedicated some time to discussion, discovering that the perspectives of the teachers about the program varied greatly. The variety of the perceptions of the teachers had included perceptions that denoted colorblindness, perceptions focused only on diversity, without analyzing issues of power, racism or discrimination, perceptions that show understanding of power relations involved in issues of race, and perceptions that manifest that having an antiracist program is an essential condition, which are discussions about racism, discrimination and stereotypes. In conclusion this shows that the restlessness of some teachers about all teachers not having the same understanding of what antiracist education meant were well founded.

During the year 2009-2010 the school district where *Aprendamos* is located offered to schools in the district an opportunity to apply for antiracist grants to implement or develop antiracist education opportunities and programs. *Prenames* created a grant committee that worked over the summer to develop an antiracist language grant, which was later submitted to the district. The school's grant was selected and *Aprendamos* was granted one hundred thousand dollars to carry on the projects included in the proposal. The proposal established that money would be used for staff development that was to be acquired in a six session antiracist education workshop with a local professor, the purchase of antiracist books and materials for each classroom and the library and to pay the teachers for hours of work in the design of an antiracist curriculum for each grade level that was later going to be coordinated with

school wide activities and curriculum planning. Since *Aprendamos*' grant proposal also focused on issues of language, for being a dual language, bilingual school, part of the grant money was also used for staff to discuss and design changes to the dual language program.

One of the participants, who taught at *Aprendamos* had the opportunity to work on the committee that selected the grantees that were going to be funded. She expressed that the grant proposal that *Aprendamos* submitted was of good quality and met the expected criteria to represent what antiracist education was really about. According to her, this was based on the antiracist principles that Carr and Klassen (1996) defined as an action-oriented strategy to be used in education and other fields to seek institutional and systemic change focusing on issues of racism and other interrelated systems of social oppression, such as sexism, classism, heterosexism, etc. Kenya said that *Aprendamos*' proposal demonstrated a better understanding of antiracist principles:

Aprendamos' proposal was definitely... probably the most thought out grant, many other schools in the Midwest had these really, they didn't really understand what the Antiracist and Language Grant was for, or suggesting that they had a movie night, or have Ko-Thi dancers come and do dancing, that's what they thought was antiracist, anti-bias, so *Aprendamos*' was much more, their grant did address issues of racism, discrimination and prejudices, it was what we were looking for

The central principles of an antiracist education program are to develop the abilities, knowledge, and skills needed within the students, teachers, staff and community members to contribute to the construction of a fair society (Kailin, 2005).

This purpose can only be achieved if antiracist education includes the examination of the hierarchical structures of power (Gorski, 2007). Antiracist education must also examine negative attitudes and assumptions about race, racial and ethnic stereotypes (Pollock, 2005) as well as discriminatory attitudes and practices towards language, not only those in society as a whole but also in school (Solórzano, 2001). *Aprendamos'* grant proposal indicated that the principles expressed by Gorski, Pollock and Solórzano were the principles that guided their antiracist program that aimed to teach the students to analyze and challenge stereotypes and racism, providing a historical perspective of its struggle and resistance. *Aprendamos'* antiracist program also included the dual language program as an example of their antiracist principles that they also included in the grant proposal.

The school determined that school wide themes provided the opportunity to share the experiences of people of color, their struggle and their resistance a potentially effective vehicle to address issues of racism and antiracism. The antiracist curriculum that the classroom teachers developed was built around these four themes. *Aprendamos'* leaders indicated that the school wide themes were touted as indicators of their antiracist curricula.

The cultural diversity of students and their families is a strength. Our school-wide themes help students to connect their own experiences to lessons in various subject areas. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of young learners preparing for life in a multicultural, multiracial, society. Classroom activities emphasize cooperative learning methods which help children learn to work together to solve problems and learn important skills.

The school wide themes divided the school year into four larger subjects that every teacher had to address in their classrooms. Teachers were also expected to prepare a presentation with their class for the whole school community about one of the four themes.

Theme I. focused on the students' heritage and the promotion of awareness about the world and its need for peace and equality,

Theme II focused on diversity, the strengths of being bilingual and learning to counteract the stereotypes contained in cartoons, books, magazines and the media),

Theme III. focused on African-American history, the contribution of African American people and women to the nation, the need to overcome prejudice and racism and how people of all nationalities have worked for justice and equality, and

Theme IV focused on the importance of the students' families' story and learning about other people through their stories.

These school wide themes do focus on inequalities provided by racial issues. They do contemplate history and face possible reasons for that inequality, they also honor activist and leaders that have worked towards social justice and are inclusive or narratives that are not Eurocentric. The school wide themes celebrations as well as in daily activities, the school has tried to include a wide range of media that comes from racially and ethnic diverse groups and creators

Approximately every two months, *Aprendamos* hosted a "Theme Celebration" in the gym, where different classes took turns working on a presentation about what they

had studied or prepared, where the whole school community, including parents, gathered. While working at *Aprendamos*, I designed a curriculum that consisted of these school wide themes. My class put on several presentations such as theater and dance performances that revolved around peace, immigration and other social justice issues. Other classes presented presentations that included: the creation of pamphlets with biographies of a broad variety of social justice leaders that were distributed to the whole school and its guests, plays and songs that talked about justice, respect for diversity and peace and videos that encouraged antiracist values.

The design of these lesson plans and activities are represented in appendixes 1 and 2. It is clear that, at least on paper, the school tried to follow through with antiracist education core principles.

General Perceptions of Teachers and Staff about the Antiracist Program

Most teachers and staff at *Aprendamos* thought that the antiracist program at their school was relevant because, in comparison to other schools in the district, *Aprendamos* gave importance to issues of racism and social justice and promoted antiracist values. These were general perceptions and were independent of the Antiracist Language Grant that was implemented to improve both programs. With respect to the grant implementation, many teachers and staff did not think that this implementation had as much impact on teaching perspectives or on the racial relations perceived at school. Nevertheless, they identified aspects in the grant implementation that were useful and meaningful for the continuity of the program, such as the planning sessions they

engaged in, which helped them systematize the antiracist lessons they used to plan and teach on their own. They established that the curriculum planning could be helpful for grade level teams to stay on the same page in relation to the antiracist program. They also appreciated the material they could acquire with grant money because it could enhance their antiracist lessons. They were grateful that the school had the opportunity to re-evaluate the dual language program, using the grant money to pay a team of teachers to work extra hours in its design. The antiracist workshops that were conducted with a local professor was, according to them, the least successful part of the program, because it didn't involve the participation of the whole school; they felt there was not much racial and ethnic diversity among the participants. Teachers and staff *at Aprendamos* identified strengths and challenges in the program and they offered suggestions that could improve further implementation.

Strengths of the Antiracist Program

The opportunity that teachers had to collaboratively work on an antiracist curriculum per grade level was what the teachers perceived as one of the most valuable aspects of the implementation of the antiracist grant. Most teachers had the chance to participate in the curriculum planning sessions and were paid to do so, but some limited their participation due to time conflicts. Most of these sessions were led by team levels and followed the templates created by the school that were used as guides for the lesson and unit planning (shown in appendixes 3 and 4). The curriculum was designed according to the school wide themes as explained previously.

In these sessions, teachers also had the chance to share their strategies for teaching the lessons and made a list of resources, such as books, exercises and homework that could support the lessons, modeling lessons for each other. Appendix 1 shows an example of unit planning completed by a grade level and Appendix 2 shows a grid that shows the unit plans that were organized after bringing together all the unit plan that grade levels from kindergarten to fifth had planned in relation to one of the school wide themes.

Teachers shared lessons that they planned with their grade level teams. Kenya, shared what she perceived as the antiracist principles that *Aprendamos* was committed to:

Well, we did a big unit about American Indian studies this fall, I tried to do that around Thanksgiving a lot, we talked about Christopher Colombus. I used the worksheet that another colleague gave me. We talked about American Indian stereotypes; I used pictures to show the kids about what American Indians look like and talked about specific tribes and not American Indians as one. We also talked about holidays in different cultures... They read books with icon American characters in the more present time... talked a lot about race, color, color of skin, why your skin is beautiful?.

The lesson that Kenya referred to reflected how she incorporated social justice into her teaching, bringing to the present what is oftentimes set in the past. She also discussed issues of race with her students, which is a fundamental component of antiracist education (Kailin, 2005). She also referred to the analysis of stereotypes, by

rejecting false notions of human difference (Pollock, 2006). This lesson was followed up by a visit from a Native American dancer that explained to all the first grade children the meaning of his outfit and explained that he used it exclusively for special occasions. This experience challenged the stereotype of indigenous groups wearing Native American attire at all times. The presentation also reminded the students that Native Americans are still alive. In past years, I prepared a puppet show for children in all first grade classes that explored the arrival of colonizers, pointing out that there were people in America before they came. In other grade levels they used Thanksgiving to talk about the life of Native Americans before the arrival of Europeans.

All third grade students worked on leaders' biographies. Lauren shared her lesson related to political and social leaders' bibliographies, which allowed students to identify biographies as a genre, but also reinforced their knowledge in history and their awareness for social justice and racial struggles:

Our students are exposed to biographies of leaders of all times and races, people that have challenged their time fighting for social justice. Leader's biographies are shared in the class and the students are supposed to find their own biography books in the library. After reading about many leaders they choose the person they will write about and do further research on the person until they are ready to create their own biographical writing on the person. After the students finish their final draft, they publish their biography and share it with their class and with other students in the school. The leaders that the students study about are diverse, they generally pick a leader with whom they identify personally, either by their race, ethnicity or gender and because the struggle they lived matters to them. When

sharing all the biographies the students learn about these leaders as heroes of their time, identify the causes of their oppression and what they did to work towards freedom and justice.

This unit about biographies gave the students the opportunity to identify different forms of oppression during history and to learn about struggle as a possible response to oppression. By studying about leaders that belonged to different ethnic and racial groups, both male and female, the students were able to see leaders they could identify with, which does not generally happen when only a partial notion of history is taught, especially when this notion gives primary importance to Eurocentric leaders.

Participants mentioned, and it was confirmed by lessons observed and student's work, that some teachers used political contingency issues to teach students about social justice and racism. In my observations as a researcher and as a former teacher of the school, I can say that political contingency issues were used as opportunities to reinforce the antiracist curriculum of the school. For example, during elections, students engaged in several activities related to the election to talk about how Obama was the first African American president in the United States. When public education suffered budget cuts in the state where *Aprendamos* was located, the teachers focused on how those cuts were unfair because they affected public education and public health, among other public institutions that were primarily used by racial and ethnic minority students. Olivia encouraged her students to work on responses to these cuts and to express their opinions about their families' concerns about the issue:

In terms of social justice issues I would just say that this year with all the stuff with the governor I've done a ton with my kids, as I mentioned earlier, if there is

something that is not fair, there is always something you can try to do to make it better so we have written letters, they've spoken at the meeting with one of the school's board director. I did not make this happen but some of the children have gone with their families to the State Capitol, but I've provided the opportunity for them to talk about that. And we've talked about it a lot I mean everything related to what is going on and what that means, because those cuts affect them and other children, which are mainly children of color that live in the most impoverished neighborhoods of this city and state.

In terms of racial issues and struggles, Mayrin also explained that every year the issues of race were raised in her classroom. She relayed the experience with one particular group of students who did not seem to have the previous knowledge about issues of race or the previous experience of having that discussion:

In terms of explaining, like look around you, do you see mostly people with my skin color? They are like 'just you and him" (a White student) I'm like yeah, and then that's funny because then they" get in this discussion "what color am I?" 'cause they are fair, you know and so is it the color of your skin that's always the thing that determines where you are from? no....and supposedly we teach it in every grade every year...this year I had kids saying, "where am I from? What's my skin color? what do you call this color? so that happened, I remember the date was April 4th because we were talking a lot about....we read a book "Martin's Big Words" in commemoration of his dead and we were talking a lot about that and....just a lot of confusion, like on identity, how they identify themselves. Like how do you identify yourself versus how someone else make a judgment based on

what they see, or the color of your skin, so, I think in here it happens more organically, like it just comes up and then we talk. But I remember talking in that book about how there were laws that people who are black and people that are white could not be married and this one girl, who is biracial, just about to have a heart attack, she said 'oh my god, I wouldn't be here, I wouldn't be here' she was like this intense realization, I was like "yeah, you wouldn't be here, isn't that sad"....it taught me that even though every year we talk about this with the kids, It doesn't mean that they get it, like when they get older is more complex, they think about it in a different way, so what you do with them when they are six years old, is different than what you do in third grade.

Mayrin raised the example of this lesson and conversation with the student to illustrate that talking about race had different layers including: identity, the perception of the self, the perception of others about ourselves, and how those perceptions are marked by the social constructs of race and ethnicity. Olivia explained how she addressed her students' confusion to bring out a lesson that touched on the concept of race and its historical implications. She also suggested that these lessons need to be taught over and over again, and deepened, because students forget and sometimes don't understand what issues of race and racism really mean. She emphasized that with time and development, students were able to understand these issues from different perspectives.

Besides teaching specific antiracist lessons, some teachers commented on the daily opportunities they used to bring forward issues of race, racism and antiracist strategies. Various teachers mentioned the use of books as a permanent source of

antiracist lessons. Olivia shared that she used the contexts of books on every possible occasion when they spoke about issues of social justice and racism:

If I saw an opportunity within a story to bring out an awareness or to relate to something else that has to do with you know, classism or racism or sexism or whatever I would do my best to do that

Lauren, using this strategy with further analysis, commented on using the antiracist lesson as part as her work as a graduate student:

During this implementation I decided to write my thesis on the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies using antiracist texts. I was so pleased to see that using nontraditional texts (referring to text that addressed issues of social justice) still aloud for the teaching of explicit literacy strategies. I now use a wide range of books that focus on different aspects of social justice in my classroom.

Lauren showed that the work with antiracist lessons inspired her to analyze antiracist literature in a deeper way, highlighting that the use of this literature in the classroom not only suited the purpose of teaching the antiracist lesson, but supported other subjects and skills that the students needed to work on.

Identified Challenges of the Antiracist Program

The discussions among teachers and staff during the 2008-2009 school year uncovered the variety of perspectives regarding the content of an antiracist program. This realization motivated school leaders to apply for the Antiracist-Language Grant, with the hope of implementing a program that would refresh the antiracist program that

was in place and finance training sessions for the school's personnel. The grant was also used to implement changes in the dual language program, an extension of the school's antiracist program.

The participants identified that the difference in each other's' understandings of what the antiracist program was about and what it involved, had to do with the background of the teachers and the training they had received to be able to teach and carry out an antiracist curriculum. They recognized that because *Aprendamos* was known for implementing an antiracist program, many teachers came to the school with the intention and expectation of teaching an antiracist curriculum. These teachers were aware of social justice and racism issues. I personally applied to the school because I was informed of the program and the possibility of designing a curriculum that was consistent with my personal beliefs. I understood issues of social justice and antiracism because of my life experience, so I was able to maintain daily practices and generate learning moments that addressed these issues, which was not the case for all teachers. Besides a cd with homework, the school wide themes and a book about peace education, I was not provided anything else in generating a school curriculum. When other teachers that had a background in social justice came to the school, they created their lessons independently-lesson plans that consistently contained themes and activities that related to issues of social justice and racism. Other teachers came to *Aprendamos* hardly knowing that the school had an antiracist program and more so, hardly understanding what it was that they, as teachers, needed to do to implement it. Most teachers and staff at *Aprendamos*, including myself, felt that newly hired teachers were not trained or well informed about the programs that the school implemented, which contributed to the

feeling that, overall, teachers and staff were not on the same page. Kenya's comment represents the views of 13 out of 17 participants about the limitations intrinsic in the hiring process:

When they get hired, you know, not necessarily know, the interview has a lot of questions about the themes of the school and about how you would implement it, but maybe people don't understand that we are supposed to be teaching every, we're supposed to be teaching it all the time, not just once a year... I think there is not enough support as there could be for teachers.

Kathy added that they are not only not warned about the program, or evaluated to see if their abilities and perspectives suit the program, but also that teachers were not guided to work on the program and develop lessons and skills:

Algunos maestros enseñan dependiendo de que creen importante no los programas de la escuela cuando yo llegue nunca me dieron nada me dejaron solita, pero ahora si los maestros se preocupan un poco más pero en mi caso nadie me ayudo.

Some teachers teach depending on what they believe is important, not according to the programs implemented by the school. When I come I did not get much help, I was left alone. Now teachers care a little more, but in my case, no one helped me.

Sierra commented on her experience as a new teacher to the school. She felt that she was poorly informed about the antiracist program; it was mentioned to her, but not since the beginning. This gave her the impression that the school's program was not a

genuine priority to the school, because if it was, the school would have informed and trained all new teachers in order to make sure their work aligned with the objectives of the program:

For Sierra, the importance of the antiracist program required that the school's leaders make a bigger effort to demonstrate its importance through its reinforcement. Sierra did not see the program being reinforced because new teachers were not trained and neither the program nor its objectives were discussed or mentioned regularly in any meetings in the school. If some teachers had information about the program and other teachers did not, only some teachers might have been able to implement which created inconsistency – relaying mixed messages about issues of race and racist. Considering how important it is for teachers to be thoroughly trained in an antiracist program (Kailin,2005), not doing so could deteriorate the program.

Sierra also mentioned that new programs were coming into the school, such as the new literacy series, that took precedence over the antiracist program. Three participants commented on the school's inability to follow through with the programs it implemented; many new school programs and initiatives appeared in the school and received attention, which made it challenging to create continuity with programs that were already in place. Mary provided an example of this concern:

Para mi es que empiezan una cosa pero no la terminan no sé qué pasa pero ahí quedan, el material es el que más sirve pero creo que no es una diferencia

Creo que aquí hay gente con conciencia social, pero para mí si es difícil ver que no se siga trabajando en lo que se empieza y terminan las cosas.

For me they start a program and they don't finish it. I don't know what happens but that's where they stay at, nowhere. The materials that we can use are what works the best but I think it doesn't make a difference then on their own. I think there are people with a social conscience, but it is difficult for me to see, but it is hard to see that there is no continuity in the work, from the start to the end.

According to Sierra and other participants, the antiracist program did not seem important to the school since they didn't promote it and failed to explain it to teachers and follow up with it. The program was not regularly discussed in staff meetings or teacher trainings; the new implementation of the antiracist program posed an opportunity to review the antiracist program and aim for all teachers to understand it.

The grant implementation encouraged leaders to make an effort to close the gaps of understanding that *Aprendamos'* teachers and staff had about the antiracist program. In order to work with the teachers and help them be on the same page about the antiracist program or at least have a common understanding of it, the grant committee decided to include a series of antiracist workshop conducted by a local professor who specialized in antiracist education. The grant committee's hope was to have broad participation from teachers and staff in the school in these workshops, including the cooks, secretaries and service helpers. In order to facilitate this, they planned to meet after hours or perhaps on a Saturday, in order to allow everybody's participation. When surveys were distributed to teachers the majority of them did not want to attend

meetings on weekends. The nights chosen for the workshops were convenient for many teachers, but not for other staff, such as service helpers, the nurse, the cooks, the secretaries and paraprofessionals. Most of the participants ended up being teachers and some supportive staff such as the librarian, literacy coach and speech pathologist, etc.

The participation in the antiracist workshops was voluntary, but participants were paid to attend, which was an incentive. This fact might or might not have influenced some of the people's participation. No one mentioned the financial compensation as being a stimulus for participation. Moreover, according to the reasons given by the participants that stopped going, or the ones that never attended, the payment did not seem to influence their decision.

There was inconsistent participation in these workshops; many people chose not to participate after the first session or two. Sierra, is a woman of color, attended the workshops only once. After the first session, she felt as though it wasn't going to mean anything to her as a person of color. On the one hand, she felt that her experiences as a person of color, dealing with discrimination were far more instructive in relating to racism than the workshop could be, and she thought, after hearing their comments, that the rest of the participants did not have experiences in relation to issues of race and racism that would provide new knowledge for her. Later she admitted that her participation could have been important. She stated:

I did participate in one of the workshops....I didn't know if really ...what I was gonna gain from it, like the first one was kind of long and blown out and I just thought...maybe it is my perspective....this is my thinking...I didn't think I needed a lot of training in how to be anti-racist because is kind of already ingrained in me

because I see so much racial things in like literature and all around me and I'm aware of that, because I am not part of the majority group. I am part of the minority, so I didn't feel like I needed much training...I didn't know if I was gonna gain anything form it, so I decided not to go....

Sierra's comment showed that she saw more potential in learning from the experience of racism than from conversing about it. This led her to stop her participation. She later commented that it would probably have been a good idea to share some of her experiences in the workshop. She also said that it would have been helpful to still listen to what her colleagues had to say. In fact, she said that the only session she attended was "very eye opening" which showed that even though it wasn't what she expected, she still learned something:

I mean it is good to listen. It was very eye opening, the first training, to hear how many teachers had had first hand either racist upbringings or they had racist elements in their immediate family...and I was blown away at how really common it is....it is so very real and common in like everyone's everyday life and upbringing....so it would have been nice for me like to, just as a different kind of perspective to be in....I have been in the receiving end of that and I've had experiences in the other end of that so guess it would have been nice to share that but....and would have been nice to listen and learn from people, to see what they are doing to fight it....and to combat that...but I think the first training was so heavy and I just thought...aaaaahh....mmm....

Despite the fact that Jamisha decided not to continue her participation in the workshops, she recognized that there was information she obtained from the day she did

participate. This experience that she identified as “eye opening” was the opportunity to learn that her colleagues came from backgrounds very different than hers. She observed that the first training was “heavy.” She perhaps considered that the difference between her life and that of the lives of other people of color was heavy in comparison to White people’s lives. She felt a heavy load. Her facial expressions during the interview indicated that this was something she did not want to deal with. She did not come back to it, so that is something that may be inferred.

Two Latinas participated in most of the sessions and both expressed having felt somewhat lonely because their experiences as Latinas were different from everyone else’s and there were not many Latinos/as to share stories similar to theirs with. Jennifer, Mayrin and Jamisha, as women of color, did not feel there was adequate representation from their racial or ethnic groups in the workshops. Jennifer expressed her feeling of loneliness:

Me sentí solita porque no había alguien que pudiera relacionarse con las experiencias que había tenido yo creciendo en un país Latino y todo eso, a nosotros nos enseñan de otra manera el tema del colonialismo por ejemplo y el mestizaje y usamos palabras que podrían se consideran racistas, pero que las usamos como de cariño, como negrito. Así que no se si alguien podía entenderme.

I felt lonely because there wasn’t somebody that could relate to the experiences I had had growing up in a Latin country. We are taught different themes such as colonialism and being *meztizos* and we use words that could be consider racist here that are not racist over there, like *negrito* (little black) which we use kindly. I didn’t really felt understood.

Sierra and Jennifer's comments revealed that the some of the people of color that did participate in the workshops did not feel represented or understood, perhaps because there were more voices of White people in the workshops. Because their White colleagues were part of the group of power and enjoyed the privileges that being White provides (Lipsitz, 1998), their experiences were privileged. Most of the White teachers and staff that participated in the workshops grew up in racist environments (Feagin, 2010). For this reason, the presence of more diverse voices at the workshops may have proved beneficial for all participants.

Jennifer, a Latina, felt particularly misunderstood in the workshops because her perspectives as a Latina in relation to racism and discrimination were not the same as her colleagues. In many Latin-American cultures, race relations are marked by the discrimination perpetrated from the European descendants towards indigenous groups (Bengoa, 2000). Jennifer mentioned that in her country the word "*negrito*" or little Black one does not have a racist connotation (the way it does where Africans were once enslaved). This term is used as a term of endearment because the termination "ito" added to the word "negro" is a diminutive frequently used not only to talk about proportions, but also about beloved things. Recent debates have surfaced about the way in which those diminutives are used in relation to minority groups and there are several studies that identify it as a racist word (Shoichet, 2011). This is just one example of the complexities that racism introduces and therefore points to the importance of including as many diverse voices as possible.

Clearly, the workshop could have had been more impactful if there had been more diversity by enhancing the participation of people from different racial and ethnic

backgrounds and particularly, by having people that could have shared different experiences about racism. The participants that did not feel integrated into the workshop could have also felt better. For example Sierra, may have been willing to participate. Ironically, there was a need for diversity in the workshops, but efforts to accomplish such diversity were at the root of the need for the workshops themselves.

Besides the lack of diversity within the participants within the workshops, there were other troubling observations regarding the content and organization of the workshops and the activities. The antiracist workshops were structured as a whole group format where teachers talked about their upbringing and experiences with issues of race and racism. Some participants thought that this approach took too much time and would have been more effective if organized in smaller groups where more discussion could have happened. One participant stated that she thought the workshop did not answer her initial questions upon entering the exercise and left her with many doubts. Jennifer said that the doubts she had were not explained to her:

Para mi viniendo de que el color es el que determina el grupo, que es incorrecto pero así crecí yo. El color te pone en un sitio y una persona decir que una persona argentina, venezolana...y yo lo traje a la conversación...todavía decir que estas personas de piel blanca todavía son personas de color. Yo quería que me explicaran eso y simplemente lo verificaron que sí y yo.... pero explíquenme como puede ser eso, porque es así. Es como si eso estuviese bien. Aunque estamos trabajando para romper las barreras, todavía el entendimiento que una persona se pueda determinar, como es la definición de una persona de color, basada no en su color sino porque no es de aquí. Por ejemplo esos chilenos que

han venido de Alemania que su procedencia es otra porque son de color entonces, que son? de color rosado? Es como que no lo entiendo.

For me coming from that color is what determines the group, which is incorrect but that's how I grew up. The color puts you in a place but a person that is Argentinean, Venezuelan ... I brought that up at the conversation ... why still to say that these people of white skin are still people of color. I wanted them to explain that and they just said that that's how it is but no explanation, and I.... but explain to me how can that be, why that is. It is as if that was okay. While we are working to break down barriers, yet we understand that a person can be determined, as is the definition of a person of color, based not on their color but on their foreign origin, for example those Chileans who have come from Germany that their provenance is another because they are of color? What are they are? pink? It's like they do not understand.

Jennifer shared that from her experience as a Latina, talking about people of “color” did not make sense, because the classifications that are made in Latin America are broader than the ones that are made in the United States. As an example, in the United States, Germans, Greeks, Italians and other groups that are of European heritage are considered White. However, Latinos that are of European heritage in Latin America are still considered Latinos (not White) which would classify them as people of “color” according to the definitions she had heard in the workshop. Jennifer had questions regarding this issue, which illustrated her confusion between some terms and concepts, such as the concept of race and ethnicity.

At the core of her statement, Jennifer seemed to have left the workshop without understanding the meaning of these concepts and did not have her needs met or questions answered, but she also spoke to the lack of understanding that many other teachers might have about issues of race and racism and what these concepts really mean. According to Escribano (2010) when the issues of race, race relations, racism and inequality seem to be absent from antiracist education, the potential of effective interventions is limited (Escribano, 2010). In the case of these workshops, I am not implying that the workshops did not analyze those concepts, but simply that at least one of the participants felt those concepts were not explored enough, and it is possible that other colleagues might have shared her confusion about those issues.

Some of the initial workshop goals went arguably unmet such as: articulating the difference in teachers' perspectives; going from notions of colorblindness to the need for the analysis of structures of power; and developing strategies to guide school leaders in improving their antiracist program. The desire to teach within an antiracist model led many teachers to *Aprendamos*. Many teachers implemented antiracist lessons and discourses in their classrooms before the program was even updated. *Aprendamos'* teachers and staff considered that this desire to teach about antiracism and social justice issues was something that many teachers developed as a result of their own personal experiences and beliefs and not as a result of the implementation of the original antiracist program or its adaptation in the year 2010-2011. Alice explained how she came to be attracted by the social justice curriculum of the school:

Yo leí un artículo sobre esta escuela en una revista y pensé....qué bonita esa escuela a mí me gustaría trabajar ahí, por todo lo que estaban haciendo con los

niños sobre temas de justicia social, me encantaría ser parte de esto, así que me acerque y busque un trabajo aquí

I read an article on this school in a magazine and thought how beautiful that school.... I would like to work there, for what they were doing with children about social justice issues, I would love to be part of this, so I approached and looked for a job here

There were two participants that identified a positive influence of the implementation in the school's antiracist program. Kenya, who had left the school for a couple of years and had come back the year after the Antiracist- language grant was implemented, considered the changes she witnessed between her departure and return to the school:

Yeah...the program is definitely much more; it's much deeper now... I didn't do many specific, that I remember, any lessons, about anti-racist, anti-bias...before we didn't have the celebrations, and I think now the celebrations have made everyone more aware, because if you have to perform then you have to know what the theme is, you have to teach that stuff in your class.

The theme celebrations Kenya referred to were implemented before the Antiracist-Language Grant. She didn't know that because she wasn't there. Maybe this comparison could be made from previous years to the time in which she was a teacher at the school, but it can't really show if the implementation of the grant made this more significant. She explained that the celebrations helped teachers guide their planning, since every class had to present once a year in one of the four theme celebrations. The theme

celebrations were an artistic expression of social justice issues that the school reviewed each quarter, but unfortunately, it was not possible to know if, beyond the presentation, antiracist lessons were being taught inside the classes. Certainly, most, if not all, students benefited from the other students' presentations, and that was a definite impact that these celebrations had.

Lauren also stated that the program had impacted her teaching, changed her perspectives and reinforced her job as a teacher in relation to antiracist strategies. Lauren was a special case because during the year the grant was implemented, she decided to further her study in the subject by focusing her master's thesis on issues of the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies using antiracist texts

It has challenged me to look at my own biases. It has reminded me of the importance of valuing my students and the expertise that they and their families bring to my classroom. It has reaffirmed my belief that we all have things that we can learn from each other and strengthened my drive to make my classroom a place where students and their families feel welcomed and honored.

Lauren admitted to not participating in many parts of the program, citing her experience with a teacher that implemented many antiracist lessons as the primary model for her learning:

I have attended some of the workshops given through the program. I also taught with a teacher who was excellent at implementing antiracist education and learned a lot from watching her teach

Lauren's positive remarks were very interesting, but it was hard to evaluate if her perspectives related directly to the implementation of the grant or to the studies she did and the focus of her research, together with the books she used for her work with the students. Besides, she participated in only a couple of workshops and not in entirety of the program. She stated that her teaching strategies in relation to antiracist lessons were influenced by a teaching partner that implemented these kinds of lessons. Lauren's learning process and the impact of seeing another teacher model antiracist lessons, suggest that teachers at *Aprendamos* could help each other by co-teaching or exchanging lesson plans on antiracist education.

All teachers perceived the implementation of the antiracist program as having some useful components such as the curriculum planning and the purchase of materials to support their lessons. However, since the whole school did not participate in the workshops, the concepts and notions that were introduced at the workshops were not shared with all faculty and staff meetings or other sessions. Overall, the program did not impact all teachers and staff in the same way, nor were the concepts of race and racism were discussed as a school wide community. If the school wanted the teachers and staff to be on the same page about issues of race and racism, the implementation needed to be consistent.

Currently, the artwork and surrounding elements around the school speak to pedagogical practices directed at teaching and analyzing racism, promoting antiracist values. Most classrooms have a broad collection of books and materials related to themes of racism and antiracism and other forms of discrimination, posters and visual support for these lessons.

Teachers' and Staff's Perceptions of How the Antiracist Program Could Be Improved

Teachers and staff at *Aprendamos* agreed that the antiracist program was relevant, albeit flawed, for the school and that it was important to understand the strengths and the challenges of the program, so the school could enhance this program in the future. They had recommendations for its improvement which consisted of addressing the identified challenges and maintaining the program's strength.

One recommendation led to all the remaining ones: the need to prioritize the program in the school, review it constantly and encourage participation. In essence, teachers and staff emphasized that the program needed to be preserved to prevent it from becoming another program relegated to the bottom of priorities. Sierra suggested that even though school leaders made an effort to implement this program, the program should become a priority along with other important educational issues in the school: They attempt to be more socially aware and anti-bias, but if I think that if it's a theme it has to be a priority ...because you already are gonna make reading a priority, you know you need the academics, so if you can make the anti-bias curriculum a priority then it will be a priority along with the academics....

Part of the process of making the program a priority is to inform and guide upcoming teachers about the program. This would also help to establish a common understanding of the program and the key concepts of race, racism and the principles of

an antiracist program. would be communicated to all. Kenya referred to the training that teachers received when arriving into *Aprendamos*:

When teachers get hired, you know, they do not necessarily know about the program, the interview has a lot of questions about the themes of the school and about how you would implement it, but maybe people don't understand that we are supposed to be teaching ... it all the time, not just once a year.

According to Kailin (2005), teachers should reflect on their practices and how these practices are informed by what happens in the larger society. Teachers should be trained in an antiracist curriculum. Also, educators of any race need tools for analyzing which actions are racist or antiracist (Pollock, 2006). The program needs sustain the training about antiracist educational principles to succeed.

Teachers and staff suggested that the antiracist workshops could be organized differently since these were the aspect of the program that was identified as being the least successful. Instead of having a large group, small groups could make the work in the workshops more effective and meaningful. Jennifer commented on the structure of the workshops and suggested how they could be organized:

Tu puedes haber tenido 3 personas encargadas de tres grupos diferentes para que el grupo no fuera tan grande; los grupos se separan tienen las conversaciones y vuelven y comparan lo que se discutió, los temas que salieron y eso se hizo hasta cierto grado; en algunos momentos lo hicimos. Pero como que no fue lo intenso que yo esperaba que fuera.

You could have had three people in charge of three different groups so that the group was not so large. The small groups have conversations and then they come together and compare the themes that came out. That was done to some degree, in some moments we did. But it was not as intense as I expected it to be.

Jennifer commented previously that she did not have her needs met in the workshops because she left with doubts and misunderstandings of some key issues. When she suggested a change in the workshop's organization, she suggested a smaller group structure because that would give participants the ability to discuss issues in a deeper way, because according to her, some of the issues they discussed were only discussed to a certain degree.

Jenifer also mentioned that she expected the workshops to be more "intense" and "emotional." For Jenifer, the small group structure would have assisted people in discussing issues further and evoking emotions. Previously, Sierra also referred to what she experienced in the workshops as "heavy." What can be inferred from the comments of both participants is that issues of race and racism are tied to emotions.

Sabrina noted that the implementation of the grant design had some important aspects that were not pursued in the implementation:

One of the things....when we wrote this grant, we wanted to...and I don't think this has happened...we wanted to specifically look at, you know...African American boys who are, you know, by the numbers in the principal's office, or psychologist's office and we wanted to look at that specifically...that's been done at all?... I don't know if that stayed in the grant or not... addressing of a group of

people of color, that was the number one thing that we were supposed to look at so did any of that happen? It does not appear.....

There was also another suggestion about future implementation of the program that related to the needs that the grant committee identified in the antiracist program at *Aprendamos*. Sabrina said that these needs were based on a study conducted in the school in 1999. The study showed that the percentage of African American students that graduated from the program was much lower than the percentage that entered the program in K5, showing that African American students were not persisting through the whole program. It also revealed that the needs of African American and low economic background students were not being met at the school, because they were not learning the second language (Spanish) appropriately in order to move on to the dual language curriculum taught at the school. The researcher (anonymous) that conducted the study suggested that this program should be reexamined to identify the reasons why it was not meeting these students' needs and make the appropriate changes.

Dual Language Program at *Aprendamos*

The dual language program at *Aprendamos* began in 1987. *Aprendamos* was the first school to implement such a program in the state. The dual language program has been considered, since the beginning of its implementation, a part of the antiracist program because of the antiracist principles that a dual language program promotes. At the inception of the program, community members and school leaders wanted classrooms in which dominant students of both English and Spanish would study at the same time. The intent was “not to separate language groups in order to give meaning

and purpose to the acquisition of two languages” (Peterson, 1993, pg. 58). The dual language model strives to get to a point of sharing both languages (English and the second language of study) equally (Harley, 1991). Olivia spoke about how she and other school leaders were a part of the development of the dual language program. They saw an opportunity to provide a bilingual program with a different insight:

We saw this place as being the....a place where we could initiate and develop a program that had a really sort of, much more best practices focus that included a whole language approach, that included community and parents involvement, that was a dual language program as opposed to the bilingual model, we would do a dual language...when thought about the criticisms of bilingual education, traditional bilingual education, we thought that this was a different alternative.

Dual language bilingual programs provide content area instruction and language development in two languages (Christian, 2011). In this program, bi-literacy and full bilingualism are objectives (Hakuta and Gould, 1987); bi-literacy can be acquired in two languages simultaneously or with an initial emphasis on native language (Baker, 1996). Baker (2006) suggests that students that become bilingual and bi-literate tend to reach higher academic achievement and higher self-esteem. This higher self-esteem might exist because in these kinds of programs, the minority language is not seen as a disadvantage or a marginalized language. Bilingualism is viewed as a positive attribute and therefore programs with this philosophy are considered an additive model (Valenzuela, 1999; Barlett & Garcia, 2011). This additive model is more likely to appear when two languages are valued and considered to be useful. *Aprendamos* presented itself as a school that employed additive schooling practices, promoting a dual

language program intended to encourage the learning and use of Spanish and English. The school leadership believed that *Aprendamos* was committed to students' cultural values and celebrated linguistic diversity. When initiating the program, they wanted to provide native Spanish speakers the opportunity to have a program in which they could use their native language as an instrument for learning and whereby non-Spanish speakers could learn Spanish as a second language:

So as we took a look, first of all at this neighborhood it was clear that it was an integrated neighborhood and we were thinking we wanted all the kids in the neighborhood to be able to attend the school and some of them were Spanish dominant kids we were thinking we should open a bilingual program. We all felt that bilingual education was the future for children, but not just for Hispanic children, we really felt that all kids should be able to have two languages

During the implementation years of the dual language program, the program underwent many changes, continually attempting to meet students' needs and challenges. A recurrent problem was the uneven numbers of native Spanish speakers versus native English speakers, which were a majority in the school. As originally planned, even numbers were required in every classroom to maintain the balance of students' language skills and the language that was being used during instruction and socially. *Aprendamos'* leaders tried to implement different methods to solve this problem.

My personal experience as a first grade teacher at "*Aprendamos*" reflected some of the frequent changes in the dual-language program previously mentioned:

During the years I taught at *Aprendamos*, teaching literacy brought changes every year. After teaching the English literacy the first year, I taught Spanish literacy the second year; I received the Spanish speakers of another colleague, and she received my English speakers for literacy. I had 12 students in my literacy class and she had about 20. The year after that I was in charge of the Spanish literacy of three out of four first grade classes. The year after that I switched students with a different colleague, but that year the class lists were divided in a way that allowed for two out of the four first grades to have an equal number of Spanish speakers, so that year we had 18 children each in our literacy classes. The last two years I worked at *Aprendamos* I had a job share position, which was a short term opportunity that the school district gave to employees that wanted or needed to work part-time in teaching positions. I shared the classroom with a colleague; she taught Monday and Tuesdays, I taught Thursday, Friday and, we each worked alternating Wednesdays. The first year we worked together we each taught the literacy in our first language (I taught Spanish, she taught English). A teacher was hired that year to meet the ratio of one teacher per 16 children. She was given the job to teach literacy to a group of second graders in the morning and the afternoons she would support every first grade classroom for 45 minutes. In our classroom she worked in guided reading with the English speakers on the carpet while my colleague and I worked on the same subject at the tables with the Spanish speakers. The rest of the time, the children wrote and read in their native language. The last year I taught at *Aprendamos*, the school had implemented a dual-literacy program so I and my job-sharing partner had to teach both literacies to all of our students, switching every week.

As of 2007-2008, one out of every four classes in each grade level had native

English speakers only, receiving Spanish language instruction as though they were in an immersion program, a program in which native speakers receive all of their initial education in a second language (Larsen & Long, 1994). Putting the English speakers together in one class allowed the other three classes in each grade level to have a balanced class of ideally eight English and eight Spanish speakers. This change was criticized because this system would have one group of English-only speaking children every year, which would not encourage the social use of Spanish and lack Spanish speakers as language models. It was also criticized because this method would make the school run more than one bilingual program at the same time; in this case the model would be a language immersion program, in which students were exposed to and instructed in their second language.

During the 2010-2011 year, the Dual Language Program at *Aprendamos* was modified in most grade levels. Dual literacy began to be implemented from k4 to fifth grade. With this new implementation, the lower grade levels (k4-2d) had literacy in English and Spanish alternating each week in self-contained classrooms (in the same classroom and with the same teacher). The upper grade levels (3rd-5th) had literacy in English and Spanish alternating every two weeks. These changes were also criticized by most of the teachers in the school and all the participants in this study. They identified weaknesses in the program that would place the whole implementation in jeopardy; such as the low quality Spanish they believed was spoken at the school. This was caused by two main factors, one was that some of the Spanish speakers came from homes that were not fluent and they were placed as Spanish language models, but mainly, because of the reduced number of native Spanish speakers that worked at the school.

General Perceptions of the Dual Language Program

According to 16 teachers and staff at *Aprendamos* (all participants besides Ana), the dual language program at the school worked well theoretically, but there were many difficulties in practice. These difficulties limited the possibilities of this program's ability to fulfill the students' needs. As mentioned before, the program underwent many changes because the requisite conditions for success were not met.

The changes to the program were poorly evaluated by its participants for different reasons. Fifteen participants thought that the changes would not work well given the conditions of the school, the difficulties that bi-literacy brought to most teachers and the limited amount of the curriculum that bi-literacy would allow to cover in a year. A common concern was the young age in which students were supposed to begin with bi-literacy lessons. Mary reflected on the ability the school had to respond to this problem:

Con las condiciones de esta escuela no creo que el cambio sea beneficioso, no hay maestros capacitados para enseñar lectura en ambos idiomas.

With the given conditions in the school, the change will not be beneficial, since there aren't enough teachers that are trained to teach literacy in both languages.

Kenya provided an example of one teacher's insight pointing out the difficulties for teachers. Kenya expressed her concern that teachers had to prepare material for two literacies in addition to adapting themselves to teaching two literacy series at the same time:

I don't think that the change was the best idea, maybe a Spanish emergent program and a bilingual, maybe in two tracks would have worked, bi-literacy was

not a good idea, in my experience it didn't work well. I think kids should have been taught in their own language. It was really hard to teach literacy in both languages, because of time, materials and because in kindergarten they are too little.

Alice's comments reinforced the idea that second language literacy should not become a priority until children were in the second grade. As a European immigrant, she evoked the bilingual or plurilingual models that exist in Europe:

Lo que más responde es mantener el idioma, el idioma en la forma oral, desde 4 años hasta siete años, 8 o 7, de k4 to second grade, verdad? If you go to Finland, or Denmark, kids play, until they are seven, and then they start to read, why do they play? Because they are learning their language, Danish, or Finnish or whatever it is, so entonces, mucho menos que debemos estar de haciendo eso en español y Ingles, jugando y usando palabras, usando canciones, usando juegos y hablando entre ellos mismos para que cuando lleguemos a siete años, Segundo grado, los niños que estan leyendo en su primer idioma pueden cambiar, porque eso, people who study language know this, people who speak many languages know this. The new program is not the best, people want a solution, they wanna pinpoint everything and they are missing the big picture.

The best response is keeping the language, the language in the oral form, from four years old to seven years old, 8 or 7, k4 to second grade, right? If you go to Finland, or Denmark, kids play, until they are seven, and then they start to read, why do they play? They are learning because their language, Danish, or Finnish or whatever it is, so then we must be doing that much less in Spanish and English,

we should be playing and using words, using songs, using games and having kids talk among themselves so that when they reach seven, second grade, children that are reading in their first language may switch, because, people who study language know this, people who speak many languages know this. The new program is not the best, people want a solution, they wanna' pinpoint everything and they are missing the big picture.

The model that Alice proposed was not considered by the school nor the school district. Tests were given to all children starting at K-4 to measure their abilities in English, even if they were not native English speakers or even if they spoke no English at all. Every semester, students were expected to show progress in their abilities. By the end of first grade, children were supposed to be proficient in reading and writing skills in their language and be at beginners level in their second language. Alice proposed that children switch to bi-literacy when they were already proficient in reading and writing language in their first language. The school did not allow this transition to happen. All students were expected to study literacy in both languages. In this process, students' proficiency in both literacies was put at risk due to the amount of time the children had to study both curricula; additionally, oral skills were marginalized when focusing primarily on writing and reading skills.

Only Soulja commented on these changes in a positive light, stating that the changes could have a positive impact in the future:

I think the changes are good and long overdue but again having a teacher capable of teaching both competently is really the issue.

For Victor, a supportive staff member, the changes could have both a positive and a negative impact, depending on how they were carried out:

Para mí lo ideal sería que fuera un maestro por idioma, s realista. Si para mí eso sería el modelo favorito para lo que estaos tratando de hacer aquí. Tener un maestro y esperar que va a enseñar a su cubículo los dos idiomas, mantener la integridad y la pureza del idioma todo el tiempo, eso es esperar mucho no sé. Esto cuando estamos hablando del español como idioma pero hay otras ventajas de tener self-contain, como que los niños no tengan que hacer transiciones entre dos salones pero en cuanto al idioma creo que sería mejor no tener el self-contain.

For me it would be ideal that there was one teacher per language. Yeah, for me that would be my favorite model for what we're trying to do here. Having a teacher that will hopefully teach their class both languages, at the same time as maintaining the integrity and purity of the language all the time, that's a lot to expect, I don't know. That when we are speaking of Spanish as a language but there are other advantages to having self-contain, as children do not have to make transitions between two rooms but in language I think would be better not to have the self-containment.

Program Strengths

Findings from this research uncovered minimal strengths regarding the participants' perceptions of the dual language program. Most of them (8) appreciated the fact that a bilingual school was always better than having solely

monolingual programs., In the case of *Aprendamos*, the challenges seemed to trump any positive impressions. Most of the participants agreed that the major problem was that the conditions were not met in order for this program to succeed although the program itself had potential. One strength that participants identified in this program was the opportunity to enter a classroom and hear students communicate in both languages, even though this did not occur in all classrooms. Rossi shared:

I like to walk into a classroom where kids are having conversations in both English and Spanish. In classroom where there were more Spanish speakers, you could listen to their conversation and you could see kids speaking to each other in both languages, even though that wasn't so common to find.

Rossi also valued the fact that bilingual materials could be found in the school and that these materials enriched the projects she did with her students:

It is also nice to see Spanish and English visible in the walls through the school, and bilingual libraries in the classroom, the material that the library has is also good and available for children and families The fact that some children write in their second language is wonderful. When I have created a project, like the book project, the bilingual abilities of the students enhanced the project.

Olivia's comments supported most of the teachers' opinions about the availability of finding a second language in the school, providing the students with a bilingual program, which they probably could not have elsewhere. In the challenges and suggestions, they explained that the program needed to better serve students.

Challenges of the Dual Language Program

Since the beginning of the program, all subjects were expected to be taught in Spanish, with the exception of literacy; children studied literacy in their native language (English or Spanish). The percentages that *Aprendamos* was aiming for was 80 % Spanish / 20% English from k4 to third grade and 50 % Spanish / 50% English in fourth and fifth grade, when students were supposed to transition into full immersion in Spanish or English environments, alternating two weeks with full immersion in each of them. Participants believed the school was unable to maintain the ideal percentages of Spanish for a dual language program. According to them, there were two major causes. First, teachers preferred to use English when students did not understand what they were saying, instead of modeling for the students' in their second language. Second, when communicating with children in their language it was easier to discipline them and, also because of the teachers and students' own limited skills in Spanish. Kathy commented on this:

Yo creo que no se cumple el 80-20 decir 50-50 es mucho, los maestros terminan hablando en ingles porque es más fácil para que les hagan caso.

I think that the 80-20 is not being accomplished; even saying 50-50 may be too much. The teachers end up talking in English because it is easier for them to listen in English.

Kathy thought that the percentages were hard to maintain when the teachers and the students were stronger in English than in Spanish. Her comments suggest that to

discipline and instruct the students is harder when the teachers have to do it in their second language.

Olivia pointed out that a student's behavior became harder and more complex when they were not engaged in the classroom work as much as their classmates:

para las maestras es lo más fácil, si los niños no les hacen caso en español, les van a hablar inglés, es lo lógico

The language differences influence their behavior because they are not being successful and they fall behind in content because they can't understand what is being taught.

Mary added:

For teachers is the easiest, if children ignore them in Spanish, they will speak English, is logical

Soulja reflected on this by mentioning that some groups were used to speaking Spanish and other groups were not, all based on the Spanish they used in the classroom:

Some groups of students do not speak enough Spanish, they are used to speaking English in their classrooms and when they speak Spanish to them, it seems as if they had never heard it before, I think it depends on the teacher.

Lauren commented:

It has been disappointing to hear so much English wherever I go in the school, sometimes I can hear Spanish speakers go back and forth in some classes, in others I hear English most of the times. In common spaces mostly English is used.

A great majority of participants (14) perceived that the Spanish being used and taught at *Aprendamos* was not of good quality, in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary, meaning that words were used incorrectly either because they were used out of context, misspelled, mispronounced or conjugated inappropriately. Mary commented on the quality of the Spanish and how her daughter learned it while being a student at *Aprendamos*:

Los que hablan Español, lo hablan como decimos nosotros 'mocho'. Mi hija me habla y me dice: ay mami ¿por qué no se de las conjugaciones de los verbos? ¿Por qué no se leer bien la literatura Española? Porque no aprendió bien cuando estuvo acá en la escuela, porque el idioma es mediocre

Those who speak Spanish, I speak as we say 'mocho' or cut. My daughter talks to me and tells me mommy, why not the verb conjugations? Why not read well the Spanish literature? Why not learn well when he was here in school, because the language is mediocre

Rossi added:

I would say the Spanish is pretty bad. I also saw teachers speaking English in the lunchroom...there should be no tolerance, everywhere Spanish should be spoken.

Victor said the quality of the Spanish varies from one individual to another:

Es muy variable depende del individuo. Tenemos gente que son muy bilingües y casi hablan los dos idiomas como nativos y tenemos otros que están todavía en varias etapas de aprender el segundo.

It varies depending on the individual. We have people who are bilingual and speak both languages almost as natives and we have others who are still in various stages of learning the second.

Participants thought that, even though the school leaders recognized that the quality of the Spanish should be better, there was not much insistence or incentive for non-Spanish speaking teachers to work on improving their language skills. Lauren and Rossi's words expressed what 8 participants felt - that teachers do not make a real effort to improve their Spanish skills because they are not expected to:

Yo creo que si hay maestros que no lo hablan bien que les den clases, osea exigirles que tomaran clases fuera en el extranjero para mejorar el español.

I think that if there are teachers who do not speak well enough to teach in Spanish, they should be required to take classes abroad in order to improve their Spanish.

Lauren worked in the school for several years and had seen no improvement in the language skills of some teachers.

I would like to see teachers strive to improve their Spanish and use Spanish with their students. I would like to see Spanish dominant students growing in their Spanish as well as their English and see teachers teaching higher order thinking

skills in both languages. That doesn't happen now; I have known teachers in the school that during 10, 15 and 20 years speak Spanish making the same errors.

In my 7 years as a teacher at *Aprendamos*, I witnessed improvement in a couple of teachers, but for the most part, the teachers' Spanish skills remained the same. Participants felt that this suggested that high expectations for the development of Spanish language skills were not there, because leaders did not encourage the teachers and staff to improve their skills. Participants also perceived that low expectations could be observed when the written and spoken Spanish in the school had common mistakes. Most literature that went home from the school was revised by a native Spanish speaker, especially in the last years, but there were common mistakes found in homework from the teachers. There were also spoken mistakes in the vocabulary used by most teachers that through the years were repeated. An example of this is the wrong translation of the word "card" into "*carta*" which means letter. Card would be called "*tarjeta*." This word was used every day in the lunch room. On several occasions, Spanish mistakes could be overheard in public, during school wide activities.

Some participants thought that school leaders did not have the same expectations about the Spanish speaking skills teachers and staff had as they did for English speaking skills. This was explained by the fact that some teachers that were not Spanish speakers were offered teaching positions while other staff was not allowed to do so. Sabrina explained her story and referred to her lack of Spanish skills and yet still being hired at *Aprendamos*:

At first I thought I was going to leave the school because of my language barriers but the principal told me that I should stay anyway and that Helen, another teacher could help by being my teaching partner.

Differently than what happened to Sabrina, Jamisha referred to herself not speaking Spanish and being denied the opportunity to apply to a different position than the one she had in the school because she didn't speak the language:

Last year somebody got a job as paraprofessional and I said how come I can't apply and they said "you have to speak Spanish"...I am doing the same job as a paraprofessional and I am not a paraprofessional ...and there are lots of people who don't speak Spanish.

It was possible to find teachers in the same school that spoke little to no Spanish. In fact, staff in other positions, such as literacy coaches, special education teachers, program coordinators, among others, also had limited or no ability in the Spanish language. Jamisha and Sabrina's comments, coupled with the multiple Spanish levels of staff at the school, demonstrated that there were different expectations in relation to how much Spanish should be spoken by teachers when they were hired. During the years I worked in the school, teachers with basic bilingual skills were hired and were given teaching positions or positions in which the dominance of the Spanish language dominance would be key, such as the literacy coach. Expectations differed as some teachers that were not Spanish speakers had been employed there for many years and on, other occasions, hiring seemed to depend on the abilities of the teacher in terms of language skills.

The different levels of Spanish language skills that existed in the school caused disparity in the quality of the Spanish language being used in the school and, in turn, with disparities in the way children were taught. Fourteen participants believed that the disparity was not only due to the level of Spanish that the students brought, but also the ability of the teachers to speak the language, which varied as well. Sabrina, Jennifer and Soulja commented on how parents, primarily teachers at the school, preferred their children to be in the classroom of a native Spanish speaker. Soulja's comment reflected the perception that the leaders and teachers at *Aprendamos*, knew about this disparity and understood that having a native Spanish teacher was much more beneficial to the students. Soulja questioned the contradiction that appeared when *Aprendamos*' teachers and leaders, when given the chance to choose a teacher for their own kids, would always go with a native Spanish speaker teacher:

Curiously, or not, really, all the teachers that have put their children through *Aprendamos*, have had the same teachers. Supposedly, we feel comfortable putting our children with anyone in the building but that has not been random when it comes to the teachers' kids.

Karla explained that as a staff member and parent of student at the school, her son learned a great deal and made lots of progress and she attributed this improvement to his teacher being a native Spanish speaker:

A mí me parece bien de hecho mi hijo está hablando más español y cantando y quiere aprender y que le hable, los otros no, yo les hablo y me contestan en inglés, pero el sí, quiere que le hable en españolcreo que tiene que ver con la

maestra....es nativa eso es bueno y la calidad del español que habla es buena y yo creo que eso hace la diferencia. Que hablen un español bien, no importa que no sean nativos, pero que hablen bien español y lo sepan enseñar

Well I think my son is actually speaking more Spanish and singing in Spanish and want to learn, not like his brothers...I think it has to do with the teacher She is native Spanish speaker and I think that makes a difference.

Karla showed that the preference that some parents might have over their children having a native Spanish speaker as a teacher is explained by the results that having a native Spanish speaker has in relation to the bilingual skills developed by the students. In her case, a Spanish speaker herself, she thought that, in her son's case, that was key for his bilingual skills development. She also thought that the quality of the Spanish that teachers had should at least been enough to allow them to teach, even if they were not native Spanish speakers.

As a teacher in *Aprendamos* I can speak to this issue. Being a native Spanish speaker meant that over the years I worked there, many teachers, staff and people close to the school that had children made requests for their students to be in my classroom. In my first year, I had a couple of children whose parents worked at the school. My class had belonged to another native speaker whom they had requested. The following year, when I was the only Spanish speaker in first grade, I had all the teachers and staff's children in my class. This happened every year until the policy of allowing parents to choose "what class" their children were in, changed. And yet, it even happened after that, when the school leader made exceptions.

Soulja pointed out the contradiction in the school discourse because the school leadership claimed that students could choose any teacher, but when it came to their own children, staff chose the teachers that were native Spanish speakers. With this in mind, Soulja went a step further by stating that this was injustice; Olivia supported this perspective.

The Latino kids are not getting what they need because the Spanish that is taught is not at their level and they have to limit their progress by learning at the pace of the rest of the students that are at a much lower level. They're not being challenged nor getting to advance in their vocabulary and language skills. Some students at very young grades know Spanish better than their teachers. I think this is discriminatory because Spanish-speaking kids are put at a disadvantage and English speakers are getting access to better literacy (in their own language).

Soulja and Olivia are clearly referring to language practices that can be identified as discrimination or racism. Because there was a group of students that spoke the language of power, that is receiving instruction in their language by English speakers, without mistakes or misuse of words, they were acquiring vocabulary and developing their language. On the other hand, students that spoke the minority language received watered down Spanish, recognized by Spanish native speakers in the school as one of poor quality, keeping them from developing their language. The statements of these two participants were supported by 11 other participants and raised an issue that was crucial for the school to consider. While the school's antiracist program claimed to strive for social justice and fairness, especially in terms of language, the difference in how

students at the school learned or didn't learn Spanish arguably prevented justice and equal opportunity for all children.

The participants expressed their concerns about the quality of the Spanish language being used at school. This concern could only be resolved if the expectations were standardized for all teachers or the school as a whole. If the school would set goals about the language, it would be easier to identify if the teachers and staff that made progress or if they were a good fit for the program. In order to be on the same page, the school could definitely use the training suggested by Alice in order to help the school's teachers and staff prepare to teach in a dual language program. *Aprendamos* recognized that incoming teachers might not be trained. Who is responsible for that training? If the district in which *Aprendamos* is located sends the school teachers to a dual-language bilingual school, they should be trained to work at such schools. Even though participants felt that the school did not have the same expectations for the level of Spanish teachers had, it is clear that the district does not have the same expectations either. Teachers with many different levels of Spanish skills are sent to bilingual programs every year, some of them, even with outdated Spanish language licenses provided by the district of education in the area. As informed by the teachers and witnessed myself, teachers that are not bilingual are appointed in the school and the district to positions where bilingual skills are required, such as the position of literacy coaches. A revision to the standards for acquiring bilingual licenses and for appointing individuals to specific positions should be examined, not only at the school level, but at the school's district level.

Dual language programs are known as programs directed to benefit non-native English speakers, who, while developing skills in their second language, could maintain their first language, and also to benefit English speakers that are offered this program as an opportunity to learn a second language (Roberts, 1995). The participants of this study manifested their concern about the Spanish speakers that were enrolled in the program because they did not benefit from the program. Participants considered that the poor quality of the Spanish used and taught at *Aprendamos* had serious implications for the students' feelings about their language and identity development as Latinos/as. Alice believed that when students did not have good Spanish speaking models and their language was spoken with little quality, they were being delivered the message that their language was not valuable.

Los niños Latinos no están escuchando su idioma latino, que es un mensaje cuando alguien pasa por la puerta de, yo voy a usar eso ahora porque estoy cansado, y yo voy a usar ingles porque ahora, no conozco el idioma suficiente para poder enseñar en español, que tu idioma no es suficientemente importante, ese es el mensaje, es bien sutil, ¡subliminal! Parece inocente

Latino children are not listening to their Latin language, which is a message when someone walks through the door, and says I'm not going to use it now because I'm tired, so I'm going to use English for now, I don't know the language enough to teach in Spanish, the message is: that is your language is not important enough, that's the message, is rather subtle, subliminal! It seems innocent but not innocent, stays with the child for life.

Soulja, explained her argument very strongly by saying that Spanish speaking students were not only not being benefited by the program, but also being discriminated by the program because the use of watered down Spanish didn't let them grow or develop in their language:

Teachers are not bilingual and that is obvious to the children. Children stop listening to people who struggle to make their point over and over again. If anything, we are teaching them how to be patient with people learning a second language. Due to this problem it is more often the Spanish dominant children who lose content area instruction because it is either 1 not taught in a language they understand or *more likely* 2 taught using watered down language and vocabulary because the teacher is not competent to deliver the instruction in their second language, usually Spanish. This is inherently racist. Not intentional but institutional, at least at the school level anyways.

It is important to note that Soulja's vocabulary was very specific and sophisticated when referring social issues and in this case, issues of racism. Soulja's personal and professional journeys allowed her to study these issues. Like Soulja, there were other teachers at Aprendamos that were very well trained and educated.

Soulja claimed that the fact that Latino/a students were being instructed with poor quality meant that they were receiving an education of poor quality, because of the way this limited their development and because they were not receiving all the instruction they needed. She explained her perspective of how this is a form of racism:

No attention has been or is being paid to the achievement gap affecting this group as a whole. For many of the years at the school, the Reading Resource teacher couldn't speak Spanish and delivered instruction to underperforming students in English only. Historically, Spanish dominant Latino students have been used for what they offer to the program... no fuss language models. Spanish speaking students are used as language models, interpreters and translators at times. They are used as language models because many of the adults instructing them are not fluent or competent language models, so they are the models to serve the program, but what are they getting out of it? That is again, racist, no way around it... Strange to see that in an anti-racist school.

Participants' perceptions about *Aprendamos'* dual language program reflected the larger society's discriminatory practices. The fact that Spanish was spoken and taught poorly, not up to native speakers' standards, gave the students the message that Spanish was a lesser language than English. If we consider that English in the United States represents the dominant language of power, it can be presumed that students tended to prefer English over Spanish. Marginalizing one language and validating another language is linguistic racism (Yahya, 2011) which is paradoxical when a program is supposed to promote both languages equally.

Differently than the experience that the Spanish speakers had with the dual-language program, the participants perceived that English speakers added a second language to their repertoire by learning their native language by native English speakers and learning Spanish as a second language. Jennifer referred to this:

Los muchachos si están aprendiendo español, hasta cierto punto, algunos, no todos, pero los que tienen apoyo están saliendo leyendo y escribiendo en español. Muchos de ellos se van a programas bilingües de otras escuelas después de estar en Aprendamos.

Kids are learning Spanish, to some degree, some, not all, but those that are getting support are reading and writing in Spanish. Many of them go to other schools bilingual programs after being on Learning.

Sierra added to Jennifer's comment, expressing that some students could develop bilingual skills in the school:

Some students are leaving the school being bilingual, students that were in the school since K5 had the opportunity to learn and practice Spanish and are proficient when they leave; I have read their work. It does work for some of them; some fall behind in both languages.

Soulja expresses that in her opinion the students that are learning Spanish are the ones that have the support of their families and that have access to resources:

Tu sabes, los gueritos, esos si aprenden, los que son hijos de profesores de la Universidad o profesores de la escuela, eso si aprenden porque sus padres son bilingues aveces o porque tienen oportunidad de leer, viajar y recibir apoyo.

You know, the white kids, those learn, the ones that are the children of professors or teachers from this school, because their parents are bilingual or have the chance to read, travel and have support.

Soulja's opinion can lead as to wonder who is benefiting from the program, in her opinion the beneficiaries are "white" children with accommodated families. If

this was the case, the program would be reproducing what happens in larger society where the white middle class holds privilege and is advantaged over groups that are from different ethnic, racial and economic background.

These three participants indicated that some students did learn Spanish at *Aprendamos* after being in the school for several years. They indicated that while the program didn't seem to work for all students, it did work for some.

Besides the limitations that participants found in the ability of some teachers to speak the Spanish language, seven teachers and staff expressed that situations occurred because some teachers did not know about the Latino/a students' cultural practices, which resulted in teachers discriminating against their students' actions. This discrimination seemed to stem from teachers' lack of understanding of students' cultures or customs. Sierra, Mary, Kathy and Jennifer spoke to this. Kathy explained:

Una maestra se pasaba regañando a un niño Latino porque nos daba abrazos y la profesora no era Latina, cada vez que el niño saludaba lo ponía en time out, al no entender la cultura no entienden lo que está pasando, yo le he dicho un montón de veces que los latinos somos así, que saludamos y no entiende...sigue pasando

A teacher repeatedly scolded a Latino child because he greeted us with hugs, and as the teacher was not Latina, every time the child greeted us she would put him in time out; by not understanding the culture she did not understand what was going on. I've told her a lot of times that Latinos have those customs, we greet with hugs, but she does not understand ... this still goes on.

As a teacher at the school, I had the opportunity to observe episodes like this; it happened to my own students as well as the students of other classes when they approached a teacher. When a class was passing by a teacher they knew, or a couple of teachers would say:

Se saluda con la mano

We say hello with our hand

Kathy referenced the importance of cultural sensitivity. Providing insight regarding a recurrent problem that occurs in bilingual schools, Kathy confirmed that teachers may have language skills, but not cultural awareness, and both things need to go together (Lorenzen, 2005). Teachers need to be trained about cultural aspects of their students' identities so that they can develop a solid understanding about what being culturally sensitive means and what that would look like in the everyday practices of school.

The participants in this study recognized that there were challenges in the implementation of the program that didn't have to do with the decisions taken at school, but with decisions that came through the school's district administration. The participants explained how historically there had been poor quality assessment instruments provided for the students to be tested in the Spanish language. English assessments were divided to measure reading skills, comprehension, phonic awareness and the recognition of grade level letters words and rhymes. For the reading part of the verifications, there were 2-3 coloring books per reading level. To measure the reading skills in Spanish, there were two instruments being used, both of which did not offer the

same quality and accuracy when evaluating student's progress. These instruments came from two different series, one that had been formerly used and another that was still being used in the school district; *Señora Sabiduria* and *Trofeos*, respectively. These instruments were organized to measure the reading skills, comprehension, and the recognition of letters and grade level words. For the reading section in the *Señora Sabiduria* series, there were a couple of books per grade level in kits that belonged to some staff, but not enough for everybody. For the reading section in the *Trofeos* series, there were no books, but photocopies of the books that came with the series or printouts that the district provided.

Staff complained that the books of the *Señora Sabiduria* series were not organized appropriately by grade level; some books seemed too hard to be low level books in comparison to the English books, some too easy and so forth. Teachers complained about the books of the *Trofeos* series, first of all because they were not books, but copies of books and the pictures weren't clear; the students could not recognize visual cues. They also complained about the vocabulary that appeared in the books; it wasn't common for the students and the level of the texts. In general the teachers complained because not everyone was using the same instrument. The evaluations were perceived as very subjective.

Even though *Trofeos* was still being used in the district, *Aprendamos* was able to pick their own evaluation instrument, and inside the school, teachers were also allowed to make their own choices, individually at first, and in grade levels in the last

couple of years. Soulja shared her opinion about the disparities within the evaluation instruments for English and Spanish literacy:

Testing students is another issue. Our students are and have been regularly assessed in our building using English instruments, even before the mandates. The Spanish was again, not consistent and the materials used were questionable and mostly translated. Some of the skills assessed came directly from English and did not translate. For example, when being tested on a short passage in English, the passage will often rhyme, helping the student figure out the passage. That same passage will be translated into Spanish but it doesn't rhyme nor does it have a pattern, making it much more difficult for the Spanish speaking student to read it. How is that fair? I'm not saying *Aprendamos* is to blame for the poor testing materials, but ensuring your students are being assessed justly and appropriately should be a priority.

Aprendamos' ability to use their own evaluation instruments showed that the school did make an effort to provide their students with the best instruments as possible, however, these assessments still lacked accuracy and did not provide quality to the Spanish students, which placed their Spanish speaking students at a disadvantage; their progress was harder to determine, and without data about how the student was progressing, it was difficult to implement the appropriate strategy to help the student improve. With the participants' concerns about assessments, it is fair to say that there were challenges in implementing *Aprendamos'* dual language program that the school could work on, but there was also a lack of support from the school system to develop such implementations.

Teachers and Staff Perceptions of How the Dual Language Program Could Be Improved

The study participants had many suggestions to improve the program. Lauren expressed what could be considered a summary of what most participants suggested. Her comment relayed great hope in what the school could do. Some participants were not as hopeful as she was, but all of them were willing to look at the program with both its challenges and strengths, in an effort to provide a better language program:

I truly believe in our program at *Aprendamos* and believe that we can help students become bilingual, bi-literate, and multicultural learners. However, I believe that for this to happen we, as teachers must address our own biases and weakness. We must strive to improve our teaching and must be willing to look at the relationships of language and race in our school. We must be willing to change, which is challenging and uncomfortable, but I believe that if we are asking our students to change the world it has to start with us. That it is hypocritical to ask our students to do something at we ourselves are not willing to do. I hope that we as a staff can commit to change.

Teachers and staff at *Aprendamos* recommended that the leaders redesign the program, taking into consideration the school context and the real conditions that it had to implement it within The school needed to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses and decide from there, in which way all students can be better served and be benefited by the program. Teachers and staff at *Aprendamos* recommended that the dual language

program should be rethought in order to respond to the context and the reality of the school. Victor recommended the following:

La verdad es que hace unos años y lo que yo propuse una vez pero la verdad que no hubo mucho interés. Yo siempre pensé que quizás en frany había funcionado mejor ese programa de two wayverdad, la inmersión doble pero también un programa para las familias que realmente no les interesaba tanto eso de tener los dos idiomas. Porque tenemos muchas familias aquí que son atraídos hacia la escuela por otras razones. Por la filosofía, la forma en que tratamos a los niños. Hay una escuela en el suroeste en new México que tienen el programa como nosotros y también en el mismo edificio tienen otro programa que todos los niños y todos los adultos, adultos y niños tienen el programa de que se les da español como segundo idioma. Y otros que son como nosotros que padres tienen que firmar cada año y hacer un compromiso y el modelo es más puro, osea los niños con los padres y las familias, que sea que los niños no escuchen ni una palabra en inglés y los maestros que trabajan en español nunca hablan inglés, nunca, ni en los pasillos ni en las cafeterías, nunca. Los niños no saben porque nunca los han escuchado hablar inglés y lo contrario con nosotros, o sea que es un modelo muy puro con mucha disciplina pero se puede lograr porque todos están comprometidos y es un buen balance también. Pero los otros niños, es que es una sola escuela. Los niños que están en otro componente tienen arte ,gimnasia, educación física, salen al patio al recreo hacen otras actividades juntos y eso funciona como una escuela. y me parece que hay cierta atracción ,es el modelo más puro verdad.

The truth is that a few years ago I proposed something but really there was not much interest. I always thought that perhaps they had been better fit for this program.... true two way, double immersion but also a program for families who really did not care much about having the two languages. Because we have many families here who are attracted to school for other reasons. In philosophy, the way we treat children. There is a school in southwestern New Mexico that has two programs in the same building, one in which all children and all adults speak in

Spanish, and another one, with adults and children that gives Spanish as a second language. In the programs the parents must sign a paper each year and make a commitment, saying they understand that the model is pure Spanish, because children do not listen to a word in English and teachers working in Spanish-English speakers never, never, not in hallways or cafeterias, ever, so families need to agree and be up to that challenge. Children do not know because they have never heard English and otherwise with us... so it is a very pure model with a lot of discipline but you can achieve because everyone is committed and is also a good balance. But the other children play with them - it is a single school. They have art, gym, physical education, at the recreation yard doing other activities together and that works as a school. There seems to be some attraction, is the purest model.

All the participants agreed that there was a need to hire more Spanish speaking teachers and staff and to set higher standards for teachers and staff. Participants felt that all staff and teachers should participate in this process. They also thought that *Aprendamos'* leaders should speak fluent Spanish in order to lead a bilingual school. The study participants suggested that new teachers needed to be trained better in order

to set expectations across the board. In the case of this program, the participants also recommended that families receive education because often, parents and guardians did not know that their students were entering a bilingual program. A couple of months into school, parents began to wonder why their children were expected to do homework in Spanish.

Conclusions

This chapter presented the perceptions of *Aprendamos*' teachers and staff about the antiracist and the dual language program at their school. *Aprendamos* has had an antiracist and a dual language program in place for a very long time. The resources provided by the school district through the antiracist-language grant helped the school analyze both programs and allocate time to work with the staff in workshops and meetings.

The implementation of the antiracist program was identified as valuable for the school and the teachers; antiracist lessons were taught and an antiracist environment and materials supported this curriculum. However, it is unclear whether all teachers and staff developed a common understanding of what antiracism meant and what the principles of an antiracist educational program were. In the process of implementing the antiracist and language grant, teachers and staff recognized positive aspects, such as curriculum planning of antiracist lessons and the acquisition of materials to implement these lessons. *Aprendamos* showed good faith by providing their school community with two programs that were keys for the development of a multicultural, multilingual society, programs that intended to support minority groups and offer them an alternative

with respect to other schools in the district and in the country. In spite of those good intentions, the school showed limited ability to provide a quality program for the language minority groups in the school.

In relation to the dual language program, the participants did not hold many positive perceptions about program; they did, however, identify many areas in which the program needed to be revised and improved. There was unanimous disagreement with the changes the school decided to make, which included teaching bi-literacy in all grade levels, starting at K4, in mostly-contained classrooms. The teachers and staff thought that the conditions of the school, did not allow these changes to be implemented successfully. Some of the biggest problems were the lack of proficient Spanish speakers among teachers and students. This reality delivered Spanish language instruction of poor quality. In order to fix these problems, participants thought that setting high expectations of Spanish proficiency could help the program and encourage the teachers to develop their bilingual skills. In this sense, the school district where *Aprendamos* is located should also set higher expectations for teachers to receive a bilingual license and appoint bilingual teachers and staff at bilingual schools, particularly in positions where being bilingual is required, such as the position of literacy coach. According to participants' comments, the school district where *Aprendamos* is located should also work in providing quality teaching and evaluation materials for the Spanish literacy, which historically had been deficient. Due to internal and external factors, the way in which the program was implemented at the moment when the study was conducted can be considered as an act of discrimination against the Latino/a students, because of the watered down language they received and the limits the program placed on their

instruction perpetuated the academic achievement gap between Latinos/as and White students. The school's antiracist principles were also challenged by the fact that the school found itself perpetrating linguistic racism due to the limitations in their dual language program.

Chapter V

Discussion

Introduction

Aprendamos' teachers and the staff's perceptions about the antiracist and dual language programs were revealed through the data collection process. This study's research questions were: What are teachers and the staff's perceptions of an urban dual-language school in relation to the implementation of an antiracist and dual language program? And how do teachers and staff perceive these programs in relation to the school in relation to the students?

The findings indicate that there were both strengths and challenges in the programs and that the implementation process of both programs directly and indirectly contributed to the general understanding of how teachers and staff at the school experience and perceive issues of race and racism in its diverse forms.

Discussion

Aprendamos

Because of *Aprendamos*' reputation as a progressive school, many teachers who shared a passion for social justice came to *Aprendamos* guided by the desire to work within a curriculum that focused on this passion. Most were more than willing to work in this environment and to implement in one way or another, antiracist lessons. These educators try to fulfill Giroux's idea of teachers as emancipators (Giroux, 1987) by trying to generate social change and change political and social structures through their

job as educators. The antiracism component of the program responds to the understanding of oppression being channeled by race, as well as others.

The school was historically a community advocate; the school opened against the districts' will, in response to the strong organization of community leaders and teachers. The programs' design challenged traditional schooling practices; *Aprendamos* implemented the first dual language program and antiracist program in the district. The school advocated to determine which instrument that measures Spanish reading proficiency was more appropriate for their students and worked to procure financial support to create what they considered positive changes through their antiracist and dual language programs.

Aprendamos' Antiracist Program

Aprendamos' antiracist program was in existence since the school was founded. The school's teachers and leaders were committed, for the most part, to an inclusive school project that addressed issues of race, racism, bias and discrimination, all antiracists values. Through the years and due to changes in the staff and the attention given to other programs implemented at the school, the antiracist program became slightly detached from its original definition. Teachers did not share the same understanding of the program, partly because the curriculum and lessons were not revised or aligned and training was not provided to new teachers. When asked what an antiracist program meant to them, teachers demonstrated very different perspectives, some of which did not mirror the objectives the school had set for the antiracist program. Some teachers manifested colorblind perspectives about the program, hoping

the program could demonstrate equality between the students, somehow ignoring that equality does not exist among all groups (Chapman, 2010). The differences in teachers' perspectives regarding the antiracist program was perceived as a threat to the integrity of the program. As an effort to reverse this and come to a mutual understanding of what antiracism meant, the school implemented several measures with the support of the antiracist and language grant provided by the school's district. To earn these resources the school had to design a plan and apply to the funds. The improvement plan included: workshops about racism and antiracist education, antiracist curriculum planning by grade level teams, purchase of materials to support antiracist lessons and changes to the dual language.

Aprendamos' antiracist program aligned with what several authors (Carr and Klassen 1996, Gorski, 2007, Kailin 2005, Pollack, 2005, Solorzano, 2001) recognized as vital elements of an antiracist program, such as: addressing issues of race, racism, discrimination in history as well as in the present. The lessons planned during the grade level curriculum planning sessions, most of which are taught at the school, followed through with these principles and included the examination of inequalities throughout history, such as: slavery, colonialism, and current issues such as immigration policies among other social justice issues. The purchased materials (mostly books) spoke to these themes, providing support for teaching those lessons, as well as the posters and graphic materials posted throughout the school.

The Implementation of the Antiracist and Language Grant

Because of the role teachers play in the implementation of an antiracist program, training and continuous revision of racist principles and attitudes should happen (Kailin, 2005, Pollack, 2006). Teachers and staff at one point possessed very different perceptions of what an antiracist program was about and, the meaning of issues of race, racism and discrimination, but the school leaders took initiative in finding the resources and make an effort to solve this issue. From this study we learned that in a school that has a school community that is sensitive to issues of racism and discrimination the antiracist principles of an antiracist program can become diluted if not revised, for which, constant examination is required not to lose perspective or fall into the reproduction of racist patterns that are trying to be challenged. Since participation in the antiracist workshop did not represent a large number of teachers and staff from the school, it was unclear for participants and myself if the school had achieved a common vision of their antiracist program, in relation to that, participants recommended that training be mandated across the school so that everyone would be on the same page. In spite of the low participation, participants felt that the training gave their program a better chance to be maintained and aligned due to the antiracist lesson planning done across all grade levels.

The participants felt that the workshops they attended were not as successful as the other two parts of the grant implementation, which were the curriculum design of antiracist units and lessons and the acquisition of material to support their antiracist curriculum, partly because of the inconsistent attendance. Most minorities reported feeling uncomfortable because there were so few people of color in the workshops.

They felt their experiences were not echoed in the other participants and that other people's experiences were not going to be meaningful to them. Participants reported that when each workshop participant took individual turns giving their opinion about something, it was time consuming. Some participants felt that their doubts were not clarified and that the way in which the workshop leaders addressed issues of race and ethnicity did not make sense for countries outside the United States that had different histories in terms of race relations and slavery. The participants also noted that the lessons learned by the teachers and staff that attended the antiracist workshops, were not discussed in school wide meetings or reported in documents. This study has showed us that in antiracist workshops, participants of color, might feel lonely or underrepresented if there is not enough diversity among the participants, particularly if the participants are mainly from the majority group. The study also showed that in this type of workshops, it is important to consider the background of the participants in order to relate to their experiences with issues of race and racism, for example, in the case of the Latino/a participants, the workshops could have considered the way in which colonialism has operated in Latin countries. In the case of the implementation of future workshops, the organizers could refer to the guidelines of diversity trainings that encourage programs to address broad dimensions of a person's and a group's history, such as gender, race, nationality and religion (Bird, 2007). They could also consider gathering all participants' observations about the workshops and probably provide follow up sessions in grade level meetings, staff meetings or documentation that could make the information accessible to all teacher and staff. The participation of all teachers it is crucial in these types of programs (kailin,2005) and the constant revisions of issues of

race and racism, as Pollock (2006) claims that “everyday antiracism in education thus requires that educators make strategic, self-conscious everyday moves to counter these ingrained (racist) tendencies” (Pollock, 2006, p.2). Understanding racism and challenge it is a dynamic process that should be revised and evaluated periodically.

Participants evaluated that the lesson planning and the purchase of material through the implementation of the antiracist-language grant was meaningful for the implementation of the school’s programs, partly because curricular alignment was seen as a way to help the school’s programs in the present and in the future, introducing consistency throughout the school. They also felt that the materials that were purchased provided much needed support to teach their lessons. This study showed that the implementation of an antiracist program can be practical and useful for teachers when they are practical steps taken, such as the purchase of material or the possibility to work in lessons that can guide their teaching.

Aprendamos’ Dual Language Program

Aprendamos’ dual language program has been in place since the beginning of the school’s existence, in the same way their antiracist program was. The implementation of this dual language program intended to respond to antiracist principles, challenging the discrimination minorities that do not speak the majority language suffer and understand how language has been used as a tool to help an elite maintain power and privilege, marginalizing those who do not have mastery of the mainstream’s language and its discourses (Chapman, 2010).

The leaders, teachers and staff recognized that implementing this program has been hard; in part because of the limited resources the school district provides for bilingual education, not only in terms of teaching and evaluation materials, the low expectations of the Spanish language skills the teachers are expected to have and the appointment of non-bilingual staff in crucial positions such as the position of literacy coach, but also because of the difficulties the school has had in attracting native Spanish speaking teachers and students, which are two of the requirements to implement a successful dual language program (Christian, 1994, Lindholm, 1990). Because of this difficulty, the school decided to make many changes to the program throughout the years, making accommodations to balance the number of Spanish speaking students in a classroom or having groups of students move around in order to take Spanish literacy with the teachers that were capable of teaching that class, ending up not only a dual language model, which tried to: promote the use of a student's first language as much as their second one (Harley, 1991, Valenzuela, 1999); provide content area instruction and language development in both languages (Christian, 2011) in order to achieve bi-literacy and full bilingualism skills (Hakuta and Gould, 1987); but also a language immersion program, in which the students received instruction mostly or only in their second language (Larsen and Long, 1994). Changes in the percentages of the usage of language were implemented also, even though the program aimed for a 80 % of Spanish being spoken and a 20% of English being spoken in the school, those percentages did not meet reality, because in the school, English is much more frequently spoken than Spanish. Participants thought that English was mainly used to discipline students, since they respond better to English than Spanish and it is easier for many of

them to speak English. While the leaders at the school felt they responded with these changes to meet the reality of the school, in terms of its population and the ability of their teachers, teachers and staff at the school perceived the changes in the program as not responding to the school's reality because most teachers are not qualified to teach literacy in Spanish. Participants also felt that the teachers' bilingual abilities were not challenged since they were not asked to address their weaknesses. The role of the school district where *Aprendamos* is located should also be addressed, because they hire teachers that hold a bilingual license. Questions regarding the requirements to receive such license or whether there are training programs or opportunities for teachers in these schools are raised.

This study revealed that changes were made to accommodate teachers' existing strengths and abilities, given the school had a hard time finding teachers that were Spanish speakers or fully bilingual, but there were no changes made in order for existing teachers to improve their bilingual skills, this might not depend on the decisions under the control of the school, but of the district. When these accommodations were made, Spanish speaking students were receiving instruction from a Spanish native speaker teacher, which helped them develop their skills, but it did not provide bi-literacy to all students, which is one of the objectives of dual language that should be honored (Hakuta and Gould, 1987). One of the last changes that the school implemented was the addition of a bi-literacy component starting in K5, which goes with the characteristics of a dual language program, but raises the concern of premature transition to English, which could adversely affect student's cognitive and literacy development (Crawford, 1989) and also sacrifices the quality of the Spanish being

taught in literacy, since the teaching of bi-literacy requires teachers to have developed bilingual and bi-literacy skills in both languages, which in the case of *Aprendamos*, was not a reality.

Language in Aprendamos' Dual Language Program

Teachers and staff at *Aprendamos* believed that the biggest challenge for the program was the quality of Spanish language the school provided. The Spanish used at the school was limited in terms of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, mainly because there were not qualified personnel to provide high quality Spanish instruction and interaction. Christian (1994) defines qualified personnel as teachers who can understand students and instruct them in both languages fluently.

Most teachers at the school hold bilingual licenses, however, the different definition of bilingualism found in literature makes it hard to know the stage at which teachers are with regards to bilingualism. If defined by Diebold (1961) and Hornberger (1998), being bilingual is determined by an initial dominance of a second language, for which teachers at *Aprendamos* would be identified as bilingual, but under Hughes (2011) being bilingual requires the ability of a person to control two languages as if he or she was a native. Through the perceptions of the Spanish speaking participant of the study, being bilingual means to speak, write and read both languages with minor difficulty, speak Spanish correctly; without severe grammatical mistakes in spite of the phonological ability and, according to them, many teachers at the school would not meet these conditions. The school district and the authorities in the state where

Aprendamos is located at, should come to terms with a definition of bilingual skills that is most appropriate for teachers who are instructing through their second language.

Culture and Language

This study has showed us that in language programs, cultural aspects might be absent, causing misunderstandings between members of different cultural groups. Besides the difficulties that some participants identified in relation to the teaching and speaking of the Spanish language, some participants identified non-Latino teachers and staff's lack of cultural knowledge. That could be explained, also by the limitations in their language skills since an increasingly higher proficiency would be expected to develop in an increasing sensitivity towards the cultural aspects of the language learned (Beardsmore, 1986). If teachers and staff at the school are not fluent bilinguals, their bicultural skills may be limited also. According to participants, this lack of cultural knowledge led to misunderstandings between the non-Latino/a teachers and staff and the Latino/a teachers, staff, students and families. In fact, the response of White teachers to certain cultural behaviors of Latino/Latina students was perceived as negative and discriminatory, and as perpetuating discrimination against Latino/a cultural values.

Bilingual programs should, due to the strong relationship between language and culture (Bahomondes and Chiodi, 2001) provide an opportunity for students to develop both aspects, this becomes a serious challenge for the dual language program. When limiting the cultural aspects of an ethnic or racial group, their language is also limited and vice versa; depravation of language turns into the depravation of culture (Skutnabb-

Kangas, 2008). Limiting the development of language for native Latino/a Spanish speakers also limits their opportunity to develop knowledge and acceptance of their culture. In a global context where a minority culture is undervalued, members from that culture feel pushed away from their culture, being forced to adopt other's cultural patterns (Banks, 2002). Some participants perceived that in the case of the Latino/Latina students at *Aprendamos* they were forced to adapt to American society, giving up their culture, subtracting a culture, instead of adding another one, engaging in subtractive practices (Valenzuela, 1999)

Besides the meaning that *Aprendamos'* dual language programs could potentially provide the non-native English speakers, it was also considered an enrichment program for English speakers when they were offered to learn a second language (Roberts, 1995). *Aprendamos'* dual language program, as it was, with all its deficiencies and strengths, appeared to be subtractive only for Latino/a students, because it appeared to be additive for specific non-native Spanish speakers; they acquired second language skills and, even though limited, the access to a culture different than their own.

This study has showed that a dual language program can be both, subtracting and additive depending on the population of the school where the program is implemented. In the case of Latino/a students, the program was subtractive because they subtracted their language and culture by not being able to develop it in the process of learning English, but in the case of the **specific** English speakers, they did add Spanish as a second language while developing their own language

Linguistic Racism

In spite of students having the possibility to listen to, write, read and speak Spanish at *Aprendamos*, the Spanish they could use was limited, partly because the limitations of the teachers' bilingual ability prevented them from growing in their language. There was no expansion in their vocabulary and they could not, for the most part, learn content in their language at their language level. Since the school's non-Spanish speaking students were learning Spanish as a second language in very different stages, content had to be taught in simple and comprehensive ways to all students, which generally ended up being basic or washed out Spanish. Participants reported that Spanish native speakers did not benefit as much from the program, but served as language models to benefit native English speakers to develop bilingual skills. Ideally, in a dual language program there should be a fair exchange of languages in the classroom and students practice and learn with their peers, students serving as "linguistic models" for one another (Krauss, 1999). The non-English speaker students were using their English speaking classmates as linguistic models to learn the English language. In fact, the Spanish speakers were being linguistic models to the English speakers, because in these cases, it was usually the minority language that was used as a resource (Christian, 1994), particularly because the English speakers have English proficient teachers that are modeling English to them, but the Spanish speakers do not have many.

In terms of language, Latino/a students at *Aprendamos* were not having their needs met in relation to the use and development of their first language. As noted by Krauss (1999) in a school with similar characteristic to *Aprendamos* in relation to their population and the programs they implement, African American students from low income families were not having their needs met either because they were not learning their second language (Spanish). This prevented them from moving on with the dual language curriculum taught at the school, while not reinforcing their English language skills because the nature of the program would provide as much content in their second language (Christian, 2011). Like Krauss' study suggests, this was also likely the case at *Aprendamos*. Further research would help to establish this. If Latino/a nor African American students from low income families were benefitting from the program, who were the beneficiaries? Perhaps students from the linguistic majority (who most likely would come from the upper middle class) are the beneficiaries, learning the minority language, spoken by a minority group, which provides an educational or vocational benefit (Kornakov, 2001) which minority students would not be able to have, putting them in disadvantage.

Participants felt that limitations of the dual language program led to discriminatory practices and beliefs against Latino/a students. According to what several authors (Chiodi & Bahomondes, 2001, Skutnabb-Kangas, 1998, Yahya, 2011) identify as linguistic racism, the participants would be right. They thought that the way in which the Spanish language was misspoken and the way in which poor quality materials to teach and evaluate Spanish language were provided by the school district gave the students the message that their language was not as important

as English reflecting deficit beliefs within the larger society. The Spanish language was seen as marginal from the mainstream. The way in which languages were categorized and placed within a hierarchical scale, with some languages considered as valid while others are not, is identified as Linguistic Racism(Yahya, 2011). In the case of *Aprendamos*, the implementation of a dual language program was supposed to establish equality among both languages that were being used and taught, English and Spanish, but the way in which the program was implemented put Spanish language in second place, in spite of their good intentions and the efforts they made to fight against circumstances and limited resources. The way in which native Spanish speakers were exposed to their language was racist, because their language was not given the same importance as English.

This study showed that a language program that intends to challenge the discrimination perpetrated against a minority language, can reinforce this discrimination if in the program, the minority language is not being effectively taught and if resources and materials are not provided with the same quality the majority language is, through the way the language is being taught and spoken and. This way of presenting two languages reproduces the asymmetric position in which languages are put in the larger society, one being promoted as superior and others as inferior, which aligns with the definition of linguistic racism.

Implications of the Study

Aprendamos attempts through the programs it implements, present itself as an alternative to racism, which is perpetrated through different channels including race, ethnicity and language. In spite of implementing these programs the school still reflected the larger society's unequal structures of power and their influence in beliefs and daily practices. *Aprendamos'* antiracist program was initiated as a counter hegemonic strategy for dealing with oppression (Carr and Klassen, 1996) through which the school's leaders intend to address issues of racism and discrimination. *Aprendamos'* dual language program was designed to help language learners continue to grow in their first language while acquiring a second language (Larsen and Long, 1994) which could also challenge the value that set upon minority groups that do not speak the majority language (Chapman,2010) while allowing minority groups to tell their story as a counter-storytelling strategy (Yosso, 2011).

Both programs challenge traditional approaches to educating minority students and, their approach brought a sense of real commitment for social justice. Unfortunately in reality, the way in which these approaches were implemented, including the limitations to provide language of quality and the lack of support and resources that the school district provided, prevented the programs from achieving their objectives to their full potential.

In the case of *Aprendamos'* antiracist program, there were many successful aspects; the school provided antiracist lessons, activities and materials to support challenging issues of racism and discrimination. The school looked for extra resources and had the flexibility to address their own limitations when differences in the teachers' perspectives about issues of racism and discrimination became evident. In order to

prevent these differences from threatening the integrity of the program, they worked on aligning the curriculum and to provide training and materials to deliver a program that followed through with antiracist principles.

In the case of *Aprendamos*' dual language program, the school tried to have Latino/a non-English speaking students add the mainstream's culture and language to their own and, non-Spanish speakers add the Spanish language and the culture related to Spanish speaking countries while maintaining their own. But because the conditions and resources to implement the program were limited, the Spanish language was taught poorly in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary, and since there was a lack of Latino/a culture's knowledge, the school was succeeding only in the case of the non-Spanish speaking students. The Latino/a students, on the contrary, were subtracting their language and culture instead of adding a second language and culture to their already existing one (Valenzuela, 1999).

Studies conducted in schools that implemented bilingual programs with the hope to provide an additive bilingual model have shown a subtractive bilingual model, such as the one that Valenzuela (1999) conducted with a Mexican American community and the one that Barlett and Garcia (2011) conducted with Dominican students. Since these studies analyzed the experience of bilingualism in schools with a traditional bilingual model and not a dual language model, they could not identify two experiences in the same program; *Aprendamos* provided an opportunity to examine the ways in which a dual language program could be both additive and subtractive depending on the population.

Krauss' (1999) study was conducted in a school setting very similar to *Aprendamos*; an urban school with a dual language and an antiracist program. Her findings revealed that such programs can be more beneficial for some groups than others. In the case of her study, White middle class students benefited from the school's dual language program much more than the African American students from impoverished families.

My study of *Aprendamos*' implementation of an antiracist program and a dual language program provides a context for comparing the experiences of African American students (as studied by Krauss, 1999) and Latinos/as students (at *Aprendamos*). This study reveals a paradox--that is if a school's implementation of a dual language program led to the discrimination of minority language speakers, the antiracist principles of the antiracist program were counteracted. The linguistic racism perpetrated through the limitations of materials and human resources of the dual language program contradicted the values of their antiracist program. The benefits of receiving instruction through a bilingual model could have proven greater than those based on an all English program (August and Shanahan 2008; Cummins, 1989, 2009; Crashev,1991). A dual language not only provides the linguistic benefits that any bilingual program does, but also the benefit of validating a minority language together with the majority language. This validation can be more meaningful when the minority language has been marginalized by the larger society, because it can give minority language speakers a sense of pride in their language. In response to all types of racial, ethnic and linguistic discrimination, an antiracist program has the opportunity to challenge those discriminatory beliefs and practices. *Aprendamos* had the possibility of implementing

both, providing support to minority groups while challenging society's continuous acts of racism.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of the study was the lack of diversity among the *Aprendamos* teachers and staff. There were only seven male teachers at *Aprendamos*, and only one fully participated in the study. There was only one African American teacher in the school and the number of Latina classroom teachers was also limited. In spite of the lack of diversity that exists in the school, I was able to interview several Latinas in different positions and White bilingual and non-bilingual teachers providing diverse perspectives to the study.

While I was working on this study, the state where we were residing and working was in turbulent times, suffering major budget cuts and many of the people at the school were involved in protests and movements against the local government. Many teachers at *Aprendamos* were laid off. So between these two things, the teachers and staff were increasingly busy and it was hard to make arrangements for interviews.

Seidman (2006) suggests that there is a process of three interviews which should be conducted with each participant, as described earlier. Because I moved to Spain the year after I conducted the interviews, it was hard to go back and reconnect with people to interview them more than once. Only some of the participants were interviewed more than once and only three of them were interviewed three times.

Even though I knew all of the interviewees and there was a strong familiarity in most cases (which made them seem and act relaxed and confident while being

interviewed or observed), many of them were concerned about confidentiality issues. They asked me to turn off the recorder or made jokes about needing more than one pseudonym not to be recognized in the final write-up of the study. So, I assume that if they were worried about no one knowing what they said in the interviews, it is possible that they held some information back, information that could have been valuable to this research.

As a former teacher and parent at *Aprendamos*, I know the research site very well. That had its pros and cons; the cons can be considered part of the limitations of this study. As a Spanish speaker, I could critically see how Spanish language was taught, spoken and presented to the families both in writing and orally at school wide events. This could have contributed to personal bias in conducting this study. Even though I tried to separate myself as much as possible from the study while designing it and analyzing the data, I felt that I could anticipate the conclusions. I didn't guide them, but I wasn't very surprised with the outcome.

While this study had its limitations, its findings are relevant because the experiences of the participants provide information about the experiences themselves, and also about the phenomena being studied.

Recommendations for the School (and School District in Which the School is Located)

I believe that *Aprendamos'* teachers and staff provided thorough interviews which led to valuable recommendations that should be considered, in part because they come from the actual implementers of both programs. I recommend that the school district re-evaluate the resources it provides to bilingual programs and try to understand

the specific characteristics and needs of a dual language program in order to guarantee the resources for it to be implemented correctly. I recommend the process for acquiring bilingual licenses and the definition of bilingual skills should be revised in order to provide this license to teachers who will be able to teach in their second language in a manner that meets high standards. In the case of the schools with dual-language bilingual programs, I recommend that if the conditions for a dual language programs are not met, such as having qualified personnel with an even number of language speakers from both languages being taught (Christian, 1994), the program should accommodate to those circumstances, either by organizing the program in relation to the strengths and abilities their teachers and staff have, using the resources they have in the school community, such as the families of the Spanish speaking students, inviting them to provide assistance in relation to the language and their cultural values. If the personnel in the school are unable to provide cultural language or become cultural models, the school needs to find a way to support the students' cultural development by incorporating community members or other human resources to fill this gap.

Throughout its existence, *Aprendamos* has demonstrated a large capacity to advocate for its school, *Aprendamos* could further use these advocacy skills to have the district identify teachers and staff with bilingual proficiency that could fill positions in the school. As an alternative, *Aprendamos* could also distribute its human resources by establishing a rotating system in which all students will have access to high-quality, native Spanish.

In relation to the antiracist program, I recommend that the school continue to provide a antiracist program that examines issues of racial discrimination in history and

in the present. In order for the school to do this, it should analyze the understanding that its teachers and staff have about issues of race and racism periodically. Everybody in the school should be invited to reflect upon their own biases and racist beliefs in order to challenge them and identify their acts of everyday racism (Pollock, 2006). New teachers should be trained in order to help the program continue to work towards its objectives and the curricular alignment should continue to be revised and reinforced.

Conclusions

Both, the antiracist and the dual language programs implemented at *Aprendamos* suffered from challenges and benefited from strengths. The antiracist program was identified as having the most strengths and the dual-language program the most weaknesses. Overall, the school demonstrated to have a good will trying to make the implementation of both programs, aiming to provide to the community programs that would challenge racism in its different forms. The antiracist program showed to be align with the principles of antiracist education and their antiracist values could be identified in the school through art, materials, presentations and curricula. Its main weakness related to the antiracist workshops the school provided with the resources of the antiracist-language grant, but not to the program itself. In fact all participants identified the antiracist program at the school as being meaningful to the school community.

The dual language program showed limitations in teachers' proficiency of Spanish language and cultural knowledge, which led to further perpetuation of linguistic racism against Latino/a Spanish speakers, because Spanish was presented as an inferior language in relation to English, being spoken with mistakes, mispronunciations and

limited vocabulary. This program's challenges represented external and internal causes that prevented it from fulfilling its objectives, as the lack of resources, evaluating material, Spanish speaking teachers that could be hired and Spanish speaking students that enrolled in the school. Participants felt that the reality that the school lives should be addresses by using the strengths of the personnel they have, for example having native Spanish speakers teach Spanish. Even though the program was subtractive for Latino/a students, it was additive for specific English speakers that could be enriched by the acquisition of a second language.

Participants felt that the contradictions within the implementation of the school's programs limited their impact, weakening the positive direction of the school and the good intentions that the school had towards the children and the community. *Aprendamos* tried to present itself as an alternative for people of color through a dual language program and antiracist program, as a vehicle to dismantle racial, ethnic and linguistic racism within a context of a country that denies Latinos/as their right to their language and culture through state laws that prohibit bilingual education and Latino/a studies and continues to marginalize people of color from places of power. In some ways, the school was successful and in other ways it was not, evidenced by the many challenges encountered while implementing their programs. The school could build on its success, such as the strengths found in their teaching of antiracist lessons and the construction of an antiracist environment, by finding ways to make the necessary improvements to the dual-language program. In order to achieve these improvements, the school district where *Aprendamos* is located will have to do its part to provide adequate materials and human resources for the school to deliver a dual-language

program of good quality. The school can accommodate to their circumstances to the best of their ability, but the school district is responsible for providing the necessary support for the implementation of programs that affect some of the most vulnerable populations they serve. By supporting such programs the school district has an opportunity to bring justice to their educational system.

Reflection on my Positionality

As a Latina who experienced bilingual education as a student, a teacher and a mother: a mixed Chilean who appears to be a member of the mainstream in Chile and a member of a minority group in the United States; and as the mother of two indigenous children, this research study addressed many dimensions of my personal and professional questions and interests. I have witnessed the experience of my son as a student in *Aprendamos* and the ways in which his Spanish use and skills as a first language have declined. I have walked with some of my former students on their journeys to develop bilingual and bicultural skills in their second language. I have seen these students add Spanish to their skill set, the ones that did not experience success in either language and the ones that after coming to my first grade classroom without knowing any English, exited fifth grade speaking it and writing it perfectly, whether they still liked to speak in Spanish or not. I also struggled to teach Spanish literacy with limited resources and materials and witnessed how *Aprendamos* tried to find temporary solutions to problems that were not their responsibility, such as providing appropriate materials for Spanish literacy verifications. Through this work I have understood my journey as a parent, as a teacher and a student in the United States, the way in which I

learned English, struggled to communicate, to pass my classes and to write this dissertation.

Appendices

Appendix A

Anti-racist multicultural integrated unit planning guide

Sample 1

Grade Level: 1

Theme #: We respect ourselves and our world.

Working Title of Project: I am important.

Restatement of Big Idea: I. I am important II. Students will feel important; every child will value themselves and the uniqueness of others
Geo-political groups III. <i>All</i>
Anti-racist, social justice concepts: IV. <i>Recognition of self in relation to one's family</i> V. <i>Emergent ability to be respectful</i>
Concrete Project Summary Description: <i>EXAMPLE: Students write an autobiography booklet, in English, that includes:</i> • <i>The story of your name</i> • <i>Me Pockets</i> • <i>Remembering Somebody in our family (Day of the Dead, etc.)</i>
Language(s) of lesson/project: Spanish and English
Connection to other subjects/curricular integration: • social studies • writing

• reading • oral language • second language skills • art • music
Narrative overview of the unit: Students will engage in the study of themselves and their families while learning about and remembering the richness of their culture and those that came before them.
Lesson plan overview - Duration of unit (number of days/weeks/lessons) <i>Describe in sequential fashion all the lessons that will be taught. A one or two sentence description is adequate for each lesson.</i>
Lesson 1 – Title of lesson (2 days) • Me pockets Lesson 2 – Title of lesson (2 days) • The story of my name Lesson 3 - Title of lesson (2 days) • Where we came from Lesson 4- Title of lesson (2 days) • Remembering somebody in our families (Day of the Dead)
Assessment/Reflection <i>Explain how students will be assessed on the entire project</i> • Sharing their me pockets and demonstrating respect of others while they share through asking questions and noticing similarities and differences. • Sharing the stories of their names while demonstrating respect of others while they share through asking questions and noticing similarities and differences. • Studying the cultures of ourselves and our classmates, sharing these cultures and learning from one another. • Making an altar with traditional and personal artifacts from Day of the Dead (photographs and stories about people from their families who have influenced them and moved on). Sharing these stories and listening respectfully to others as they share.

Appendix B

Anti-racist, Multicultural Theme-based Unit Planning Scope and Sequence Grid Template

Grade	K -4	K -5	1	2	3	4	
Theme							
Big Idea							
Geopolitical group							
Anti-racist social justice concepts							
Concrete project							
Learning Targets/ TCI connection							

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – MILWAUKEE

How do Teachers at an Urban School Perceive the Implementation of an Antiracist and Dual Language Bilingual Program “

Study conducted by Ximena Soza,

Doctoral student Educational Policy department

Social Foundations in education Program

- What is your name?
- What is your position at *Aprendamos*?
- How long have worked here?
- Did you participate in any part of the process in the implementation of the antiracist program?
- Did you participate in any part of the process in the implementation of the dual language program?
- What are your perceptions about the implementation of the antiracist program at *Aprendamos*?
- What are your perceptions about the implementation of the dual language program at *Aprendamos*?
- How has the implementation of an antiracist program influence your perspectives as a teachers/staff in relation to race and racism?

- How has the implementation of a dual language program influence your perspectives as a teachers/staff in relation to race and racism?
- How have the implementation of this programs impacted your teaching strategies?
- Do you identify any cultural and language difference between staff and students? If so, please explain
- How are the cultural and language difference between staff and students (if any) being addressed in the implementation of this antiracist program?
- How are the cultural and language difference between staff and students (if any) being addressed in the implementation of this antiracist program?
- How has the implementation of an antiracist program impact (if in any way) the relations at this school?
- How has the implementation of the antiracist program taken into consideration students' families when referring to issues of race and racism?
- How has the implementation of the dual language program taken into consideration students' families when referring to language or bilingualism?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix D

Summary Charts of the Study's Findings

General Perceptions of <i>Aprendamos</i>' Antiracist Program Summary								
Common Themes. Participants:	A A M E D							
Identified <i>Aprendamos</i> ' environment , in terms of race relations, to be better than other schools	1							
Perceived <i>Aprendamos</i> ' antiracist program as important for the school								
Perceived that there were different perspectives about what an antiracist program meant								
Thought there was not enough training for new teachers								
Thought the program was not discussed often enough and left aside								
Perceived the lessons taught at <i>Aprendamos</i> represented antiracist principles								

Abbreviations for the chart: A=Asian AA=African American L=Latina W=White
B=Bilingual ED= English Dominant SD= Spanish Dominant F=Female M=Male

General Perceptions of <i>Aprendamos</i>' Antiracist Program Summary								
Common Themes. Participants:								
Perceived the implementation of the Antiracist- Language grant created did not change in the race relation of the school								
Perceived the implementation of the Antiracist- Language grant created change the teacher's perspectives about the program								
Participated In most the antiracist workshops								
Participated I few or none the antiracist workshops								
Thought the weakest part of the implementation were the antiracist workshops								
Felt the workshops were not diverse and that that limited the presence of people of color								
Thought one a strong part of the implementation were the curriculum planning sessions because they shaped the program and provide material for new teachers								
Thought a strong part of the implementation was the opportunity to purchase material because								

it can provide support to the antiracist lessons								
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Abbreviations for the chart: A=Asian AA=African American L=Latina W=White
 B=Bilingual ED= English Dominant SD= Spanish Dominant F=Female M=Male

Dual Language Program at Aprendamos Summary								
Common Themes. Participants:								
Stated that there was not enough Spanish being spoken in the school								
Says the original percentages the school was aiming for, 20% English 80 % Spanish were not achieved								
Perceived the Spanish spoken at the school was of poor quality because it was misspoken, misspelled and used out of context								
Stated that many students did not have very developed bilingual skills								
Stated that many students did not have very developed bilingual skills								
Perceived that the Spanish being spoken at the school was not consistent in all grade levels								
Thought there was not enough training for new teachers								
Thought teachers were not encourage to improve their Spanish								
Thought the changes made to the dual language program in 2010-2011 would not								

benefit the program , students and teachers.								
Shared that the conditions to provide a dual language program were not in place at <i>Aprendamos</i>								
Felt Latino/a students were not benefit from the program								
Identified the poor quality of the program as an act of discrimination and racism towards the Latino/a population and language								

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Curriculum Vitae

Ximena Soza

EDUCATION:

2009-Doctoral student of Urban Education Program, Social Foundations in Education

UW Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

2009 M. D. Cultural Foundations of Education

UW Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

2005 B. A. in Education

Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, Santiago , Chile.

2005 Postgraduate certification in Bicultural education

Universidad Arcis Patagonia, Castro, Chile.

1999-2003 Mapudungun(Mapuche's language)

DIBAM, Santiago, Chile.

WORK EXPERIENCE:

Universidad de Granada, Spain

Guest Professor taught antiracist education presentations and classes for students in the Didactics of Language and Literature Department school year 2011-2012

La Escuela Fratney

Working as a bilingual teacher 1st grade since, 2005-2011

Theater of the Oppressed with The Milwaukee Public Theater and Maquis,

Worked in different theater projects in a collaboration with the Latino Health Organization TheMedical College of Wisconsin using the Augusto Boal technique.
2005-2009

Escuela Jose Santos Lincoman and Escuela Kume Ruka, Chiloe, Chile

Worked as a bicultural teacher, with a combined course of 1st and 2nd and 3rd grade.
2004-2005

Universidad Nacional Andrés Bello, Santiago, Chile

Worked as an ESL teacher to different carriers for four years. 2000-2004

Mental Health Center, COSAM, Santiago, Chile

Worked as a therapist with women that suffered depression,. In this institution I also coordinated an art program that included diverse artistic disciplines for youth at risk during two years. 2001-2004

Greater Lawn Youth Community Network, Chicago Il

Coordinated a multicultural program, combining arts, music, storytelling and cooking of different ethnic groups and cultures 1997.

Peace and Dignity Journeys, South, Central and North America

Participating in these journeys country to country from Peru to Mexico, visiting and staying with different indigenous community 1992

EXHIBITS:

MAGI Cultural Art Center, Chicago

Tejidos-Woven, 2013

Headquarters, Berkeley

Rupture, 2013

La Peña Cultural Center, Berkeley

Conmemoración 40 años,2013

Red Poppy Art House Sn Francisco

De la Raíz y su Desaraigo ,2013

Dia de los muertos, 2013

Latino Arts, Day of the death Ofrendas, Milwaukee-Wisconsin 2005, 2008, 2009,2010,2011,2012,2013

Walker's Point Center for the Arts, Day of the death Ofrendas, Milwaukee-Wisconsin 2005-2006-2007-2008-2009-2012011

UW Whitewaters

A New America: A Bilingual Society, 2010

UW Milwaukee

Watershed public interventions show, 2010

Riverwest Artist Association

Illuminate, Collective art exhibit, 2010

MIAD, “9-9-09”, Milwaukee-Wisconsin

Showcase multimedia performance, directed by Peggy Taylor, 2009

Riverwest Artist Association

Memories of the Forgotten, two artist exhibit, 2009

Allen Priebe Art Gallery, university of Wisconsin Oshkosh

Border, a multi-artist, multi-disciplinary project about immigration issues 2008

Walker’s Point Center for the Arts

Latinos Emergentes.2008

Union gallery UWM, Day of the death Ofrendas, Milwaukee-Wisconsin 2006-2008

Ministerio de Educaciòn (Sculpture) Santiago- Chile 2000

PRIZES AND PUBLICATIONS:

AOP fellowship, UW Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2009-2010, 2010-2011

Robert Kuehneisen and Eiserlo Scholarship Fund, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 2010

Education department Scholarship ,UW Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2009, 2010

Dept. of Caribbean and Latin American Studies Travel Awards, UW- Milwaukee, 2010

Graudate School Travel Award, UW’ Milwaukee, 2010

National Scholarship for Education Students, Ministerio de Educacion Chile, 2000-2005

National Scholarship for Indigenous Studies CONADI, Chile, 2004-2005

1st place short stories ‘The families and therapies’, Santiago- Chile 2003

3st place short stories“ Un Puente en el arte”, Cordoba- Argentina 2003

1st place short stories Anthology ENE Espacio, USA 2004

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS:

2013 Immigration and Stories of Displacement, **Universidad de Veracruz, Poza Rica**

2013 Immigration and Stories of Displacement, **Universidad Huasteca Intercultural, Ixhatlan de Madero, Veracruz**

2013 Day Of the Dead, **Dalton State College, Dalton, Georgia**

2013 Latinos in Dalton, **Dalton State College, Dalton, Georgia**

2012 Antiracist Education, **Universidad de Granada, España**

2012 Más que Tolerancia , **Instituto Ilibiris, Granada, España**

2012 Antiracist Education **Universidad de Melilla, España**

2011 Educación para la justicia social en el primer ciclo básico, **Congreso de humanidades Granada, España**

2011 Educación Antiracista, **Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Viña del Mar, Chile**

2011 School of the Education research conference, **UW-Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

2010 Educacion Antiracista en el primer Ciclo Básico **XVI Congreso Mundial de Ciencias de la Educación, Monterrey, México**

2010 Social Justice Curricula in Early Childhood **School of the Education research conference, UW-Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

2010 Antiracist Versus Multicultural Education **Multicultural association conference, UW-Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

2008 Borders in Latin America **Borders Forum UW-Oshkosh, Wisconsin**

2008 Chile; Yesterday and Today **Department of Caribbean and Latin American Studies, UW-Milwaukee, Wisconsin**