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Foreign Language Learning in Santo Domingo: Qualitative Case Studies in Two Private Schools

Priscilla Garrido Noble
p.garrido@gcnewhorizons.net

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ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN SANTO DOMINGO: QUALITATIVE CASE STUDIES IN TWO PRIVATE SCHOOLS by PRISCILLA GARRIDO NOBLE, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee, and the student's Department Chair, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty. The Dean of the College of Education concurs.

Philo Hutcheson, Ph.D.
Committee Co-Chair

Joyce Many, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Gertrude Tinker Sachs, Ph.D.
Committee Co-Chair

Doug Davis, Ph.D.
Committee Member

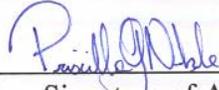
Date

Sheryl Gowen, PhD
Chair, Department of Educational Policy Studies

Ronald P. Colarusso, Ed.D.
Dean, College of Education

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

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Priscilla Garrido Noble
87 Hammock Place SE
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

The director of this dissertation is:

Dr. Philo Hutcheson
Department of Educational Policy Studies
College of Education
Georgia State University
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3083

VITA
Priscilla Garrido Noble

ADDRESS: 87 Hammock Place SE
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

EDUCATION:

Ph.D. 2007 Georgia State University
Educational Leadership
M.A. 1998 Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada
Educational Technology
BA 1995 Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Industrial Engineering

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2004 Graduate Teaching Assistant
Georgia State University
2003-2004 Literacy Teacher, ongoing research project
Georgia State University
2001-2003 ESOL Teacher
Parklane Elementary School
Fulton County, Georgia
1998-2001 Assistant Principal- High School
New Horizons Bilingual School
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
1991-1995 Teacher, Media Specialist
New Horizons Bilingual School
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS:

Noble, P.G. (2005). Implicaciones de un programa de educación dual en el aprendizaje del inglés como segundo idioma. In Boggino, N. (Ed.), Convivir, aprender y enseñar en el aula (pp. 171-194). Santa Fe, Argentina: HomoSapiens.
Noble, P.G. (2002). Bilingual education vs. English immersion: Immigrants left behind with the new education law. Paper presented at TESOL SE conference, Atlanta, GA.

Caron, J. & Noble, P.G. (1998). St. Dorothy's Elementary: Tomorrow's School Today. The Process of the Integration of Technology. Montreal, Canada: Apple Canada, Quebec Government's English Schools Network and Norshield Financial Group.

Geissler, C. & Noble, P.G. (1997). A Methodology for Software Evaluation. Paper presented at the Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education conference, Baltimore, MD.

AWARDS:

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1996 | Organization of American States (OAS), Washington, D.C.
Fellowship (graduate studies and other expenses) |
| 1991 | Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Scholarship (undergraduate studies) INTEC (Outstanding Student Award) |

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 2004 -2006 | Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) |
| 2002- 2006 | International Reading Association |
| 1995 - 2006 | Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
Sierra Club
National Wildlife Organization
Cousteau Organization |

ABSTRACT

FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN SANTO DOMINGO: QUALITATIVE CASE STUDIES IN TWO PRIVATE SCHOOLS

by
Priscilla Garrido Noble

Improving the teaching of English as a foreign language in public schools is a high priority for the Dominican administration elected in 2004. Consequently, the government's plan of action includes a pilot project that integrates language teaching strategies and methods already found in the country's private, K-12, foreign language programs. The purpose of this naturalistic inquiry was to investigate English teaching through case studies at two private schools in hopes of guiding the country's educational policy. The schools were selected based on their contrasting methods of foreign language instruction. One school, Imersão, follows a structured immersion program where most academic subjects are taught in English. The second school, Cervantina, teaches all subjects in Spanish, the students' first language, and provides one hour a day of English instruction. The research process included repeated observations of classroom activities, interviews with administrators, staff and students, and reviewing teachers' lesson plans and student products in English.

The study found that effective English language teaching can be accomplished through varying methods, as elements that promote language learning were seen in each of the schools. The programs were observed to be similar in the importance placed on meeting the academic needs of students with differing abilities, as well as cultural and linguistic backgrounds, by having language classes emphasize the importance of grammar and vocabulary alongside culturally relevant authentic communication opportunities. Even though students at both schools are able to communicate orally and in writing in English, Imersão students appear better equipped to contend with complex academic situations in the second language. However, in order to concentrate almost entirely on the teaching of English, Imersão falls short of the immersion objective of concomitantly developing the primary language at age-appropriate levels.

The results also suggest that encouraging students to analyze, deduce, and think in the foreign language while learning subject content in English is advantageous. Future research into this topic should explore where the threshold of optimum exposure to the foreign language inside and outside of the classroom might be in order to achieve language proficiency, therefore allowing the administration to maximize the use of limited education resources.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN SANTO DOMINGO:
QUALITATIVE CASE STUDIES IN TWO PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

By
Priscilla Garrido Noble

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in
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the College of Education
Georgia State University

Atlanta, Georgia
2007

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADP	Dominican national teachers' union (Asociación de Profesores)
APEC	Universidad acción pro educación y cultura
BID	International Development Bank
CALP	Cognitive academic language proficiency
CLT	Communicative language teaching
EDUCA	Action for basic education
EURYDICE	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ELL	English language learner
ESL	English as a second language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
FTZ	Free trade zones
GNP	Gross National Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund,
IRB	Internal Review Board
ITBS	Iowa Test of Basic Skills Students in high school take the
KWL	What students know; what they want to know; and what they learned
L1	First language

L2	Second or foreign language
LEP	Low English proficiency
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act
OBEMLA	Federal Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OELA	Office of English Language Acquisition
ONE	Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas
SACS	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
SAT	Scholastics Aptitude Test
SEE	Dominican Ministry of Education
SSL	Spanish as a second language
TAP	Test of Academic Proficiency
TOEFL	Test of English as a foreign language
UNDP	United Nations Development Plan

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language has become one of the main priorities of the Dominican Ministry of Education (Secretaría de Estado de Educación, SEE). The SEE has stated repeatedly that the English language will aid students to compete in the job market in addition to helping them to contribute to their own social, economic, educational and cultural development as well as that of the country (German, 2005). The most recent plan of action, which outlines the central government's main 24 goals and educational policies, lists the instruction of English as a foreign language as one of its central concerns. These goals state specifically that among the government's highest priorities is the recruiting and training of teachers of English as a foreign language and the strengthening of English teaching in high schools (German, 2005). The SEE's stated plan includes the integration of strategies and methods already found in the country's private bilingual programs (SEE, 2005c). In the summer of 2005, the SEE began to take steps towards the fulfillment of this plan. One of these steps included authorities from the national school board inviting principals of several of the bilingual private schools to meet and consult with them on curriculum, methodology and English language instruction.¹ Additionally, the Ministry of Education signed an ordinance in April, 2005 that advocated the enhancement of educational opportunities for public school students by making better English courses available to all (German, 2005). This ordinance

included the establishment of a pilot project to study the best possible strategies for incorporating the teaching of the English language into schools nationwide.

The government's pilot project is slowly gaining momentum as it incorporates foreign language teaching strategies benchmarked from the country's private schools. There are many quality foreign language programs in Dominican private schools today that deserve attention. The intent of this multiple-case study was to examine two such programs of foreign language instruction in the Dominican Republic. The study sites were two private schools in the capital city of Santo Domingo. One school teaches English through a program consisting of one hour a day of foreign language instruction, while the other follows a structured immersion program where most academic subjects are taught in English.

English as a Second Language vs English as a Foreign Language

The amount and quality of exposure to the target language, teachers' competence and motivation, classroom methodology as well as continuity of programs all vary in foreign language contexts as compared to second language programs (Nikolov and Djigunovic, 2006). Baker and Prys Jones (1998) state that success for learners of a foreign language will depend in large measure on the relationship between the target language and each individual's native tongue. Students are much more likely be motivated to learn target languages with high status, or those that serve to open possibilities for educational or economic progress, or languages that are spoken in an area that is geographically close to the students. These authors further state that English is learned successfully as a foreign language by students around the world because of its usefulness as a major international language, in business, employment, travel, and the

media, as well as young people's desire to identify with, and be part of the Anglo-American culture. The situation for foreign language instruction is completely different in countries where the second language being learned is perceived as of less relevance, status, and power. The monolingual belief in countries with English or French as a first language, for example, seems to be that one international language is all that is required and these individuals also have little opportunities or motivation to practice the new language (Baker and Prys Jones, 1998).

The Dominican Republic is a Spanish-speaking country. In all of its territories the population communicates in Spanish, all official documents, billboards, and information are exchanged in Spanish. As a result, English is considered as a foreign and not a second language. The Samaná Peninsula is a small exception. Former American slaves fled to this area in the 19th century. In this community, even though many young people grow up speaking Spanish, a dialect of English is also spoken by many Samaná residents (Lifson, 1999). Even in Samaná though, English is taught in schools as a foreign language.

Even though, in the Dominican Republic, Spanish is the official language, the country conducts much of its trade in English. For example, in 2004, it joined the United States- Dominican Republic- Central America Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA). The Agreement covers all agricultural and industrial sectors, opens markets in these countries to U.S. services, while opening the U.S. market to goods from Central America and the Caribbean Basin (Thomas, 2005). The type of globalization seen in the free trade agreements (DR-CAFTA) is currently resulting in the liberalization of commercial goods, services, and hence, a great deal of foreign investment in the Dominican Republic (Dauhajre, 2000). Maira (2000) adds that the United States controls, to a great degree,

through mass communication, the global image of what is correct or desirable, including in part, the use of the English language.

The current international market also influences local education and encourages the study of English as a foreign language at all levels. One example is the Technological Institute of the Americas (ITLA), which is a technical college that the government opened in 2000. In 2004, ITLA graduated over 4,400 professionals in the areas of information technology, multimedia, software engineering, call center management, business process outsourcing (BPO), and English as a foreign language. As stated by its executive director (Tavarez, 2007), the institute's mission is to educate the technical personnel to help further develop national industry, encourage foreign investment and the export of technological products and services.

Similarly, in 2005, a pilot project was begun called English for competitiveness. It is a joint effort between the central government's administration of higher education (Secretaría de Estado de Educación Superior, Ciencia y Tecnología, SEESCYT) and the Dominican Centre for Exports and Investments (Centro de Exportación e Inversión de la República Dominicana, CEI-RD). It seeks to train university students and professionals in English as a foreign language. Between its pilot year (2005) and its first year of implementation (2006), the program graduated 6,831 individuals (SEESCYT, 2007). The courses began with over 26 participating teaching institutions in the capital city of Santo Domingo and 5 other cities in the country. Most of the graduates immediately joined the labor market in different companies such as telecommunications, free trade zones, and call centers (SEESCYT, 2007).

Statement and Significance of the Problem

For business, world trade, as well as access to information, it is an immeasurable advantage to speak more than one language. Additionally, some languages such as English, French, and Spanish have been identified as international languages and are used around the world for communication, science, technology, diplomacy, and the media (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998). As stated by Sjöholm (2004), English has become the dominant language in a large number of domains such as commerce, industry, sport, youth culture, and tourism, and is particularly the language of advertising for consumer goods. In his studies of Finnish education, Sjöholm found that proficiency in English is also necessary for anyone using the Internet and is also of considerable importance in higher education and for scientific discussion. Furthermore, in many parts of the world, speaking English and hence, foreign language instruction, have become an educational priority. For example, Ordóñez (2005) affirms that in some monolingual countries the native and the foreign language share a similar status, which results in knowledge of the foreign language being considered as socially desirable. De Mejia (2002) points out that in several South American countries “English is undoubtedly the international language that is perceived as most valuable by parents and students in bilingual schools” (p.181). In a manner similar to that of other countries, in the Dominican Republic English is widely used in everyday life. This is most apparent in the areas of tourism, business, and especially in entertainment. As a result, several different forms of bilingual education have grown in popularity.

When referring to a bilingual education program, Heller claims that “it can best be understood in the context of the interests it represents and the characteristics of the population it serves” (1994, p.269). Current educational policy makers in the Dominican Republic are very interested in improving public school teaching and the learning of English as a foreign language. According to the latest report on the Dominican Republic by USAID (Alvarez, 2000), policies are needed to improve teaching and education outcomes, and to increase equity, as well as to strengthen the education system’s management capacity.

Case study is an ideal method when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). In their guide to naturalistic inquiry methods, Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993) maintain that the successful completion of a qualitative research project depends on the researcher being intrigued and stimulated by the topic and its context. At this time it seemed appropriate to study long existing and successful models of English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction and their relationships with students’ use of their foreign language. The results of this study could inform public policy that affects many schools and large numbers of students as the current policy in the Dominican Republic is headed toward a bilingual education model.

Theoretical Framework

In abridging the sociolinguistic principles present in the differing linguistic outcomes of bilingual education, Garcia (1997) classifies bilingual education into 14 separate categories. While taking into account Baker’s (2001) explanation that typologies are limited and that not all real-life examples will fit neatly into these or any categories, the two programs studied have been classified according to García’s (1997)

categorization. According to that classification, one school has mainstream education with foreign language teaching, and the other school has a structured English immersion program.

For this study, language arts programs were observed, analyzed, and documented at the two schools through case studies. A case study design is used to gain in-depth understanding of a situation, with the main interest being discovery rather than confirmation (Merriam, 2001). In order to accomplish this, theories on foreign and second language learning were explored (e.g. Vygotsky, 1962: zone of proximal development; Chomsky 1965: universal grammar and 1966 theory of formal cognitivism; Krashen, 1981, 1985, 2003: input and acquisition-learning hypotheses; Cummins, 1978, 1984: BICS, CALP and interdependence hypothesis; Canale and Swain, 1980: language competence; Savignon, 1983, 2005: communicative language teaching; Baker, 2001: types of bilingual education programs), as well as theories on power and leadership (e.g. Weber, 1922: bureaucracy; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin (1995) and Marks & Louis, 1997: teacher empowerment; Sergiovani, 2001: school administrators). These and other theories that guided this research are explained in more detail in chapter three. The research literature, along with four initial guiding questions, led the way for this inquiry.

Research Questions

This study was designed to understand the nature of English language instruction in well-established foreign language programs at two Dominican private schools. The purpose of the research study was to explore the extent to which learners of English as a foreign language are achieving bilingualism through two different instructional methods

currently being used in many Dominican schools. Specifically, the study explored four major questions:

1. What is the framework of teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in a structured immersion school and in a mainstream school with foreign language teaching and what are the cultural elements that influence the implementation of that framework?
2. What are the pedagogical methods utilized in each of these programs?
3. How can students' English use in each of these programs be described?
4. What interrelationships are evident between the theoretical approaches and pedagogical methods utilized and students' use of the foreign language?

Research Design

As originally designed, the study was to take place at three private schools in the city of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Each of these schools represents a specific English as a foreign language program. The first school, which was labeled *Imersão*, has a structured English immersion program, where most classes are taught in students' foreign language, English, (L2). The second school, designated as *Nevinschool*, follows a mainstream bilingual program (Garcia, 1997) where instruction takes place in both the students' first language, Spanish (L1) and in English. At the third participant school, identified as *Cervantina*, the foreign language program is mainstream education with foreign language teaching (García, 1997; Baker, 2001). Therefore, all classes are in Spanish, and there is also an English as a foreign language (EFL) class once a day at each grade-level.

The schools were selected for this project based on their English language programs. The researcher compiled a list of all the schools that teach English as a foreign language in the city of Santo Domingo and sent letters of intent explaining the nature of the study. Follow-up calls were also made to the different school principals. The schools whose administrators were willing to participate were then visited and asked some preliminary questions about their language programs. Once the researcher was satisfied that she had as participant schools three representative cases, one from each type of program (e.g. one all Spanish with EFL once a day, one bilingual, and one structured English immersion), she stopped contacting schools (Yin, 2003). The principals assured full access to information at the three schools that were to be studied. Unfortunately, once the data collection began, in March, 2006, the bilingual school backed out of the study. As a result, some of the other possible bilingual schools in the city were contacted, but a suitable substitute school could not be attained. The study continued with the two remaining schools, *Imersão* became case one and *Cervantina* case two.

Participants in this research included the researcher as participant-observer, specifically selected high school students at each school, their teachers, and school administrators. In qualitative research, subjects are sometimes selected because they meet certain criteria that are relevant to the study at hand. Patton (1990) explains that in a stratified, purposeful sample, characteristics of particular subgroups of interest may be used in the selection process. Stratified, purposeful sampling was used to select participating students, as well as teachers and administrators related to the language arts departments from each school. Reasons for this sampling technique are further explained in chapter four.

Data collection took place from February through August 2006. The study was carried out without research assistants. Data were collected in English and Spanish depending on participants' preference and all documentation was translated into English. Data sources included transcripts of audio-taped semi-structured interviews with students, language teachers, and administrators, field notes and transcripts of tape recorded participant observations, and reflections on relevant classes. Data were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

In order to disclose any possible biases, a review of the researcher's background is presented in chapter four. The methods and theoretical basis of educating in a foreign language were germane to this study. Furthermore, the research took place at two schools in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. For these reasons, the literature review in chapter three includes a description of foreign language instruction and is preceded by a brief overview of the past and current socioeconomic and political situation of the country as they relate to educational issues.

Summary

By conducting these case studies of two private schools, each with a different method of foreign language instruction, the researcher sought to better understand the learning of a foreign language in the Dominican Republic. To spend some time observing, carefully documenting, and analyzing data at these separate institutions allowed me to gauge general similarities and differences between as well as strengths and weaknesses of these two methods of instruction. It was believed that pairing the views of administrators, teachers, and students with site observations and document analysis at each of these schools in order to construct a thorough qualitative description of their

programs for the teaching of English as a foreign language would aid in the understanding of English instruction in the Dominican Republic.

The following is the researcher's organization of this study. Chapter two begins by presenting some background information on the Dominican Republic and some historical context on its educational systems. The literature that is germane to the teaching and learning of a foreign language as well as some context on language learning in other parts of the world are also presented in chapter three. Chapter four depicts the qualitative research method used to carry out these case studies. Chapter five presents the findings from both schools separately. Chapter six discusses how these cases relate to each other, and to the literature, and some conclusions derived from the case studies as well as some recommendations for policy and for future research on this topic.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Demographics

The Dominican Republic, with an area of 48,482 square kilometers, occupies the eastern two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola, which it shares with its neighbor Haiti to the west. The Windward Passage separates western Hispaniola from Cuba. Puerto Rico is only 54 miles to the east, across the Mona Passage. The country has a total population of 8.6 million which makes it one of the most populous countries in the Caribbean (ONE, 2002), with a population density of approximately 432 per square mile (McKnight, 1999). 1.8 million of the people live in the capital city of Santo Domingo (ONE, 2002). The official language of the Dominican Republic is Spanish. Seventy-five percent of its citizens are mulattoes, a mixture of Europeans, Africans, and Amer-Indians. Fifteen percent of the remaining citizens are whites, who are mainly descended from the original Spanish settlers, and 10% are blacks, descended from the African slaves brought during the gold trade. The country has a very high birth rate, with about half of the population under 15 years old, while only three percent are over the age of 65 (Information Please, 2005).

The Dominican Republic is divided into 29 provinces and a National Territory surrounding the capital, Santo Domingo. There are two major cities with large population

concentrations, Santo Domingo, with almost two million residents, and Santiago de los Caballeros, with more than half a million (ONE, 2002).

Historical and Political Background

Despite the fact that the country gained its independence in 1844, political stability and development of public institutions is relatively new to the country. For the first 80 years of democracy, the state was very weak and public institutions as well as socioeconomic structures were very slow to develop (Moya Pons, 1998). The irregular governments and frequent civil unrest ended with the first United States' military occupation of 1916. This begins the U.S. military government that would last eight years. When the troops leave in 1924, it is succeeded by the provisional government which holds elections that are won by Horacio Vásquez who was elected to govern for four years but his rule was prolonged until 1930. On this final year of his rule, Leonidas Trujillo, who was heading the Dominican army, betrays the president and becomes dictator (Garrido, 2003). As a result, the country was marred by a brutal dictatorship that lasted over 30 years and ended in 1961 when Trujillo's murder led to another civil war and a second United States' intervention in 1966.

Since that time, governments have been systematically elected every four years, and the political climate has been stable. For over 30 years, the country has had a representative, democratic, governmental system. The president and vice president who have the most power, serve four-year terms, and can be reelected. The legislature consists of a Senate and a House of Representatives. The judicial branch is made up of a Supreme Court of Justice and other lower courts where all judges are chosen by the Senate. Municipalities are governed by elected mayors and municipal councils while the

provinces are led by governors who are appointed by the president. Most matters related to public and private education are controlled by the SEE. Apolinar (2005) reports that Dominican public schools are funded entirely by the central government and hence they do not usually charge parents any fees. However, some schools have recently began the practice of charging a nominal fee of up to 100 pesos (U\$3) at the beginning of the school year in order to pay for office and cleaning supplies or even minor building repairs such as fixing leaky roofs or building new classrooms.

In August of 2000, Hipólito Mejía went into office as president. He initiated a series of measures, among them having the government repurchase several of the distributors of electricity and placing thousands of people on the government payroll, that sent the country's economy into a tailspin. As a product of the mounting inflation, and resulting increasing poverty level, in 2001 the army was deployed in major cities to fight rising crime. The popular discontent continued throughout his failed administration, and in the May 2004 presidential elections, the previous president, Leonel Fernández (1996–2000), won 57% of the vote. He has promised to institute fiscal discipline in order to help the country rise from its current economic crisis (International Monetary Fund, 2005). As indicated by the Dominican Central Bank (Bancentral, 2005), among the newly established measures of President Fernandez's administration were new agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and new tax regulations that have aided in lowering the annual inflation rate from 42% in 2003 to 28% in 2004.

Social Classes

The economic model that emerged in the Dominican Republic under the Trujillo regime in the mid-nineteenth century inhibited class formation. With the rural population

constituting over 80% of the population, the petite bourgeoisie or small property owners were the largest social class at the time (Betances, 1995). During the same period, the bureaucracy forced an increase in the middle levels of government employment. Betances (1995) indicates how the dictatorship established a series of tariffs that prevented the development of an industrial working class in the non-sugar sector of the economy, and that the working class would not increase in size until “after the implementation of import-substitution industrialization in the 1950s” (p. 108). Betances also asserts that the dictator did attempt to create an industrial class consisting mostly of his own family and close friends as well as foreign merchants-turned-industrialists, but this economic development was limited by its concentration in the hands of the dictator, its dependence on U.S. technology, investments, and advice on production decisions, as well as being too dependent on world market prices of raw materials and agricultural products.

The system of stratification that currently exists in the Dominican Republic is that of social classes. These human groupings are historically determined by people’s relationships with production means, by their roles in the social organization of work and consequently by their process of receiving social wealth (Alcántara Almánzar, 1991). The Dominican upper class is made up of business owners, bankers, politicians, and people involved in commerce. The middle class is growing and is made up of owners of smaller businesses and industries, professionals, owners of large farms, and middle managers. The lower socioeconomic level is generally made up of the lower level workers with little decision-making authority. This group is also economically dependent and often in debt as the minimum wage is U\$84 a month and living expenses for a family of four for the same time period roughly equals U\$160 (Bancentral, 2005).

Additionally, many Dominicans live in abject poverty. Some of the causes for this situation are high levels of unemployment, unequal distribution of income, low salaries, and bad management of agricultural products for local consumption. The 2002 census shows an unemployment rate of 23.21% (ONE, 2002). Moya Pons (1998) points out that many political parties, labor unions, professional associations, interest groups, and cultural and sports clubs have been created and social democracy has improved significantly in the last twenty years thanks to the exponential growth of the middle class whose liberal tendencies are based on its desire to substitute the traditional ruling oligarchy or at least imitate its lifestyle and patterns of consumption. Most of the students attending the two schools that were observed in this study come from families in that growing middle class whereas public school students are almost exclusively from families in the lowest SES segments of the population.

Relations Between Race and Class

Because of historic as well as current interracial marriages and other circumstances, the interaction between race and class in the Dominican Republic is somewhat intricate. When explaining race relations in the Dominican Republic, Hoetink (1985) points out that "in Dominican society, where the presence of dark-skinned bureaucrats and military officers next to light-skinned peasants attests to the lack of a rigid hierarchy based on color, but where incidents of discrimination on the basis of physical appearance are common as well, it is hardly surprising that racial tensions tend to be projected upon the Haitians. Haitians are viewed by Dominicans not only as a blacker people but also as culturally inferior." (p. 65)

In his volume on Dominican race and politics, Sagás (2000) gives this sentiment the name of antihaitianismo. He describes antihaitianismo as the combination of “a legacy of racist Spanish colonial mentality, nineteenth-century racial theories, and twentieth century cultural neoracism into a web of anti-Haitian attitudes, racial stereotypes and historical distortions” (p. ix). Even though Dominicans have a strong African heritage, the antihaitianismo ideology perpetuates the idea that Dominicans are not black in favor of a mythical, if not purposefully fabricated, notion of Indian heritage.

Sagás also explains that because they must share the small island with Haiti, Dominican elites have “erected barriers of prejudice and racism to distance themselves from their poor, dark-skinned neighbors” (p. 1). He further points out that antihaitianismo ideology has helped to maintain an unequal class and racial structure in the Dominican Republic, where Haitian immigrants are at the bottom of the social pyramid and are “unmercifully exploited” (p. x). Additionally, this ideology has been used by those in power against the black and mulatto Dominican lower class in order to maintain the “hegemonic control of light skinned elites” (p. x). Sagás (2000) describes antihaitianismo as the Dominican elite’s “divide and conquer” policies since ethnically and racially divided lower classes find it harder to form alliances with the Haitians and can hence be more easily exploited and controlled (p. 125).

Macro and Micro Economic Indicators

According to the statistics published by the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic (Banco Central), over 56 percent of the domestic output is accounted for by the services sector which is also the country’s largest employer (Bancentral, 2005). This sector is made up mostly of free trade zones, tourism, and telecommunications as well as

construction. As the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) explains, the free trade zone system (FTZ) (or zonas francas, as they are known in Spanish) began in 1969, and the country now has approximately 50 such tax free zones with over 500 companies employing over 175,000 workers. The zones are regulated by Law 8-90 of January 15, 1990, which seeks to promote the establishment of new free zones and the growth of existing ones (OECD, 2004: p.27). OECD (2004) data also show that even though these agreements are mostly for the export of finished products assembled from foreign raw materials, more value is now being added to these exports within the Dominican Republic. The United States, Canada, and Spain are the country's main trading partners (International Monetary Fund, 2005).

OECD (2004) asserts that among the key elements contributing to foreign investment is the Dominican Republic's state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure, which is one of the most advanced systems in Latin America, and its openness to foreign investment, as well as its political and macroeconomic stability. The OECD (2004) also adds that in these companies managerial and other high-level positions are often filled by foreigners because there are not enough native highly qualified, English-speakers to employ. It is ironic that the same companies that identified worker productivity and a workforce which is perceived by investors as being "competent, trainable and cooperative" (OECD, 2004, p.15) as a factor that facilitates their business model also cite the shortage of skilled workers and supervisors and the low education level of workers as one of the country's major weaknesses. There is considerable evidence that unskilled Dominican workers are able to reach between 60 and 80 per cent of best-practice labor productivity in the home countries of the investors

(Moran, 2002). OECD (2004) further remarks that with respect to the laborers, an increase in the skill level of the workforce would help the Dominican Republic to compete for higher value-added foreign direct investment.

Background on the Dominican Educational System

Foundations

The Dominican educational system originated with the country's first constitution in 1845. A real push towards giving education national importance began in 1880 when Eugenio Maria de Hostos founded the first normal school. Hostos also criticized the existing educational system calling it dogmatic; he advocated for a more scientific, and rational formation of citizens and for equal access to education for all (Moya Pons, 1998).

In 1918, during the United States' occupation, in the context of a reorganization of the Dominican state, the interventionist forces passed an Organic Law of Public Education and the Law for University Education. The first national program of massive school construction was also undertaken. Free and obligatory public elementary education was also established. As a result, by 1920, more than one hundred thousand students attended public school, five times more than in 1916 before the invasion (Moya Pons, 1998).

In the 1930s, during the Trujillo dictatorship, the greatest quantitative growth in Dominican public education took place. Moya Pons (1998) estimates that when the regime ended in 1961 a total of around half a million Dominican children attended public schools, ten times more than in 1930. Diaz Santana (1996) states that surprisingly, most of the educational infrastructure that still exists was built during the dictatorship. What is more, during that time, a successful literacy campaign was launched and many of the

polytechnic institutes still in existence were founded. One such institute, the Politécnico Loyola, located in the town of San Cristóbal, has a high school, a technical and vocational school, and offers afternoon, evening, and Saturday courses for vocations such as agriculture, electricity, and mechanics, as well as English and pedagogy. This type of institute is mentioned here as it illustrates the type of program that is still common in the country today. That is, high schools and two year vocational schools operate morning, afternoon, evening and weekend shifts in order to accommodate the educational needs of the working class.

During the 1960s and 1970s, political turmoil dominated national attention. The civil unrest and subsequent U.S. invasion of 1965 was followed by the repressive consecutive terms of Juaquin Balaguer from 1966 to 1978. As a result, public schools, especially secondary and university level ones, turned into battlegrounds against the police and bastions of the growing human rights struggles (Diaz Santana, 1996). This author also states that at the same time, the resulting deterioration of public education led to its abandonment by the middle class and the beginning of the process of privatization of schooling, especially in the capital city of Santo Domingo.

In July, 1989 a group of entrepreneurs and educators joined together to create a non-government, not-for-profit organization with the mission to drive and support elementary education, both public and private (Tavares, 1994). They named it Action for Basic Education (EDUCA), a group which continues today. This group's first priority is educating teachers and administrators, and re-introducing those individuals' leadership into the schools; other goals include improving teacher salaries, working conditions, and retirement plans, as well as improving school libraries and sport facilities. Among

EDUCA's other objectives is the implementation of pilot projects in specific areas so that they may later be widely implemented by other educational institutions. This group also works to reintegrate communities, families, and businesses into school affairs (Tavares, 1994). Tavares also states that EDUCA has developed projects that have aided the SEE by publishing books and other instructional materials, conducting numerous teacher trainings, giving scholarships to SEE officials for specialization courses in other countries, and in providing an extensive program of school sponsorships. The latter is conducted by having private enterprises help a specific school monetarily; the schools chosen for these programs must have the active participation of the neighboring community.

As previously mentioned, Balaguer was the elected president of the Dominican Republic from 1966 to 1978. After an eight year hiatus, he was again elected for the post from 1986 to 1996. In 1991, President Balaguer commissioned a group of teachers to study the nation's educational situation. It subsequently published the document "A National Pact with the Future of Education" (*Un Pacto con la Patria y el Futuro de la Educación Dominicana*). The document characterized the educational crisis by noting its low quality, absence of didactic materials, low budget, low coverage of preschool and special education, growing illiteracy, brevity of the school calendar, low involvement of parents and the community, deterioration of physical infrastructure, little attention to poor students, growing poverty of teachers, and inefficient administration (Diaz Santana, 1996).

“Plan Decenal de Educación”

Concomitantly, in 1989, the Ministry of Education, under the tutelage of a consultant from the United Nations, began working on a study in order to determine the nation's educational problems. The resulting document was called “Plan Decenal de Educación” (ten year plan) and was organized around five sections of education: quality, democratization, innovation, modernization, and context. It involved teachers, students, and the community. This plan was designed to organize the work necessary during the years 1990 to 2000 in order to improve Dominican education in all of its aspects (Portorreal, 1994). When describing public school students, the Plan Decenal (SEEBAC, 1993) maintains that most students are poor, with 71% of the families not having a steady income, with the resulting poverty, malnutrition, infirmity, and housing deficiencies. Furthermore, the plan noted that out of every 100 children who started elementary school, only five graduated from high school (SEEBAC, 1993). The same document stated that Dominican teachers' living conditions, salary, health services, and housing were worse than those of any other public servant. Even though teachers' salaries had been raised seven fold between 1970 and 1990, they could only purchase 14% of what they could in 1970, leaving them in abject poverty. Furthermore, the document added, teachers' education was “excessively theoretical, vaguely instructive, and woefully outdated” (Diaz Santana, 1996, p.12). Fewer and fewer individuals were registering in the country's normal schools or university programs in education. Nevertheless, the SEE spent only 0.8% of its budget on increasing the number of students of education in 1990 (Diaz Santana, 1996). In order to fund the Plan Decenal, SEE signed an agreement with the International Development Bank (BID) and the Global Bank in 1990. This agreement

earmarked US\$50 million to improving education in local elementary schools. US\$29 million were financed by BID, US\$15 million by the Global Bank and US\$5.6 million by the local government (Diaz Santana, 1996).

As a response to the Plan Decenal, and in order to implement some of its recommendations, in 1991 a “General Education Law” was decreed by then president Juaquin Balaguer. Its details were determined by a commission that included the Ministry of Education (SEE), several local universities, representatives from the Catholic Church, the national teachers’ union (ADP), Action for Basic Education (EDUCA), the United Nations development plan (UNDP), and a representative from the Dominican congress, among others. Even though this law continued to give a great deal of decision making authority to the executive branch in matters of education, it was a step forward in allowing the community a more active and permanent participation in decision making. This law determined, among other aspects, the legal structures, governance of the educational system, responsibilities of the Minister of Education, schools’ accreditation requirements, curricular flexibility, and even university entry requirements (Portorreal, 1994).

Portorreal also states that alongside these changes, the country’s higher education system was also receiving some much overdue attention. In 1990 a program that joined the efforts of the International Development Bank (BID) and the local university foundation Acción Pro Educación y Cultura (APEC) for educational credit (BID-FUNDAPEC, 1990) gained final approval. The project carried out a feasibility study that showed a shortage of 300,000 qualified workers and technicians, while only taking into account agro industry, free trade zones, and tourism. Its survey also showed the average

worker in these industries had only a 6th-grade education. The US\$20 million project included credit for educational institutions to improve their infrastructure and increase their coverage and credit to help poor students gain access to technical degrees, as well as better communication and coordination among institutions charged with work related training.

During this period, Diaz Santana (1988) also conducted a study of the condition of Dominican teachers that showed that the average teacher's salary, in the public as well as the private sector, was comparable to that of non-qualified day laborers. Additionally, most teachers in the public sector (77%) worked two shifts. Twenty percent of public school teachers did not have an educational degree of any kind, thirty eight percent had graduated from the normal schools, and thirty three percent from universities. She found that most educational shortcomings could be related to the poor quality of life and arduous work expected from teachers. Diaz Santana later conducted a thorough evaluation of the Plan Decenal halfway through its implementation in 1995. At that point she found that even though the monthly salary had been increased to US\$78 a month for one shift, the poverty line at that time was set at US\$146. Since most teachers worked two shifts, that left them only a few dollars above the poverty line, even after the reforms. Nevertheless, the Plan Decenal did achieve the goal of ending normal schools of education and requiring that instruction at all levels be conducted by professionals with university degrees in the areas taught (Diaz Santana,1996).

The reforms that have taken place because of the Plan Decenal and since its inception have been far reaching. Diaz Santana (1996) stipulates how the program worked hard to decentralize SEE's authority and responsibility, attempting to distribute

resources and the execution of activities between regional, municipal, and central authorities. She further states that in 1990 the rate of repetition for students in the first-grade was 50%, and even greater in rural areas. Furthermore, a clear symptom of underdevelopment and poverty was seen when 28% of the students in elementary school were in first-grade and only 5% in 8th-grade, which clearly portrays the high rates of failure and attrition. Additionally, 22% of Dominican students attended private schools in 1990.

Some of the reforms put in place appear to be working. Compared to the data from the 1980s and early 1990s, SEE (2004) paints a somewhat brighter picture. The data from 2002-2003 school year shows a rate of only 4.4% of students repeating the first-grade, and only 7.6% overall. Attrition rates were also down to only 6.9%. Additionally, (SEE 2005b) shows that for the 2004-2005 school year, 13% of the student population is in the first grade and 12% in the eighth-grade with the other grade levels having very similar proportions.

The Plan Decenal included a significant evaluative component including a national evaluation initiative. This initiative was originally meant to include classroom supervision of teachers, and of individual schools, as well as evaluations of school districts and even of educational policies (Valeirón, 2004). Lamentably, the national standardized tests are the only element of the initiative that has been put into practice so far.

The standardized tests are carried out each year in July for students who just finished the eighth and twelfth-grades. During four consecutive days, the students receive an examination each day in mathematics, social studies, science, and Spanish language

arts. Each test lasts only two hours. The government has been administering these tests since 1993 and it is very proud of the advances made. Tests and answer sheets are no longer lost, students' grades are no longer inaccurate, and students are not able to get an early copy of the test forms before the test dates (Hernández, 2004) Nevertheless, in a recent publication (Hernández, 2004) a student criticized the national examinations and mentioned how in certain occasions, even when the ministry of education's proctors late arrival to the examinations forced them to start late, they still ended on time, costing students precious testing minutes. The student further complained about occasions when teachers, presumably to prevent the possible embarrassment of wrong answers, would give students the correct answers to test questions, while ministry observers sat idly by.

Even if imperfect, these standardized tests have served as indicators of Dominican students' learning as well as of their deficiencies. Valeirón (2004), the government's general director in charge of educational evaluation, attributes student deficiencies in language arts and mathematics to the low quality of teachers and insisted that the problem would persist as long as the teaching profession is only attractive to those individuals not capable of succeeding in other professions. Valeirón further insists that in order to remedy the situation it will be necessary to improve teacher salaries and incentives while at the same time dignifying the profession and exalting its social function.

Valeirón (2004) adds that even though there might be some drawbacks to the tests, given the way that they are currently carried out, they have still proved effective in achieving certain goals. In the grade-levels where standardized test are given, teachers systematically meet their course objectives and teach the greatest number of class hours. Additionally, these tests are used to statistically compare students. For the 2003-2004

school year, 93.7% of eighth-grade and 77.8% of twelfth-grade students in private schools passed the national standardized examinations compared to 90.4% and 71.6% in public schools. Furthermore, these results also showed a difference of 22.41% in passage rates favoring students in urban areas when compared to those in rural parts of the country (SEE 2004).

Another component of the new trend toward evaluation should help to improve higher education. As stated by national secretary for higher education Melo de Cardona (Capitan, 2006), one of the urgent needs and soon to be a requirement of the country's higher education system is for universities to demand that high school graduates take a standardized norm-referenced examination. These would ensure that those individuals who are not ready for their chosen fields are able to take remedial and leveling courses. With an eye on improving national schools of education, the current administration recently tested 11,839 university freshmen and the results were shared with the public and with the ministry of education. Unfortunately over 60% of those taking the tests did not reach the 50th percentile. Melo de Cardona also stated that elementary schools are responsible for students' deficiencies when they reach high schools and the latter are responsible for the students' deficiencies upon entering the universities. These recent tests established that students had deficiencies in science, social studies, mathematics, and Spanish language arts, and the lowest scores were observed in students from the public school system.

Requirements for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Dominican Schools

The educational legislation numbered 842'50 enacted in 1950 established the curriculum currently followed in elementary, middle and high school (SEE, 1999). The

SEE also points out that in 1953, resolution number 913'53 dictated that ninth-grade would have four hours of English instruction, tenth-grade three hours, eleventh-grade three hours of English and three of French and twelfth-grade three hours of French (1999). Subsequently, resolution 1601'84 began as an experiment. It contained a new plan of study for 7th and 8th-grade that included the teaching of two weekly hours of both French and English (SEE, 1999).

Except in their pilot program, the curriculum in use during the 2005-06 school year by the SEE results from resolution number 1'95 (1995) and does not include any provision for the teaching of foreign languages for Pre-school to 4th-grade. In 5th to 8th-grades, it requires four hours per week of foreign languages, either English or French (SEE, 1999). For 9th-grade four hours and for 10th-grade three hours of English classes are expected. Students can choose if they will take the technical or general modalities for 11th and 12th-grades. Students in 11th-grade general modality are required to take three hours of French and three of English, while 12th-graders must take three hours of French. For the technical modality, students do not have to take either language in 11th-grade and in the 12th-grade they must take two hours of technical English (SEE, 1999).

Structure of the Public School System

Some of the existing reforms have started to suggest resulting improvements in the country's educational outcomes. According to the last available census data of 2002 (ONE, 2004) in the Dominican Republic, of 2,415,279 school-aged children, 89,416 (4%) do not attend school at all. Unfortunately, of all Dominican school-aged children, only 67.5% attend preschool, that number jumps to 93% for elementary and middle school and drops to 53% for high school. The elementary school average dropout rate² is 6% and the

average number of students repeating a grade reaches as high as almost 13% in the third-grade; in high school, the average dropout rate is 9%. The inferior quality of national public education results in the existence of a great number of private schools of varying quality and size. In 2002, the SEE declared that of all school-aged children in the Dominican Republic, 36% are attending private preschools; that proportion drops to 14% in elementary and middle school and 23% in high school (Pérez, 2003). Below is more detailed information on Dominican private schools.

Pedro Magallanes, technician in charge of foreign language schools in the National Direction of Private Schools (SEE), also claims that in the year 2005, in the city of Santo Domingo alone, there are 924 private schools; of the 1,931 private schools around the country, less than 85 teach all or most classes in a foreign language as in structured immersion or bilingual programs (personal communication, November 9, 2005).

Additionally, the governments from several different countries as well as international organizations have helped to fund several projects involved with improving Dominican public education. As published by the Dominican National Budget Office in its yearly expenditures for 2001 (SEE, 2001), the ministry of education was receiving donations from the governments of Japan and Taiwan, the European Union, and UNICEF as well as utilizing moneys from a loan to the Dominican government from the Global Bank (SEE, 2001). These donations and loans are earmarked for specific projects. In this case, they were for programs improving elementary education, construction and repair of elementary school classrooms in rural areas in the southeastern region as well as in urban

areas, programs to improve access to technical degrees, and literacy programs and school lunch programs near the border with Haïti.

However, Garrido (2002) explains that Dominican democracy is believed to be institutionally weak, as it is based on political discredit, which is why every four years all projects of the previous administration must be restructured, including those from the education sector. This author also describes how in 2001 the SEE dedicated much of its time and effort to programs that had little to do with the formal learning process, such as student breakfasts and clothing, housing, and direct subsidies, hence failing to create a national agenda for developing the educational sector. Furthermore, the country currently spends on average only around three percent of its gross domestic product on education, while countries such as Nicaragua and Honduras spend closer to six percent (IMF, 2005). Garrido (2002) also critiques the lack of coordination, productivity, and efficiency in the ten or so governmental dependencies charged with educational expenditure. He adds that these investments on education are extremely inefficient and mostly serve to broaden the disparity between those who can afford private education and persons who attend public schools.

A little over half of the budgeted expenses in education each year are to pay for salaries (SEE, 2001). Of these salaries, a high percentage goes to the SEE's administration directly. According to SEE (2004), the government spends an average of RD\$5,746 per pupil. This is roughly the equivalent of US\$180.

Males and females have equal access to education in Dominican schools. The Ministry of Education's statistics indicate that out of the 2,416,449 students attending

Dominican schools in 2004, a little over half are girls. This trend remains true in the public as well as the private sector of education (SEE, 2004).

As previously stated, the 2004-2008 administration is working hard to modernize its many systems during its tenure. One recent innovation has been the upgrade of websites in all of the different government ministries. The Ministry of Education's website, for example, has evolved from a mere document containing no more than introductions to the current school officials to a tool for exchange and learning between government officials, school administrators, teachers, and even students and the community at large. The page now contains many useful and frequently updated links including tools for instruction and evaluation, tips for lesson planning, suggestions on how to teach about certain topics such as specific Dominican holidays, learning through competencies, special education, and attention to diversity. It also offers on-line courses for teachers and scholarship opportunities for other forms of professional development. Another new service offered on the site is called educational communities. This tool is intended for school administrators to use in order to keep better communication with their teachers, students, and parents. They are suggesting that it even be used for distance education, for cyber meetings, or simply for sharing information or messaging.

Argument for the Role of Private Schools in Dominican Public Policy

According to the Dominican ministry of education (SEE, 2005a) there are a total of 1,931 private schools in the Dominican Republic. In most provinces, this results in around 25 percent of school-aged children attending private schools. In the city of Santo Domingo however, there are 627 public schools and 621 private schools, and 55 subsidized Catholic schools, with over 50 percent of students attending private

institutions. Additionally, Pedro Magallanes, technician in charge of foreign language schools in the National Direction of Private Schools (SEE), reports that about 84 of Dominican private schools teach in a language other than Spanish (personal communication, November 9, 2005). The same source states that of these schools, 65 are located in the capital city of Santo Domingo and most only teach at the level of pre-school and early elementary. Murray (2005) indicates that one hundred percent of middle and upper class parents across the country send their children to private schools. While comparing statistics about results in standardized national examinations, drop out, and repetition rates, cleanliness, classroom discipline, individualized attention offered to the students, compliance with schedules, and other measures, Murray stresses that even though there are exceptions, in the Dominican Republic the quality of the educational experience is better in private schools than in public schools. In addition to this, and despite the fact that 28.6 percent of the population lives below the Dominican national poverty line (UNESCO, 2005), over half of all students in the city of Santo Domingo attend some form of private school. This suggests that in this country private schools are not exclusively for the upper class. Murray (2005) also points out that most of the country's private schools charge tuitions of less than U\$30 a month.

In the Dominican Republic, schools do not usually keep SES information on their students. The researcher's experience has also taught her that many Dominicans have several separate forms of income and second and third jobs that might not be declared to the government or to tax collection authorities. This would greatly impede any efforts to separate students by SES for this study. Furthermore, because of the cost of teachers' salaries, the lower cost private schools are not able to afford an English-speaking staff.

For these reasons, this study was conducted at private schools whose students belong mostly to the middle and upper class.

When explaining the state of Dominican education, Murray (2005) argues that part of the problem that public schools must face is a very strict bureaucracy. In the Dominican educational administration, the central government has complete control over all decisions. This bureaucracy also wields substantial power in the educational administration, as it becomes mostly a source of salaries for political activists from the party in power. Furthermore, key ministry of education positions change with every presidential election. Public school teachers are obliged to belong to the monopolist teachers' union and their membership fees are automatically deducted from their payroll. This is one of the strongest guilds in the country as it is able to conduct general strikes where all public schools are forced into closure for several weeks at a time.

The general malaise in Dominican education, which can be witnessed through examination results, can be partially blamed on poor funding. Of the thirteen Latin American countries participating in an international comparative study which looked at standardized test scores for fourth-graders, Dominican students obtained the lowest grades in the continent in language arts and were also near the worst in mathematics (PREALC 2001). PREALC (2001) also reports on several countries' investment in public education. Of the 26 countries in the Americas on the list, Jamaica, Canada, and Cuba are at the top with over 6.5 percent of their Gross National Product (GNP) spent on education. The Dominican Republic, however, shares the bottom of the list with Guatemala with a paltry yearly expenditure of 2 percent or less of its GNP on education.

Additionally, the statistics presented by Bernbaum and Locher (1997) indicate that because of the 3.2 fertility rate among Dominican women, 5,300 new teachers and 1,000 new classrooms are needed each year merely to satisfy the growing population's demand for education. To this, Murray (2005) adds: "The Dominican state has not been able in the past, cannot in the present and will not be able in the immediate future to take charge of the entire education of Dominican children. End of story" (p.180). He further presents examples of how the Catholic Church and private individuals have labored to fulfill the need for more classrooms and better quality schooling through private schools.

Murray (2005) has conducted several sociological studies of the Dominican people and their idiosyncrasies. In his latest work, he analyzes the phenomenon of private schools and how they fit into the evolution of schooling in general in this country. He concludes that the high degree of commercialization that exists even in the educational sector has a historical component. The original settlers in many of the Caribbean islands were fortune hunters whose main interest was to uncover riches to export out of these countries. He believes that this fortune hunting has encouraged local cultures to evolve in such a way that Dominicans have a marked personal tendency to seek out economic independence and they see starting their own business as the only means for self preservation. He observes that many Dominicans see employment in an organization as a mere stepping-stone while they raise enough capital to open their own business. This tendency toward independent business ownership, Murray stresses, can be seen in the teacher as much as the insurance salesperson. This entrepreneurship can be understood to affect the constant growth in the number of private schools around the country.

Some Dominican private schools are guided by international accreditation organizations. Around the world, there are many accreditation organizations that work with school evaluation and improvement in order to standardize the practice of private and independent schools as well as public institutions. Some of the criteria for a school's educational program and services that these accreditation organizations use to evaluate schools are philosophy and objectives, organization, student personnel services, curricular program, co-curricular program, staff, school plant and physical facilities, and finance (CPEC, 1984). Dominican private schools also adhere to these accreditation standards.

The merits of private and public schools have often been debated in other environments as well. In a speech given before the Comparative and International Education Society, Brunner (2004) stressed that school systems are faced with the confrontation between individuals who conclude that private schools offer the most hope for student learning and educational efficiency and those that believe that in order to ensure the best possible learning opportunity for all students, central governments should intervene with a clear vision about what constitutes good education and how to achieve it. Brunner (2004) further points out that there is similar disagreement among comparable international studies, but that at the same time these studies are not sensitive to conditions of each society, especially to each country's structure and distribution of cultural capital. He further stresses that when these studies are interpreted by policymakers they may lead to erroneous political prescriptions or lead to frustrations.

It has been stated in this section that the educational and social circumstances surrounding Dominican private schooling are unique. As Brunner (2004) suggests, what

is needed are more relevant local investigations on the effectiveness of schools in different socioeconomic and cultural environments, especially in developing countries. This study sought to clarify some of the circumstances surrounding Dominican schooling in order to possibly apply what is learned in the private sector to public policy.

Summary

A brief historical and socio-political overview of the Dominican Republic, the country where the studies took place, and the state of its educational systems has been presented. The researcher maintains that the Dominican government has a strong incentive for teaching English as a foreign language. The component of the need that receives most publicity is the lack of qualified English-speakers needed to fill the many technical job openings in the ever expanding free trade zones and tourism industries. Additionally, the location of the island amidst other English-speaking islands in the Caribbean and its strong ties with the United States for economic as well as cultural reasons make the learning of English a priority for most Dominican citizens. Furthermore, language can be considered to be socially, historically, and politically constructed. How leaders define it as central to education shapes how it is addressed and to what degree it is prioritized in the national agenda. With all of the foreign as well as local money being invested in Dominican public education in general, and in English language instruction specifically, it was interesting to investigate the teaching of English as a foreign language in local, well-established programs (for an example see the current pilot project carried out by SEE and discussed further on page 90). This study has the potential of helping to inform those ongoing investments.

CHAPTER 3
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Research Theory

Qualitative research methods follow a constructivist paradigm and seek to identify the nature or essence of the phenomenon in question (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2001). Crotty (1998) affirms that constructivism describes the individual human subject engaging with objects in the world and making sense of them. According to constructivism, meaning is not discovered, but constructed. The world and objects in the world are indeterminate. Actual meaning emerges only when consciousness engages with them (Crotty). Merriam (2001) also stresses that qualitative research methods lend themselves well to the understanding, description, discovery, and seeking of meaning. This investigative tool uncovers patterns and relationships between occurrences while integrating the multiple realities of many individuals as well as the combined meanings they create (Firestone, 1987). Moreover, Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991) suggest that the literary-narrative approach employed in the presentation of qualitative research findings is precise and disciplined while at the same time readable, graphic, and imaginative, permitting the researcher to vividly tell a story complete with a background, actors, actions, and even a plot.

Crotty (1998) explains that the pragmatist philosophy stresses the importance of looking at situations from the point of view of the actor. The authentic meaning of ideas

and values is linked to their outcomes and therefore to the practices in which they are embedded. They look toward facts and consequences and away from principles and necessities.

In this study the philosophical standpoint of symbolic interactionism was followed. As explained by Crotty (1998), symbolic interactionism stems from George Herbert Mead's Pragmatism. Citing Blumer (1969), Crotty (1998) explains the three basic assumptions of symbolic interactionism: humans act toward things according to the meanings these things hold for them; social interactions define those meanings; these meanings are modified through each individual's interpretive process (p.72). Society, in coming a priori, shapes individuals. The investigator is directed to take, to the best of her ability, the standpoint of those being studied. This interaction between investigator and investigated is only possible through the symbols shared through human communication. The observer must exercise sufficient discipline on himself or herself to ensure that it is the subjects' meanings that are recorded and not those of the observer. Methodologically, symbolic interactionism directs the investigator to take the standpoint of those being studied, giving great importance to culture.

Symbolic interaction, as pointed out by Berg (2001), is "the focus of subjective understandings and the perceptions of and about people, symbols and objects" (p.7). Berg (2001) additionally asserts that for qualitative studies, the central sources of data are human interactions. He also adds that participants' perspectives and their empathy about a given situation are key issues in the formulation of a researcher's theory of symbolic interaction. Moreover, the attitudes and norms of members of an organization are shaped

far more by informal negotiation and social interaction than by rules and regulations (Erickson, 1986).

In this context, two case studies seem to be the most appropriate means for learning about foreign language instruction. Stake (1995) argues that a case is a bounded system such as an innovative program or a particular school; in this case, two schools. Case studies focus on holistic descriptions and explanations. The case study aids in describing and analyzing the entity as it unfolds over a period of time (Wilson, 1979). Moreover, the data collection and analysis methods commonly used in experimental or quasi-experimental designs may hide some details of the researched subject, while case studies are designed to reveal the particulars from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data (Stake, 1995). The overarching focus of this study is on the participants' perspectives and culturally derived interpretation of English instruction in their specific circumstances. Case studies are frequently used to investigate in such real-life contexts where there is practically no control over unfolding events or no clear single set of outcomes (Yin, 2003). Baker and Prys Jones (1998) also stress that language learning and its nuances, which are many times only apparent due to purposes and uses of language, can be measured with tools such as interviews, group activity exercises, and observations of natural language use. In the cases described in this dissertation, interviews with students, teachers and administrators as well as participant observations of language classes and other school events were completed in order to better ascertain the features of the foreign language programs at each of the schools.

School Leadership

When defining educational leadership it is important to reflect on the traits that the research has identified as important for effectiveness. Some such traits are charisma, leading by principle, demonstrating great work ethic, being powerful communicators, and change agents. Leaders set forth a kind of vision so that everyone can work more cohesively towards a common goal. Ultimately, the leaders are responsible for creating a definable goal.

An educational leader needs to balance the requirements placed on her or him by the school board and other school administrators with the needs of the community as well as of each individual student and her/his family. They must do this concomitantly with managing a highly diverse staff of professionals, each with their own agendas and priorities. When describing the school leader as instructional supervisor, Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (1998) detail the importance of promoting high expectations as well as a trusting relationship between administrators and their staff. Higher degrees of professionalism on both parts would result in a greater commitment and collective action in order to change the attitude in schools from isolated classrooms to the collective engagement of all staff in a common school-wide instructional task that transcends any one classroom – a “cause beyond oneself” (p.458). Shanker (1985) lists four manifestations of professionalism: demonstration of high standards, development of collegial and peer relationships, expansion of the knowledge base, and action in the best interest of clients, in this case, students. Epperson (1998) also states the significance of organizational expectations for continuous professional growth as well as differentiated

staff development activities for teachers' wide range of interests and experiences that address both individual as well as organizational goals.

Hierarchical Power Structure

A bureaucratic, hierarchical power structure (Weber, 1963) with a formalization of goals and expectations frequently characterizes schools. Decisions are generally made at the federal, state, central office, or principal level and then passed down to teachers as mandates. These decisions include curriculum, texts, and even recommended instructional strategies. Weber (1922) asserted that this type of bureaucratic leadership was necessary because of increased specialization, division of labor, and large organizations. In this type of organization, fixed and official jurisdictional areas are ordered by rules, laws, or administrative regulations, and authority is distributed fairly and only those qualified are employed. Furthermore, legitimacy for leaders is usually dependent on their training and competence. In this case, disciplined and orderly bureaucracies are to be led by trained managers. This type of leadership also includes hierarchical management, super-ordination, subordination, and chain-of-command.

Distributive Leadership

Sergiovanni (2007) states that schools are loosely connected and strongly characterized by individual autonomy, and that as such, moral leadership is required to inform reflective practice. "When schools are characterized by loose connections structurally, and tight connections culturally, it is transformative leadership that is needed" (Sergiovanni, 2007, p.73). Hence, these leaders should depend on their staff's ingenuity, commitment, and talent as opposed to resting on bureaucratic rules.

Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbech (1999) have identified six dimensions of transformational leadership that translate into the purview of education: building school vision and goals; intellectual stimulation; individualized support; symbolizing professional practices and values; demonstrating high performance expectations; and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions. Distributive leadership contrasts with the more traditional concept of hierarchies in that it is a form of collective leadership in which teachers develop expertise by working collaboratively. According to Goleman (2002) this view of management requires schools to understand that leadership resides in many persons and not solely on the individual at the top. This type of organization therefore allows all members of the school community the opportunity to provide leadership and make decisions within the framework of the school culture and mission. Harris and Chapman (2002) also point out that distributive leadership is more than just delegating authority or unwanted tasks, and is more concerned with creating collective responsibility for leadership action and activity.

Valentine (2001) further establishes that the principal must transform school culture in order to establish the conditions for distributive leadership. Therefore leadership becomes central to teachers' work, as they recognize that what they do, both within the classroom and working collaboratively outside of the classroom, is critical to student success.

According to Leithwood, et al (1999), in contrast to bureaucracies, the distributive leadership perspective suggests that leadership within a school is *distributed* among many actors. In other words, leadership is not the purview of administrators only, but is exercised by people in many positions. In the distributive leadership model, while

principals retain ultimate accountability, they delegate power and responsibilities to other staff. This model is widely seen as more adaptive, reflective, and values-based. A manifestation of this type of leadership can be seen in high schools where responsibility is generally divided among different departments. The heads of these departments help shape the school's vision and goals, through direct communication or through the development of specific projects.

Leadership in These Case Studies

Besides the leaders in these schools, embodied by the principals, there are also other levels of management present. The subject area coordinators in this study share many characteristics with typical secondary school department chairs or department heads. Because of these similarities, some literature on department heads has been reviewed. Sergiovani (2001) states that department chairs have three main areas of responsibility: curriculum development and implementation, supervision and evaluation of instruction, and serving as a liaison between the administration and the teachers. When referring to departments in secondary schools, Johnson (1990) points out that department heads, while representing the interests of the group, become part of the channels of communication within the complex school environment. These department heads can benefit from their everyday exchanges with the school administration to advocate for the issues prioritized in their department. Quality leadership for a subject area coordinator, like that of other instructional leaders, does not derive exclusively from holding a position of authority, or having vast subject matter expertise or great skill in management, nor from saying the right thing or making many promises. Rather, it is about a quality that Aristotle, in his famous treatise on rhetoric, used the term "ethos" to

denote. That is, leaders' credibility, which is a direct result of their way of being in the world, their presence and comportment affects how others follow them and whether they are open to their ideas (Ross, 1952). Johnson (1990) also asserts that by encouraging the teachers in their departments to plan and implement curricular ideas as well as to work with other teachers in peer coaching or other collaborative arrangements, department heads can encourage teachers' leadership outside the classroom. Sergiovanni (2001) further asserts that department heads affect school policy directly because of their expertise in their subject area. Furthermore, Wettersten (1992) states that teachers may rely on department heads more often than on principals or assistant principals.

In looking at the power relationships in school, many of these same authors have also analyzed the intricacies of the position of teacher. Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy, and Wirt (2004) explain that there are two dominant conceptions of the teacher's role. On the one hand, according to the bureaucratic-rational conception, the teacher is seen as a technician who transmits knowledge by obeying and enforcing rules and procedures handed down from above while following a prescribed curriculum and administering standardized tests. The moral conception of the teachers' role, on the other hand, assumes that the teacher has considerable authority for making and assessing instructional decisions, enabling her/him to fulfill her/his mission of transforming individuals by using independent judgment in order to determine what each child needs in order to reach her/his full potential.

Sergiovanni, et al. (2004) also point out that teachers' work responsibilities can be made up of instructional, managerial, and political elements. The instructional role includes typical teacher duties, planning lessons, and instructional methods, and assessing

students. The managerial and political roles consist mostly of managing and negotiating their classroom activities and its routines. Ball (1987) further describes the teacher's political role. Ball suggests that teachers mainly negotiate for resources such as classroom location or particular students as well as bargain for the power needed to make decisions that are eventually enforced.

In this case study two different leadership models were observed. Imersão can be said to be more hierarchical and bureaucratic in its organizational structure. Alternatively Cervantina follows a more distributive model of leadership. Subject area coordinators have more active leadership roles at Cervantina, but teachers at both schools can be said to engage in shared decision making, hence, some of the intricacies of teacher empowerment will be presented in the following section.

Teacher Empowerment

The National Council of Teachers of English (Blau, 1988) adds to Shanker's (1985) definitions of professionalism listed above by stating the importance of creating cooperative intellectual communities and of teachers feeling empowered in their roles. According to Johnson & Snyder (1996), the teaching profession needs to enjoy the same autonomy as other careers. She stresses that in order to achieve meaningful educational reform, teachers need to be empowered. As stated by Marks and Louis (1997), the empowerment of teachers is an essential condition for building a school culture that is focused on teaching and learning. Furthermore, they add that when teachers' participation in decision-making is directed toward carrying out the school's instructional mission to benefit all students, then teacher empowerment should positively affect the classroom. "Leadership which taps the creativity of those who are

at the center of the project... will always do better than leadership that uses its authority” (Howe, 1994, p.40).

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) argue that teachers are in the best position to assess the needs of students, and education would be well served to reduce external control that is not sufficiently sensitive to the requirements of specific classrooms. Gamoran, Porter, and Gahng (1996) distinguish between two realms of teacher empowerment. One form denotes the teachers’ ability to control what happens in their own classroom, especially as it relates to content and methods of instruction. The other is the teacher’s participation in collective decision-making.

Empowerment must focus on instructional vision and professional collaboration in order to be useful as a school reform strategy. The research presented by Marks and Louis (1997) shows that teacher empowerment results in improvements in instruction and student achievement when teams and councils concentrate explicitly on issues of curriculum and instruction. Additionally, they conclude that empowerment should focus on decisions that affect mid-level policies related to school functioning, such as grouping and discipline. They deem that these professional collaborations between teachers result in increased teamwork on instruction, as well as discussion and feedback on teaching. Schools cannot be improved through one-shot interventions. If empowerment is intended to positively affect academics, then it must support teachers in changing their instruction so that it involves and challenges students through authentic tasks (Gamoran, Porter, and Gahng, 1996; Marks & Louis, 1997).

Marks and Louis (1997) believe that teacher empowerment is a necessary condition for improving student academic performance. They deem that it is imperative for teachers to be able to influence policy and practice pertaining to instruction in order to function effectively in a collaborative environment. Several studies have found significant improvement in the reading, science, and social studies achievement of students in the early elementary grades, middle, and high school among schools that successfully implemented programs that give teachers authority, flexibility, and participation (Lee & Smith, 1995; Marks & Louis, 1997). Conley (1991) also argues that because teachers have such inflexible schedules and demanding reporting requirements, participation in decision-making helps to alleviate their time pressures and improve organizational coordination by facilitating the exchange of information with colleagues and supervisors.

Golarz and Golarz (1995) speak of the importance of shared governance teams working together on creating a vision. They recommend moving away from a problem solving approach since it is often hard to agree on the causes or solutions of problems and this sort of diagnosing frequently leads to more blame laying. A visioning process, in contrast, is more likely to result in systemic change. Appropriately carried out, this process would entail a school team, consisting of staff, administrators, parents, community members, and even students, looking at their school environment and culture, and then envisioning what they would like their school to be. The changes will then come from within and the restructuring that will result is likely to help develop children who are more self-confident, educators who are empowered to take risks with new ideas, and profound learning.

Blase and Blase (1994) state that in order to improve teachers participation in school improvement it is important to encourage autonomy and innovation by promoting each teacher's authority in deciding on instructional matters, on students' needs, and in viewing failure as an opportunity to learn. Moreover, administrators can succeed in supporting teachers' professional risk-taking by diminishing threat, encouraging the sharing of information, facilitating a problem-solving approach, and establishing trust. Blase and Blase also found that principals' strategies significantly affected teachers' behavior, thinking, and attitudes. According to their analysis, teachers' sense of empowerment could be enhanced by principals establishing readiness and common goals, supporting shared governance, modeling professional behavior such as caring and optimism, and encouraging real group participation in decision-making. They found that principals could also affect teacher satisfaction, motivation, creativity, reflection, and even commitment and sense of team.

Schools, because of their service-oriented nature, have a strong dependence on staff members' individual responsibility, initiative, and constant intercommunication. Research has shown that teachers' decisions have a strong influence on student learning. When teachers are encouraged to think autonomously, as well as participate in shared decision-making, they feel empowered and this improves their practice as well as their positive impact on students. Hence, descriptions of some advantages of teacher empowerment, as well as several steps that administrators can take to share power with teachers in order to accomplish these lofty goals, have been presented.

Curriculum and Evaluation

Since the Industrial Revolution, curriculum design has been viewed as the compilation of a mere list of objectives and their corresponding activities in order to prepare students for their future responsibilities (Kliebard, 1995). The way they are stated, these objectives usually only require that students have brief contact with bits of discrete, and many times unconnected, collections of facts and data. Hence, little emphasis is placed on having students participate in meaningful activities because too much time is dedicated to memorization. Dewey (1938) believed that education is not a preparation for future life but rather that it is a process with value in itself. He went on to say that it should mostly be made up of a series of questions and the subsequent search for answers. These searches, however, should be based on the students' interests and not on predetermined lists of facts that are handed down by policy makers. Additionally, the further we investigate and explore, the more questions arise. Therefore, the process spirals upward in an endless succession of inquiries. Because this search is never-ending and unique for every learner, it is often different for every group of students, in every classroom, and for every teacher charged with directing that process. Kohn (1999), while drawing upon Deweyan thought, stresses that the curriculum cannot be a list of tasks and a progression of skills to be acquired.

Instruction does not consist of the mere transfer of disconnected facts, or as Paolo Freire (1995) put it, a banking system where teachers deposit information and then make periodic withdrawals in the form of tests. Children, by their very nature, go through certain stages of development according to their age, their interests, and a large array of other circumstances. These developmental stages must be taken into account when

curriculum and evaluations are being written. Dewey (1944) stated, for example, that the curriculum is like dead wood when it is simply handed down to teachers and to students. Using generic guidelines, but also paying close attention to students' needs, their developmental level, and their likes and dislikes, teachers should decide what and when and how to teach. When the tasks are more appropriate to each individual, the learning becomes more real.

In contrast to the typical curriculum of much breadth and little depth, it has been proven that real learning requires familiarity gained through experience (Doll, 1996; Gamoran, et al, 1996). Therefore, well-planned activities that incorporate experiential learning could generate students' interests and increase their knowledge. Kohn (1999) further points out that progressive education requires the teacher to ask open-ended questions and create an environment where students can make their own sense of things. In a manner similar to Dewey's pragmatism, instruction should focus on learning-by-doing rather than rote learning and dogmatic instruction (Dewey, 1938).

Authentic assessments are the basis of constructive teacher feedback (Neuman, 1999). These assessments are open-ended and allow students to apply their knowledge and construct meaning from their learning environment. In an ideal situation, in order to evaluate each student's learning process, teachers would use a wide selection of assessments so that conclusions about achievement can be based on a variety of contexts and measures (Kohn, 1999). In this fashion, teachers are able to understand how each student thinks, questions, analyzes, and interacts intellectually. Authentic assessments often serve to motivate students and to promote learning through reflection. Additionally,

these types of assessments compare the student's current work to previous projects, thus individual progress is evaluated and future goals are determined based on that progress.

Teachers must be regarded as fully cognizant of the demands of society and the thinking processes and skills children need to master as they progress through their learning. Facilitators of their students' engagement and academic achievement, teachers are vital, respected participants in the educational process. Their professional expertise is a key resource in children's education, as well as in the execution of the standards they themselves may help to establish.

Teaching Through Competencies

Muñiz and Laborde (2001) argue that the type of education that enhances brain and thought development is made possible by nurturing students' decision making skills and encouraging students' active participation in their own learning process. Similarly, the type of student-centered curriculum being implemented at Cervantina seeks to change the teacher's role from lecturer to facilitator of experiences in order to better develop students' intellectual capacity. The school is also attempting to implement alternative forms of assessments beyond paper and pencil tests in order to provide a more sharply focused picture of student progress and achievement (Kohn, 1999).

Jensen (1998) affirms that in order to help enrich the brain, learning activities should be challenging and include not only new but also more demanding experiences. Educational strategies should frequently be varied and include internal as well as external feedback and communication. The best way to aid in brain development, this author continues, is through problem-based instruction. Furthermore, problem-based instruction has a constructionist vision of knowledge acquisition.

Problem based instruction is not a modern concept; the Socratic Method utilized by the Greeks as far back as 500BC, for example, accentuated inductive reasoning and dialog in the teaching and learning process. Vygotsky (1978) also thinks that learning results from the social interaction between teachers and their students, as that contact with others stimulates the construction of new ideas and even increases the student's intellectual development. Moreover, in order to help students learn how to learn, develop their creativity, and become independent and autonomous learners, problem-based instruction offers active and contextual learning. According to Muñiz and Laborde (2001), active learning is when the responsibility for learning falls on the students since they must actively participate in the process. Contextual learning stresses that learning is more effective when it takes place in a context as similar as possible to real life.

Fullan (2000) states that sustained change is not possible unless there is a strong connection between internal school development, active community involvement, and the challenge and nurture of the external infrastructure. Furthermore, developing and maintaining decentralization policies is of utmost importance. Those individuals within a certain situation are to take charge and promote the change process. Fullan (2002) also points out that organizations must not only foster knowledge giving but also knowledge seeking. Teachers should be encouraged to constantly engage in scientific discovery and the refinement of the teaching knowledge base. Furthermore, social constructionists claim that meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world that they are interpreting.

Theories of Foreign Language Instruction

The complexity of language acquisition, which includes the variety in learners, environments, teachers, and supporting materials cause difficulties in the discrimination between theories and teaching methods. “There are implications rather than affirmations; propositions rather than prescriptions; insights rather than edicts” (Baker, 2001: p.132). Second and foreign language instruction has progressed through many stages. Although there are many important theories in second language acquisition, Krashen’s (1981) theory has often dominated education research and education debate in this area (Baker, 1996). According to Krashen (1981), a second language is acquired subconsciously, in a process similar to the way in which young children develop their first language. It is also interesting to note how Krashen applies the teachings of Vygotsky and Chomsky. This study also looked at the theories of Savignon, Canale and Swain, among others. These theories are complemented by Cummins’ (1978) interdependence theory which proposes that second language acquisition is significantly influenced by the degree to which the first language has developed.

Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development

Language learning is one of the key factors affecting all other knowledge acquisition. According to Vygotsky (1962), language and thought emerge independently in infants. By age two, however, their development becomes intertwined and they mutually influence each other thereafter. The child’s thinking about the world is expressed precisely in language, and language becomes increasingly effective in directing thought and action. Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (1978) is based on the insight that when other people guide and assist learners on parts of a difficult task, these

learners can often think in more advanced ways than if they had to do the entire task themselves. The zone of proximal development bridges that gap between what is known and what can be known. Social scaffolding is an application of this concept, and includes helping the child to think about the task appropriately, modeling ways of solving problems, and giving hints that guide the child in useful directions. In second language instruction, the zone of proximal development is particularly useful since content in the foreign language is taught by taking advantage of students' knowledge and schema in their native language.

Swain and Lapkin (1998) give examples of social scaffolding and find that collaborative dialogue is a useful tool in second language learning. These researchers' study of interactions shows that learner-centered discourse provides opportunities for negotiations which aid second language learning (Swain & Lapkin 1998). They also establish that classroom teachers need to vary their activities as the same tasks do not work as well for all groups of students. Antón (1999) further asserts that when learners participate in negotiations with their teachers, the instructor's directions, repetitions, assisting questions, and devices such as gestures and pauses all help to achieve scaffolded assistance. Antón also declares that in traditional teacher-centered classrooms there is a significant reduction of opportunities for scaffolding within the zone of proximal development and also of learners' connection to classroom activities.

Chomsky and Universal Grammar

Chomsky (1966) brings about a reconsideration of language learning by arguing that language competence is not acquired inductively through a behaviorist stimulus-response conditioning as was maintained by Skinner (1953), but is the consequence of an

innate cognitive capacity possessed by humans. In other words, linguistic freedom and creativity are not acquired, but already exist as a governing a priori condition. Chomsky challenges the belief that the ability to acquire a human language is genetically determined. His theory postulates that the child faces a problem in that the language-learning task must be accomplished with deficient input data. A young child learning to speak by imitating his/her surroundings receives only bits and pieces of input as most adults do not follow specific language teaching rules or structures when speaking to infants. Chomsky goes on to state that the only way to explain how children succeed at language learning is to assume that they possess a *language acquisition device* endowed with a *universal grammar* that comprises a rich set of innate principles that govern the emergence of language. These principles of the human mind are, to a degree, biologically determined and specialized for language learning (Chomsky, 1966). Chomsky argues that universal grammar is the set of properties or conditions that comprise the "initial" state of the language learner; hence Universal Grammar constitutes the basis on which knowledge of language develops (Chomsky, 1993). Therefore, according to Chomsky (1966), this language acquisition device takes imperfect input consisting of incomplete linguistic data and produces an output of highly detailed and abstract knowledge of linguistic rules.

Even though some linguists (e.g. Hymes, 1971: further explained below) have argued against Chomsky's (1965) model of linguistics, this study has applied Chomsky's position that views universal grammar as part of the brain. Because the cases in this study looked at language learners in different environments, to presuppose learners' similarities due to universal grammar as well as their comparable social and cultural backgrounds

seemed appropriate. According to Chomsky's theory of formal cognitivism, these abstract and linguistically significant principles underlie all languages and comprise the essential faculty for language with which all individuals are, in general, uniformly and equally endowed (Chomsky 1966). Thus, the language properties naturally inherent in the human mind are thought to consist of a set of general principles that apply to all grammars and that leave certain parameters open. Consequently, Universal Grammar is seen to set the limits within which human languages can vary.

Chomsky's (1965) theory of linguistic competence rejected the notion of language as a relatively rigid set of structures and rather viewed it as a dynamic system, allowing the creation of new and unique speech. Second language learning is not a set of discrete and disconnected elements. More recently, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2005) assert that both comprehension (i.e., interpreting the message and the intent of the speaker or writer) and production (i.e., constructing spoken or written messages that convey one's meaning) are important facets of language teaching and learning. Therefore Celce-Murcia and Olshtain maintain that advanced learners can and should use complex authentic materials as the basis for interpreting and producing discourse in the target language. As will be analyzed later in this study, immersion instruction attempts such uses of authentic, age appropriate readings in the different subject areas as the basis for content as well as language acquisition.

Krashen's Input and Acquisition-Learning Hypotheses

As previously stated, Krashen's input hypothesis (1985) draws on Vygotsky's zone of proximal development as well as on Chomsky's theory of a language acquisition device in order to stipulate that second or foreign language acquisition occurs when the

brain receives comprehensible input. These inputs or second language messages must make sense and are ideally just slightly beyond the listener's level of competence. For example, if a learner is at a stage 'i', then acquisition takes place when he/she is exposed to comprehensible input that belongs to level 'i + 1' (Krashen, 1985). In this way, according to the principles of Universal Grammar, grammatical rules and structures can be generalized naturally and hence acquired by the learner. Even though language learning is generally associated with teacher directed classroom instruction of target language vocabulary and grammatical rules, language acquisition can also occur in classrooms where opportunities for authentic communication, that resemble real life, occur, since this ensures that each learner will receive some 'i + 1' input that is appropriate for his/her current stage of linguistic competence. Krashen (2003) further argues that second language acquisition should attempt to parallel the process of young children acquiring their first language by creating an environment in which language can be presented in authentic communicative situations.

Krashen's input hypothesis (1981) goes on to stipulate that in order for language to be acquired, the learner must understand the message that is heard or read. This author insists that language instruction should use comprehensible input as a more effective substitute for grammar rules, repetition drills, computer assisted language learning, and other tools. Hence, language acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language, natural communication, in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding (Krashen, 2003).

Hence, according to Krashen's acquisition-learning hypothesis (Krashen, 1981), language is acquired, not learned. Acquisition occurs subconsciously as a result of informal, natural communication between people where language is a means and not a focus nor an end in itself. Additionally, Krashen (1981) defines language learning as a more conscious process that enables a learner to "know about" the second language (p.83). In this process, errors are analyzed and corrected formally and explicitly. Language learning has traditionally involved grammar, vocabulary learning, and the teaching of other formal linguistic properties. However, contrary to Krashen's (2003) claims that conscious language learning can only serve to contribute to learners' language monitor, which helps to self-correct mistakes in grammar, this study argues that the formal teaching of grammar, vocabulary, and other properties of language does have relevance (Ellis, 2005).

However, Swain (1986) disagrees with Krashen's view that comprehensible input is the only element necessary for language learning. This author contends that learners must receive sufficient input in the target language as well as have the opportunity to produce their own second language (L2) output in order to ensure second language learning. Swain (1986) further claims that the opportunity to engage in meaningful and realistic exchanges in the target language as the process of conveying meaning helps enhance the individual's grammar and syntax.

Cummin's BICS, CALP and Interdependence Hypothesis

Many of Cummins' studies (e.g. Cummins, 1978, 1986) of second language instruction are carried out in the context of children who are in the process of learning a second language as part of their regular work in Canadian public schools. Therefore,

many of his theories and findings can be applied to language learning in children while in their everyday school experience. Because this study of schools in the Dominican Republic looked at elementary and high school students learning English as a foreign language during their regular schooling, Cummins' theories also seemed germane to these students in this context.

Cummins (1979) indicates that not all aspects of language use or performance can be incorporated into one dimension of global language proficiency. On the one hand, basic interpersonal communicative skills or BICS is the surface fluency needed for general, context embedded, face to face communication such as what takes place in the playground or when ordering a pizza. Understanding is aided by contextual aids such as the interlocutor's gestures, facial expressions, instant feedback and other clues that support oral language. This surface fluency tends to be acquired fairly quickly, at home, the community, or in a language learning situation within months or only a few years. Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), on the other hand, is the language ability necessary to function adequately in academic situations (Cummins, 1984). The language used in the classroom tends to be more technical, abstract, and specialized. This includes the vocabulary, advanced grammatical constructions, and discernment of the subtleties of meaning that aid understanding of academic texts and oral lessons in a variety of subjects. In these situations, the language alone conveys the meaning, making it necessary for the learner to be able to access a richer vocabulary, greater understanding of grammatical constructions and even an understanding of details in connotation in order to grasp what is being taught. Therefore, Cummins and Swain (1986) state that on average; it takes students five to seven years to develop CALP in any language.

Nevertheless, this dichotomy is critiqued by Trueba (1989) who argues that by obscuring all classroom communication on a continuum between BICS and CALP, it has possibly discouraged examination of student progress in the vast middle region. Edelsky, Hudelson, Altwerger, Flores, Barkin, and Jilbert (1983) also add that CALP or academic language proficiency represents little more than test-taking skills, and might at times simply represent the inappropriate way in which it has been measured.

Cummins agrees with Krashen on the relevance of first language instruction for second language learning. Cummins' (1978) developmental interdependence hypothesis suggests that an individual's competence in their second language is partially contingent on the level of competence they achieve in their first language. Cummins' (1981) interdependence hypothesis further suggests that cognitive academic knowledge gained in one language can be used in context in the other language. The English learner child who knows more subject matter, even if this is in his/her native tongue, will gain additional comprehensible input when working in the second language classroom and thus learns more of that second language. Individuals vary in their language abilities, with some being stronger in receptive skills such as reading and listening and others in productive skills like writing and speaking. Language learners' abilities can also demonstrate strength in any combination of these. Cummins (1984) states that the child's language-cognitive abilities need to be sufficiently well developed to be capable of coping with classroom requirements. Cummins (1981) also explains that context reduced, cognitively demanding communication develops interdependently and can hence be promoted in their first or second language as well as in both simultaneously.

Communicative Language Teaching

Other methods developed in opposition to those that concentrated solely on grammatical rules. For example, the fundamental nature of communicative language teaching (CLT) seeks to engage learners in realistic communication in order to develop their communicative competence (Savignon, 1983). Moreover, competence addresses the ability of language learners to interact with other speakers, as well as in reading and writing activities in order to share their own personal thoughts and expressions, and to interpret and negotiate meaning (Savignon, 2005).

Hymes (1971), in reaction to the shortcomings he viewed in Chomsky's (1965) distinction between competence and performance, develops a pedagogical theory of communicative competence. Chomsky's view of linguistic competence, however, was not intended to inform instruction, but serve as part of developing a theory of the linguistic system itself, idealized as the abstract language knowledge of the monolingual adult native speaker, and separate from how the individual uses language. Chomsky's generative and transformational theory (1956) defines communicative competence based on an ideal speaker, who would be able to generate all of the grammatically possible phrases and sentences in a given language. For Hymes (1971), however, not only the speaker's correct grammar, but other sociocultural and psycholinguistic aspects would be relevant (for further explanations of language competence see p.86). Nevertheless, in analyzing the structure of language and finding that grammars in different languages are more alike than different (in their structure and the rules they follow), and although not a polyglot himself, Chomsky seems to advocate for bilingualism.

Proponents of communicative language teaching argue that unlike Chomsky's theory of linguistic competence which deals primarily with abstract grammatical knowledge, communicative competence deals with actual speech in real situations, human interactions, and the ability to know what to say and when to say it (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998). Consequently, since its inception, the communicative language approach has sought to elaborate and implement programs and methodologies that develop learners' functional language ability through practice involving realistic communication. Savignon (1983) suggests that rather than being taught a foreign language through grammar drills, learners could better focus on grammar when it relates to their communicative needs and experiences, hence communicative competence should be the goal of language education, and central to good classroom practice.

Direct Grammar Instruction

Somewhat contrary to Krashen's views on the importance of grammar instruction, grammatical rules can also have their place in the language classroom. Krashen and Terrell (1983) argue that the formal teaching of grammar is of limited value since complex rules will not be used consciously or unconsciously by the language learner. Methods in place for many years at that time (e.g. audiolingualism, functional-notional approach) did directly emphasize the importance of teaching grammatical forms, differentiating lexemes, morphemes, and syntax (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998). Krashen's main opposition to the teaching of grammar possibly resulted from the widespread return to the grammar translation method during the 1970s. At this time, second language teaching went back to the 19th century European method of having classes concentrate on grammatical rules, laboratory patterns, drills, and written correctness. Consequently, they

also did not emphasize skills in spoken language (Savignon, 2005). As explained by Fotos (2005), the grammar translation method views language learning as mostly the memorization of rules and facts. This method teaches a foreign language by first analyzing in detail its grammar rules, then applying this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language. Moreover, grammar is taught deductively through the learning of rules, new vocabulary is usually drawn from the readings, and speaking and listening tend to be neglected. Fotos also laments that in this method there tends to be no output in the target language since translation generally takes place from the second language (L2) to the first language (L1).

There still exists a debate in language learning between methods based on the teaching of grammar and those that concentrate on communication. In his natural order hypothesis, Krashen (1981) indicates that there is a natural order in which learners acquire the grammatical features of a language, and that this order is roughly the same for all learners, no matter their linguistic background. This also helped to fuel his argument against explicit grammar instruction since these mistakes will be made in the same order whether the learners have been taught the grammar or not. More current research also shows that students do progress through set stages during language acquisition (Ellis, 1994). However, in a review of recent studies on the effectiveness of direct instruction on grammar knowledge in the second language, Ellis (2005) concludes that even though grammar teaching does not appear to change the order, it can get the student through the different natural stages more rapidly, and the effect of grammar instruction tends to be quite durable. Additionally, it was also found that learners can benefit from instruction in specific grammatical features when performing on discrete point tests like the Test of

English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Taking all of this into account, Fotos (2005) suggests that for an optimum situation and effective L2 instruction, an ideal foreign language teaching method would combine the methods and activities of the grammar translation method such as grammar, translation, and vocabulary with those from communicative language teaching that include plentiful uses of target language structures and providing opportunities for negotiated output.

Instruction in the First Language

Context is also very important to language learners and some elements of context such as learners' previously acquired linguistic knowledge, as well as their understanding of the world and of the current situation, aid in language acquisition (Krashen, 2003). This is why pictures and body movement are believed to help beginners in making input comprehensible by aiding in putting new knowledge into context. In upcoming sections, this study further argues that the individual's cultural and social surroundings also play a role in language learning. Moreover, primary language instruction is a tool believed to aid language learners' conceptual development and enrich their ability to function in both languages. Krashen (1985), for example, states that quality education in the first language provides the student with subject-matter knowledge. Lessow-Hurley (1990) also explains how content knowledge acquired in any language will become part of students' overall understanding. Reading readiness instruction and skills such as directionality, sequencing, and the ability to distinguish among shapes and sounds can readily be transferred between languages. If it is true, for example as Krashen (1985) hypothesizes, that writing competence comes only from large amounts of self-motivated reading for pleasure and/or interest, then language learners who are encouraged by first language

instruction to read material in their native language, which is naturally more attractive to them, are also being supported in their acquisition of writing skills.

The findings of Vygotsky, Chomsky, Krashen, Savignon, Cummins, Canale, and Swain seem germane to this study as both of the schools studied for these cases display characteristics of communicative language teaching in their foreign language classes. Both schools have implemented programs that develop their students' functional language ability through practice involving realistic communication in the target language. Nevertheless, they also teach grammar and vocabulary in both English and Spanish directly. Baker (1996) effectively explains the dichotomy between the more behaviorist theories that advocate for language learning, and the Chomsky and Krashen growth, acquisition viewpoint. Second language learning does not occur merely by putting pieces in place in order to build stimulus-response links. Nor is it a matter of exposing the learner to the target language and subsequently waiting for the natural progression of acquisition. Grammar instruction, alongside appropriate, relevant input in the target language are equally important, but so too is allowing ample opportunities for students to produce their own output.

Bilingualism's Effect on Cognition

An individual's first language is also known as her/his native language. A person's proficiency or competence in a language as well as her/his actual use of that language may vary across the language skills of speaking, listening, writing, and reading (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998). These basic skills can be further broken down into different linguistic components that make up these abilities and could indicate an individual's language proficiency. Individuals who only possess those language skills in one

language are monolinguals. Conversely, a balanced bilingual is a person who possesses age-appropriate competence in two languages, and is therefore equally competent in reading, speaking, or writing both languages (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998).

Additionally, according to Lambert's (1974) model of language acquisition, depending upon a language learner's and her environment's attitudes, aptitudes, and motivation, additive or subtractive bilingualism will result. In an additive situation, thanks to the first language's environmental acceptance and strength, specialized schooling allows students to add a second language to their mother tongue and become bilingual with little or no pressure to replace or reduce the first language. On the contrary, in subtractive bilingualism, there is pressure to replace or demote the first language resulting in the second language becoming the sole medium of instruction and ultimately the only language of the student (Lambert, 1980). Educational programs that support additive bilingualism and that aim to generate students who are proficient in two languages as well as being biliterate are also referred to as strong, whereas those whose aim is to produce monolingualism or subtractive bilingualism are referred to as weak (Baker, 1996). Hence, the type of second language instruction received may also affect ultimate cognition. In her extensive review of the topic's literature, González (1999) states that the weight of research evidence shows that additive bilingualism, where the child has relatively high proficiency levels in both languages, especially in early childhood, can accelerate cognitive growth.

Studies done before the 1960s estimated that the IQ of monolingual children was superior to that of bilingual children (Lambert, 1975). Conversely, major reviews of studies conducted through the early 1960s on the relationship between bilingualism and

intelligence have found that those earlier studies had many methodological flaws. Testing, for example, was conducted in English (generally the second language of those children) with samples of middle-class American children as monolingual controls paired against lower income immigrant populations (Valdés & Figueroa, 1994). More recent research from Canada, the United States, and Wales, using standardized testing in the appropriate languages, and controlling for socioeconomic status, has shown that bilingual children have an IQ equal to or higher to that of their monolingual peers (Saunders, 1982).

Studies based on traditional cognitive development theories (e.g., Bruner, 1964; Piaget, 1964) have indicated that an early ability to form concepts separating labels from their symbolic meaning, such as that which often occurs in bilinguals, is important for cognitive development. Peal and Lambert (1962) matched monolingual French and balanced bilingual French/English 10-year-olds on socioeconomic status, age, sex, and school system. They discovered that the bilingual children demonstrated superior performance on verbal and non-verbal standardized tests of intelligence and a more heterogeneous pattern of intelligence compared to the unitary structure of monolingual children's intelligence. Like the researchers before them (Leopold, 1939; Vygotsky, 1962), these authors attributed bilinguals' enhanced creativity and cognitive flexibility to their word-object separation. The intellectual ability to separate non-verbal conceptual meanings from their corresponding words in various languages has more recently been called metalinguistic awareness. Various studies (Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Cummins, 1978, Cobo-Lewis, Pearson, Eilers, & Umbel, 2002) describe that when bilinguals are

compared to monolinguals they show advantages of creativity, cognitive flexibility, concept formation, and metalinguistic abilities.

Náñez and Padilla (1995) present research on 15 to 17-year-old Mexican Americans. When comparing balanced bilinguals with non-balanced bilinguals, they find that an interaction between bilingual proficiency and rate-of-cognitive-information processing initially occurs at the level of short-term memory. They also report evidence that a probable cost or trade-off to the balanced, proficient bilingual's advantage in cognitive flexibility on complex cognitive tasks is a decrease in speed of information processing of elementary cognitive tasks.

More recently, several researchers have continued to look at certain differences between monolingual and bilingual learners. Lee (1996) presents an overview of the research conducted in several different countries and on diverging age groups on the complex relationship between bilingualism and cognitive development and the important implications of this relationship for early childhood education. He was looking to examine the cognitive development in bilingual children with regard to metalinguistic awareness, concept formation, and analogical reasoning. He reasons that bilingual instruction is positively linked to enhanced cognitive language development, concept development, and perceptual motor development. Beycont (1994), studying 139 American-born Puerto Rican students, finds a strong positive relation between first language (Spanish) and second language (English) reading development. Gonzalez (1999) adds that the weight of the research evidence supports the positive influence of bilingualism on cognitive development.

Hakuta (1990) also points out that bilingualism has been associated positively with greater cognitive flexibility and awareness of language. Skills and knowledge learned in the native language transfer to the second, hence having the knowledge available facilitates the learning of the appropriate vocabulary in the second language, by providing “comprehensive input.” This knowledge is then transferred globally rather than piece by piece. In a similar vein, research shows that the greater the development of the first language, the better second language students do academically in the long run (Thomas and Collier 1997, 2002; Cummins 2000).

Diaz and Klinlger’s (1991) use as their theoretical framework Vygotsky’s theory and his emphasis on thought and language and on the self-regulation of cognitive functions through the use of an individual’s inner thoughts or private speech. Vygotsky (1962) postulates that the use of language promotes a radical transformation of the course of cognitive development. This would mean that diversity of language experiences has differential effects on cognitive abilities. Diaz and Klinlger look at six different sets of findings regarding the relation between bilingualism and cognitive development. Diaz and Klingler (1991) then compare bilingual and monolingual children as well as bilingual children of varying levels of development. Their results indicate that bilingualism can lead to superior performance on a variety of intellectual tasks. These authors’ explanatory model can be summarized in these three propositions:

- At an early age, the exposure to two languages in a systematic, additive way leads to an objective awareness of language, including grammatical rules and structures as well as a sort of stepping outside the language to see its non-communicative uses and functions.

- Increased awareness and understanding of the cognitive functions of language leads to an increased use of language as a tool of thought.
- The increased and or more efficient use of language for cognitive functions will give children an advantage in cognitive performance across verbal and non-verbal tasks.

The Dominican government is looking to improve the quality and availability of English instruction in public schools because of the economic incentive and the need for individuals highly trained in that language. Nevertheless, it is heartening to recognize that the weight of the research evidence also supports the positive influence of bilingualism on cognitive development. If carried out correctly and conscientiously, this goal of universal bilingualism across the country is likely to have unintended positive consequences on students' overall learning.

Classroom Modifications Made for Second Language Learners

In order to aid content-area teachers to adapt their classes to the language needs of their English language learner students, Claire and Haynes (1997) suggest several different strategies that teachers should use. Even though these were meant to be used in the context of schools in the United States with immigrant second language learners, foreign language teachers in other parts of the world learn from these same texts and apply very similar strategies in their classroom instruction. Some of these strategies include structuring questions to match the ESL students' language ability or breaking questions into several steps so that students may retrieve complex information. Teachers who are faced with ESL students are urged to try not to excessively correct these students in front of their peers but instead model the correct response, sentence structure, or both.

These teachers may also choose to use cooperative learning groups or teams in order to provide the ESL student with varying language and learning-style experiences. When it comes time to evaluate the class, teachers may read test questions aloud, simplify the directions, supply word banks, and extend the time allotted to complete the tests or even use portfolios to authentically assess student progress. Claire and Haynes also suggest that teachers use simple structure (e.g. verb-subject-object) and high-frequency words.

Haynes and O'Loughlin (1999) further suggest that teachers with students who are learning a second language while at the same time learning content should also simplify their speech during instruction while attempting to maintain the veracity and complexity of the concepts being taught. They should also work toward depth, not breadth of information, presenting materials in a clear, concise, comprehensible manner and eliminating all peripheral, nonessential information. Whenever possible, another practical tool is the use of graphic organizers, such as webs, Venn diagrams, and charts, to make information more accessible to second language learners. In addition, because content material is usually presented in texts that are too dense for second language learners, these teachers may also choose to present content area vocabulary and concepts using objects from real life, picture files, and hands-on activities as well as attempting to build background knowledge before teaching a lesson. As explained by Snow (2001) another modification commonly used in the second language classroom is for teachers to provide learners with multiple cues to meaning so that they do not have to rely exclusively on words to understand difficult material. Some of the commonly used cues are gestures, dramatization, bulletin boards, word banks, and building redundancy into lessons through repetition, restatement and exemplification.

Those who are teaching subject area content in science, mathematics, social studies, literature, or language arts are often faced with students who are also simultaneously learning the language of instruction as a second or foreign language. In such cases, these teachers are encouraged to use specialized strategies in order to assist these language learner students. Because both Cervantina and Imersão teachers were observed to use these strategies, they were briefly covered here.

The Effect of SES on Language Learning

Family involvement is an important factor in student academic performance. In her review of research on parental involvement in children's education, Delgado-Gaitan (1990) finds that by encouraging positive attitudes toward education and high expectations for success, parents can help enhance students' cognitive and emotional development. This author also states that parents, especially those from working class families, are a vital factor in encouraging strong academic programs for their children. Furthermore, she maintained that students' academic performance also increases when their parents show interest in their learning. De Mejia (2002) states that parents who select multilingual education for their children need to be closely involved with the school in order to help their children cope with the extra demands of unfamiliar languages and cultural practices.

Canadians, for example, have witnessed several examples of parental involvement and SES differences affecting second language learning. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted in 2000 offers some insights into the academic achievement of Canadian 15-year-olds enrolled in immersion programs. Allen (2004) looks at the PISA results for reading achievement and compares French-immersion and

non-immersion students in English-language school systems in Canada's ten provinces. In all but one province (Manitoba), students in French immersion programs performed significantly better in reading in English than students in other programs. Allen (2004) points out that although further research is needed into factors leading to the higher academic success of French immersion students, it is generally accepted that parents of immersion students are from higher socio-economic backgrounds and are more likely to have a postsecondary education. This author also mentions that French immersion programs may assist student learning by providing an enriched learning environment. In a similar, more recent study, Lytton and Pyryt (1998) conducted a statistical analysis of mathematics and reading test scores of the entire population of students for Grades 3 and 6 enrolled in elementary schools of the Calgary Board of Education. When they analyzed the school-by-school achievement test results in language arts and mathematics, average family income explained only 45 percent of the variation in achievement test scores.

Moreover, in their secondary analysis of previously published data, Krashen and Brown (2005) argue that if schools provide a print-rich environment through high quality school libraries as well as literacy and background knowledge through superior first and foreign language programs, all students, regardless of their cultural background or SES, should have superior foreign language acquisition and achievement. Among their conclusions, Krashen and Brown propose that schools can improve the achievement of all students by providing a print-rich environment in school as well as high quality instruction in the primary language. Krashen and Brown (2005) suggest that even though many studies establish a correlation between low SES and poor academic performance, SES per se is not the origin of low achievement. Rather, they suggest that certain factors

typically associated with SES may cause lower school performance among low-SES students. One example is the presence of reading materials in the home, which is associated with higher SES (Feitelson & Goldstein, 1986; Neuman & Celano, 2001). McQuillan (1998) concludes that regardless of the students' SES, being read to and the availability of a print-rich environment contribute to student achievement. Likewise, Krashen (1996) establishes that providing background knowledge and literacy skills in the native language also help improve the achievement of English language learners regardless of their SES.

Many studies have been conducted on the relationship between SES and learning. The present research study into language learning in Dominican schools looked at private schools whose students come from higher SES backgrounds in the hopes of later policy recommendations for public schools. The previous brief review of the research on the relationship between language learning and SES aids in the present study's argument that the achievement in the foreign language attained by high SES students in private schools can later be useful when deciding on policies that will affect students of lower SES enrolled in the Dominican public school system. Later in this chapter, a more complete explanation of the situation of private and public schooling in the country will also be presented.

Second and Foreign Language Instruction in Different Locations

Around the world, political, economic, and historical circumstances have resulted in multilingualism. This study must be situated within the historical, social, and cultural context of foreign language instruction to be able to better understand or even evaluate these programs. For this reason, what follows is a brief description and synopsis of

different types of second and foreign language education and their incidence in academic programs in various places around the world. In the specific case of the United States however, even though many American students do learn a foreign language while in school, their motivation is quite different from students in non-English speaking countries who are learning a world language such as English (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998). For this reason, in the case of the United States, the literature review is of students learning English as a second language as opposed to Americans learning a foreign language.

The United States

The merits of knowing more than one language are well established. In the United States, for example, the constant immigration of individuals with native languages different from English results in the need for frequent policy debates regarding the maintenance of these foreign languages versus the learning of English while offering equal educational opportunities to all language minority students. Under these circumstances, second language learning tends to be used mostly as remediation to aid non-English speakers in the regular classroom. According to Ovando and Perez (2000), in transitional bilingual education programs, for example, students are provided with extensive instruction in the native language as well as in English. Once students attain a certain level of English proficiency they are returned to the mainstream English-only classrooms.

Because of its position as a global economic power, the United States has historically attracted a large number of immigrants of different nationalities, languages, and cultures. The public education system has had to contend with great numbers of students whose first language is not English. As pointed out by Ovando and Pérez

(2000), until the late 1960s, these immigrant students were expected to learn English without any special considerations of their native language. At that time, special efforts were made to improve the education of foreign children by encouraging different languages to be spoken and even taught in classrooms in the United States. The Bilingual Education Act (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ESEA) was enacted by the federal government in 1968. As declared by Crawford (2000), grant recipients under Title VII would have to achieve the goal of having students function “well in two languages in any occasion” (p.115). Consequently, bilingual education, particularly Spanish-English, has been an on-again-off-again fixture in United States public schools as well as in policy debates for over 30 years.

In the United States, specialized education for language minority children is of national importance. Immigrant populations, particularly Spanish speakers, are at an all time high. The 2002 census indicated that the nation's Hispanic population had jumped by 58 % since 1990—from 22.4 million to 38.8 million (Therrien and Ramirez, 2000). Until recently, Hispanics had largely been concentrated in California, Texas, Florida, and New York. Hispanics now, however, constitute the largest minority group in 23 states, including such Midwestern states as Iowa and Nebraska. Even though many school systems have language minority students representing differing nationalities, in this paper, when bilingual education in the United States is mentioned, it is referring exclusively to instruction in Spanish and English because Hispanics represent the majority of immigrant groups.

As previously stated, the constant influx of foreigners has changed U.S. demographics significantly, sometimes resulting in adverse feelings towards immigrants,

especially in times of economic decline. In the late 1990s, those debates turned their attention to ending bilingual education and emphasizing on English-only instruction. The citizens of California, for example, were largely dissatisfied with their State's education of non-English-speaking children in public schools. In 1998, with a 60% majority, they passed Proposition 227 that mandated that all non-English-speaking students be placed in "structured English immersion" classrooms. The initiative also required that these students move on to mainstream classrooms after just one year. The assumption behind the "English only" initiative was that teaching foreign children in their native language held them back in their acquisition of English and therefore in their future educational success.

Voters ratified Proposition 227 in California (1998), and a similar Proposition 203 in Arizona (2000). Following the footsteps of these legislations mandating English immersion instruction for all English language learners (ELL), President Bush argued the merits of his No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). One of the many consequences of its passage in January 2002 was that the name of the Federal Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA) was changed to the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). Special academic considerations for foreign children and particularly bilingual education and the policies that govern it experienced an acute change.

As a result of constant debate, Title VII has seen many transformations. NCLB was an extensive reauthorization of ESEA. Wiese and Garcia (1998) specify how Title VII evolved from encouraging education programs to use students' native language and teach the history and culture of the target population to a remedial effort aimed at

overcoming students' language deficiencies. As pointed out by Hakuta (1990), most programs in the United States that today are called bilingual exist only as a means for students to transition from Low English Proficiency (LEP) or English Language Learner (ELL) into mainstream English classrooms. Their purpose is to use the first language for instruction only to the extent necessary to allow children to achieve competence in English. In general, United States' educational systems geared specifically toward language minority students can be classified as follows.

Submersion programs: No use of the native language nor any other special instruction to help in English acquisition. This is not in compliance with U.S. federal standards as a result of the Supreme Court decision of *Lau v. Nichols (1974)*³.

Structured immersion programs: No use of the native language, but students are given specially designed English as a Second Language (ESL) or English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction appropriate to their level of English proficiency, until they can enter mainstream classrooms. Usually, this is carried out as "pull out" (where students are taken out of their regular classrooms certain hours of the day for specialized instruction). In high schools, ESL can be taught as a subject or through academic content.

Partial immersion programs: Specialized ESL instruction is provided. A small amount of time each day is set aside for instruction in the native language. However, the goal is to move to English-only class instruction as quickly as possible.

Transitional bilingual programs (also referred to as early exit bilingual education): Half a day of instruction is provided in the native language as well as in English. However, students are mainstreamed into the monolingual English classrooms

as soon as they have adequate language proficiency. These programs vary greatly in the amount of time students are in the bilingual portion before they are mainstreamed.

Maintenance or developmental bilingual education programs (also referred to as late exit bilingual education): Half a day of instruction is provided in the native language as well as in English, even after students become proficient in English, but typically only until 5th or 6th-grade.

Two-way immersion programs: Language minority and language majority students are placed together in the same bilingual classroom to work together academically and acquire literacy as well as cognitive and social skills in both languages in the process.

Bilingual immersion Education (also referred to as Dual Language): Academic instruction through both the first language (L1) and second language (L2) for grades K-12. This is carried out as a transition from 90% or 50% minority language to where by 5th or 6th-grade, instruction takes place 60% in the majority language and 40% through the minority language (Ovando and Pérez, 2000, p.151-152; Thomas and Collier, 1997).

As might be noted from the definitions above, the amount of instruction offered to students in their native language increases proportionately as these classifications progress, i.e., two-way immersion offers significantly more reinforcement of the native language than transitional bilingual which offers more than structured immersion.

Brisk (2006) explains that bilingual education models can be broadly described according to their goals, the type of students served, languages used to develop literacy, and language of subject matter instruction. Additionally, while studying second language instruction in the United States, this author noted that in order to ensure good bilingual

programs, schools needed to set clear goals, create an appropriate school climate by setting high expectations for all students, the bilingual program should be integrated into the school community, the school should ensure to provide leadership and support for the program, well prepared personnel should be hired, and productive partnerships should be set with parents. While analyzing those English as a second language programs, Brisk (2006) also maintains that when devising curricula, schools must make difficult choices including how to use and teach language, how and when to introduce English, what to teach in the home language, as well as approaches to teaching students who are not literate in either language. She also adds that many times availability of qualified personnel and appropriate materials may determine language use in the curriculum.

Europe

Across Europe, in contrast, many countries are immersed in multilingualism and multiculturalism. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (EURYDICE), while perceiving that we live in an interconnected world where it is essential to speak more than one language, has tried to standardize the learning of languages in Europe since the 1990s (Eurydice, 2001). According to this document, students are to begin foreign language instruction with three to four weekly hours of compulsory lessons in that language. These lessons usually begin at the end of primary school or at the beginning of secondary school. English is the second language that is most frequently taught in the European Union; more than 93% of children learn English.

Bilingual education is experiencing steady growth throughout Europe. For example, Eurydice (2001) affirms that in the 1960s and 1970s, in countries such as Belgium, France, Austria, Finland, and Germany, as well as in some nations of central

and Eastern Europe, bilingual schools for high achieving students were created. These schools taught different subjects using the second language. In the 1990s, this system began to be offered to all students. Similarly, there are places in the Catalan-speaking areas of Spain that teach in Catalan, with Spanish introduced by grade three as well as Basque/Spanish bilingual schools in the Basque-speaking areas of Spain, which service both native speakers of Basque and Spanish (Arzamendi and Genesee, 1997).

Furthermore, in more than half of the nations in Europe that have a minority regional language, a system of bilingual education is used where the students are instructed in that language as well as in the state language. In order to achieve these goals schoolteachers receive special training. At the present time, EURYDICE is advocating foreign language instruction through educational methods that stress the development of individuals' complete personality by integrating the knowledge of other languages and cultures. Additionally, these programs fulfill intercultural and communicative objectives since it is believed that a better knowledge of European languages will facilitate additional communication and interaction between citizens with different mother tongues (Eurydice, 2001). Another of the project's goals is to promote cooperation between nations and to surpass any existent prejudices and discriminations as well as to obtain the cooperation and coordination between the different governments.

Eurydice (2001) further declares that encouraging the learning of European languages, which are an important part of Europe's cultural heritage, has always been one of the objectives of European educational cooperation. In 1976, for example, a ruling by the Educational Ministries included the goal of offering all students the opportunity to learn at least one of the other languages of the community. In 1995, among the objectives

considered by the European Commission was that of all young people learning at least two foreign languages and the promotion of innovative methodologies in language education, as well as fostering an awareness of foreign languages and cultures beginning as early as preschool.

Canada

Canada has a long history of bilingual education. Its example is looked at throughout the world. As declared by Allen (2004), historically Canadian policy has gone back and forth on the issue of bilingualism in its legislature as well as in public schooling. However, due to the small French population in many areas, French was many times perceived as less important and its educational use was curtailed many times. Some examples of this were in the province of Manitoba where, after many years of debate, in 1916 English was declared the official language in schools, and in Ontario where from 1912 until 1927 French instruction was officially forbidden in schools. The arguments on both sides of the bilingual issue, which involved many traditions and personal apprehensions, have been worsened many times by disputes around Catholic French and Protestant English schooling.

A central figure in the issue of Canadian bilingualism is the province of Quebec. Since 1759, when the territory of Quebec went from being a French to an English colony, the authorities in the province have labored to maintain its identity, which they consider to be linked to the French language and culture, and separate from the rest of Canada. Canadian Heritage (2005) points out that official bilingualism in Canada in its various forms goes back to the British North America Act of 1867 when both French and English language usage was allowed for parliamentary debates and federal court cases. Canadian

Heritage also states that the more extensive, modern form of Canadian bilingualism began with the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which started work in 1963. Following the work of this commission, in 1969 the first Official Languages Act was adopted by Parliament. Among its objectives was that there be equality of English and French in Parliament and the rest of Canadian government as well as in society. That same year New Brunswick enacted its first Official Languages Act, which made it Canada's first, and only, province to be officially bilingual. Additionally, in 1974, the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act was passed. It required the use of both French and English on all consumer packaging across the country, and bilingual packaging remains a very visible aspect of bilingualism for the Canadian general public (Allen, 2004).

In 1982, in addition, a national constitutional act was enacted that required that all the provinces and territories, within their possibilities, educate their students in both official languages. As Cummins (1979) contends, in places such as Ontario, Manitoba, and Montreal, immersion education is extremely common. In this system, Anglophone students receive all content instruction in their second language, French. This system, also known as Canadian French immersion focuses on developing comprehension by focusing on meaning and following the work of Krashen (1981). Key vocabulary is taught directly and in the context of real messages in order to encourage the ensuing flow of production by second language students. Swain and Lapkin (1982) point out that in this type of language instruction, grammar is taught as a means of making use of words and structures in communication rather than as isolated rules.

In Canadian early immersion there is no direct instruction about the second language, rather instruction is in that language. Swain and Lapkin (1982), in their study of French immersion in Canada, found that early total immersion students attained near-native proficiency in listening and reading comprehension as well as improved achievement in speaking and writing with the earlier onset of these lessons in the second language. Similarly, these authors also reported that these students' literacy skills in their first language exhibited a temporary lag in their performance when compared to monolinguals, but this lag disappeared after about grade three, and in subsequent grades the bilinguals performed as well or better than their monolingual counterparts.

Canada continues on the forefront of bilingualism. In the spring of 2003, the Federal Government launched its Action Plan for Official Languages in Canada, entitled *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality*. One important strategic objective in the plan is to double the proportion of graduates from Canadian high schools with a functional knowledge of their second official language by 2013 (Canadian Heritage, 2004).

Latin America

Despite the fact that multilingualism used to be commonplace among the different indigenous groups in Central and South America due to colonialism and to the historical hostility between natives and nonnative peoples, nowadays monolinguals are the norm. This situation has also resulted in native peoples preferring that their children be educated in each country's hegemonic language in order not to hinder their societal advance given that only a single language is of common use. This is changing gradually and in countries

such as Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Nicaragua, and Paraguay indigenous languages already are used officially (De Mejía, 2005).

Nevertheless, De Mejia (2005) explains that bilingual programs are slowly becoming more prevalent in Latin American countries. In these programs, two languages are used as the means of instruction and for the construction of knowledge, by emphasizing language learning for communication as well as for the attainment of linguistic and academic goals. A good example of this type of instruction exists in the Andes where the Andean Program for Bilingual Intercultural Education (PROEIB Andes or EIB) operates schools in countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela. Because of this program, large numbers of children are able to participate in additive bilingualism and maintain their indigenous languages while simultaneously learning the hegemonic language, which is usually Spanish or, in some cases, French or Portuguese. In many cases, EIB's use of these native languages for education has resulted in the governments making their use official by laws and decrees. Lopez and Küper (1999) argue that although in many of these countries some indigenous languages have been legislated as official languages, they are still considered by many as politically unimportant, which limits their use to the homes of minority groups. Furthermore, those who already speak Spanish rarely take advantage of these programs in order to learn some of the indigenous languages. Nevertheless, this type of program also helps educate the community on the advantages of bilingual education through specialized community-based initiatives. In addition, PROEIB Andes has allowed bilingual and intercultural education to transcend

from a compensatory program only for natives to being an educative alternative destined to equip the official educative systems with greater quality (Lopez and Küper, 1999).

In the Andean countries the indigenous languages are most often used in informal and intimate contexts since Spanish and Portuguese are used for the majority of social functions and especially for formal and institutional purposes (Lopez and Küper, 1999). However, in Paraguay the native language, Guaraní, coexists favorably with Spanish, in cities as well as in rural areas, which is not necessarily the case in countries such as Peru, Mexico, Bolivia, and Ecuador. This is due in part to that country's simultaneous use of both languages for almost four hundred years and in part to Paraguayans' positive attitude towards both languages, in addition to these languages' use in urban and rural educational systems (Corvalán, 1990).

Moya Pons (1998) points out that in more than eleven Latin American countries there are constitutions, laws or decrees that recognize the right of the indigenous populations to an education in their own language, which directly affects any educational reform efforts in those places. In countries such as Bolivia and Guatemala some projects are being established that aim to consolidate indigenous interests with those of the rest of the population. Thanks to its newfound popularity, in Bolivia, several private high schools in cities such as La Paz and Cochabamba offer courses in Aimara or Quechua as a second language; whereas in some cities and towns in Guatemala children in early elementary school are sensitized about the Mayan culture by learning rudimentary Mayan language and traditional poems, songs, and playful activities (Lopez and Küper, 1999).

In many of EIB's programs, it has been proven that the best way to guarantee quality bilingualism is to ensure specialized teacher training. Lopez and Küper (1999)

indicate that EIB has innovatively incorporated certain training initiatives for the development of indigenous instructors. These authors also recommend training these teachers on multilingualism, its characteristics, complexities, and advantages.

The case of Nicaragua is somewhat unique among Latin American countries. Native populations have historically been marginalized and are physically separated from much of the rest of the country by natural boundaries set by the rugged surrounding terrain. As a result, English, Miskito, and Sumo are spoken almost exclusively in the country's Atlantic coast region. After the Sandinista revolution and the overthrow of the dictator in 1979, a national effort was launched in Nicaragua in March, 1980 to try to raise the especially low literacy rate inherited from the Somoza dictatorship. In October of that same year, the government also launched a parallel literacy crusade in the English, Miskito, and Sumo languages of the Atlantic Coast. This was the first recognition by any Nicaraguan central government of the need for native language education in the geographically distant region. From an educational perspective, this movement was quite successful and it endowed 12,000 Miskito, Creole, and Sumo coastal peoples with basic reading and writing skills in their native language (Shapiro, 1987). Alongside this move, in December, 1980, the Nicaraguan Council of State passed a bilingual education law obliging the minister of education to plan, coordinate and evaluate the teaching of pre-primary to fourth-grade in Miskito and English in the areas of the Atlantic Coast where those populations were found. Spanish was to be introduced gradually (Shapiro, 1987).

As Shapiro (1987) observes, Nicaragua's government was the first in Latin America to organize and fund bilingual-bicultural education programs for two different ethnic minority populations. Shapiro (1987) also laments that because of organizational

hurdles, these courses follow a mostly transitional bilingual program that uses the native language as a “bridge” to facilitate what eventually becomes the almost exclusive learning of the hegemonic language (p.74).

In many monolingual Latin American countries, even though most neighboring countries also speak the same language, Spanish, the importance of foreign language instruction, particularly in English, is also increasing. The Chilean government, for example, due to its participation in international trade agreements as well as to encourage foreign investment, recently implemented English instructional programs throughout its public schools and universities. Furthermore, as Luis Proenza, president of the University of Akron, explains when speaking of his native town in Mexico: learning English as a foreign language is “part and parcel” of the culture (Belcher & Connor, 2001, p.192).

The examples of the United States and Canada, as well as certain countries in Europe, were reviewed because all of these countries have such a long, and in some cases successful history of second language instruction, that it bears mentioning. Even though the circumstances in every Latin American nation are unique, many of these countries also have similar cultural, socioeconomic and language backgrounds as the Dominican Republic. It is important to frame Dominican policy recommendations while taking into account previous state-wide successes and failures.

Dominican Republic

In the Dominican Republic, all high schools, public and private, have historically taught English as a foreign language beginning in the 11th-grade, by offering about an hour twice a week of foreign language instruction. Foreign language instruction in

English as well as in French was mandated by the Dominican national Ministry of Education's (Secretaría de Estado de Educación - SEE) in 1993 for all schools beginning in 5th-grade (Pérez, 2003). At this time, the national curriculum purported to teach an average of two hours a week of each of these two languages. Due to the increasing interest in foreign language instruction (especially English), some private schools now offer fully bilingual or English-only instruction for all of their students starting in preschool. At present, there are no public schools offering comprehensive English instruction programs.

In the current Dominican administration, improving educational opportunities for all children is at the forefront of public policy. According to Kingdon (1984), governmental officials will pay serious attention to an issue when the problem and policy proposal are accompanied by high public receptivity. "*Inglés es uno de los idiomas más importantes, en cualquier país que tu vayas, siempre vas a encontrar a alguien que sepa ingles.... Además todo el mundo para trabajar tiene que saber ingles.*" [English is one of the most important languages... Besides in order to work everyone needs to know English]. (Cervantina 10th-grade female intermediate student 7) (other examples of the importance of English to Dominican students can be seen on page 126). Teaching English as a foreign language has become one of the SEE's main priorities. The most recent plan of action, which outlines the central government's main 24 goals and educational policies, lists the instruction of English as a foreign language as one of its central concerns. These goals (German, 2005) state specifically that among the government's highest priorities are the recruiting and training of teachers of English as a foreign language and the strengthening of the teaching of English in high schools. The SEE's

stated plan includes the integration of strategies and methods already found in the country's private bilingual programs.

The current ambitious plan (SEE, 2005c) includes all levels from pre-school through twelfth-grade. The SEE proposes up to six hours per week of English classes in pre-school and to offer at least one subject in the language such as mathematics. Similarly, students in fifth through eight-grades would receive two hours of second language classes per day. For high school, the plan includes a proposal to identify high school students with advanced knowledge in English in order to offer them intensive courses to help them to become fully bilingual (SEE, 2005c). In the summer of 2005 steps were taken by the SEE toward the fulfillment of this plan. It was decided to begin implementation with a pilot project in pre-schools and early elementary schools.

One of these implementation steps includes authorities from the national ministry of education inviting principals of several of the bilingual private schools to meet and consult with them on curriculum, methodology and English language instruction.⁴ Additionally, 17 public elementary schools, one in each region of the country, are part of a pilot project that began in the fall of 2005. The SEE actively recruited qualified English teachers⁴ for the pilot locations and these individuals participated in specialized training throughout the summer of 2005. The previous chapter also had an in-depth analysis of the other elements of the Dominican educational system in the context of its history.

Language and Culture

The previous two sections of this chapter analyzed some theories of foreign language learning as well as the teaching of a foreign language in different parts of the world. The current section will bring these two together as it examines the interrelation between language instruction and a group's thinking and customs. As stated earlier in this chapter, Crotty (1998) explains that experience comes from exploring culture. Baker and Prys Jones (1998) state that "all languages are embedded in the culture of the language where they are spoken" (pg. 261). This can be seen in the example of the Canadian province of Quebec, where authorities have labored to maintain the area's distinct identity, which they consider to be separate from the rest of Canada since it is linked to the French language and culture. Schumann (1978) lists the differences between the learner's culture and the target language culture as a forming psychological factor that is important in second language learning. Lambert's (1974) model contains the basic ingredients that help to explain individual and societal bilingualism. It suggests that both individual and sociocultural factors are important in the possession and passage of bilingualism. As explained earlier in this study, Lambert's (1974) differentiation between additive and subtractive bilingualism also points to the importance of a language learner maintaining their cultural identity.

For Schumann (1978), language has three broad functions: a communicative function, an integrative function, and an expressive function. Specifically, language assists in transmitting information, in affiliating and belonging to a particular social group, and in allowing the demonstration of individual feelings, ideas, and even personality. Schumann argues that second language learners will initially use their second

language for communication, and then those who develop in that language will seek to use the language to affiliate to a social group. Ultimately, some learners, but not all, may achieve the expressive use of the second language. Moreover, culture and language are inextricably linked together, particularly when referring to the learning of a second or third language.

Additionally, Schumann (1978) proposed an acculturation model of second language acquisition whose essential element is the second language learner adapting to a new culture. In this model, the central idea is that language is one aspect of culture, and the relationship between the learner's language community and that of the second language is significant in second language acquisition. The basis of the model states that "the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language" (Schumann, 1978, p.34).

Socio-Cultural Influence on Language Learning

This study argued that language learning cannot be viewed as separate from the learner's environment. Some linguists have previously contended that language has social and cultural origins that help us to better understand its form, function, and acquisition (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978), for example, asserts that full cognitive development requires social interaction. Central to Vygotsky's (1978) theory is his belief that biological and cultural development do not occur in isolation nor in discrete stages (Driscoll, 1994). Vygotsky argues that this lifelong process of development depends on social interaction and that social learning actually leads to cognitive and language development, as is further explained in his zone of proximal development.

Through his Zone of Proximal Development, Vygotsky focuses on the connections between people and the cultural context in which they act and interact in shared experiences (Crawford, 1995). Traditionally, schools have not promoted environments in which the students play an active role in their own education as well as that of their peers. Vygotsky's theory, however, requires that teachers and students play untraditional roles as they collaborate with each other. In this method, learning becomes a reciprocal experience for the students and their teachers as they collaborate together in order to create meaning in ways that students can make their own (Hausfather, 1996).

The social importance of language was also argued by other researchers (Canale and Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; Van Ek, 1986, 1987). When explaining language competence, Canale and Swain (1980) put forward a three component framework that includes communicative, grammatical, and sociolinguistic competences. Grammatical competence is characterized by sentence-level syntax in a form similar to that advocated by Chomsky. Canale and Swain further maintain that communicative competence includes both linguistic understanding and the ability to use this understanding for communication that is focused on meaning. Viewing language as social behavior, for these authors the third component, sociolinguistic competence, represents the significance and suitability of these forms in a specific social setting. Van Ek (1986, 1987) adds to these social and sociocultural competences. She describes social competence as the ability to use particular social strategies to achieve communicative goals. It involves understanding the social conventions that govern communication within a culture. Sociocultural competence is “the awareness of the sociocultural context in which the language concerned is used by native speakers and the ways in which this

context affects the choice and the communicative effect of particular language forms” (Van Ek, 1987, p.8) (for further explanations of language competence see p. 47).

The individual’s surroundings have been found to be important in the construction of word meaning as well. Nelson (1977) argues that the sociocultural environment is important to cognitive and language development since it is the child’s a priori conceptual knowledge that determines the first meanings for words. What is more, she stresses that language is simply an abstract symbolic tool for transforming the complex cultural and semantic knowledge supported by the dynamic sociocultural- linguistic environment. Consequently, Nelson (1983) considers language as a sociocultural representation.

Gonzalez (1999) posits an interaction or interdependence between the nonverbal and the two verbal representational systems in bilinguals. This author adds that because the process of conceptual and language development involves the individual’s construction of meaning, it must be a priority to include sociocultural variables in theoretical and applied research in this area. Moreover, she suggests that models and theories of cognitive and language development generated for monolinguals need to be re-conceptualized in order to include the “multidimensional interaction of two languages and cultures in bilingual children” (p. 46).

In a similar situation, Khuwaileh (2000) conducted a research study in Jordanian universities on the cultural obstacles that may hinder language teaching and learning. The study shows how in certain classrooms, cultural activities that are natural to the target language but unknown to the learners can negatively affect the learning process of English. While arguing against the separation of culture from language this author also

implies that imported EFL theories written for a certain culture may not be workable in another culture.

Moreover, Savignon (2005) also affirms that culture plays an essential role in shaping speakers' communicative competence and there are strong links between language and culture and those links are reasonably pertinent to teaching and curriculum design. She further asserts that "language teaching is inextricably tied to language policy... diverse sociopolitical contexts mandate not only a diverse set of language learning goals, but a diverse set of teaching strategies" (p.637). Communicative language teaching (CLT) dictates that in order to select and develop language methods and materials that are appropriate to a specified context, the specific needs of language learners should be analyzed and socially defined for each individual educational setting. In the current Dominican administration, the SEE has done just that with its pilot project that is now entering the second year of successful English language interaction in a small scale and under strict national and international scrutiny in order to ensure its success.

A culture rich environment is consequently essential for second language learners. As has been previously stated, language learning does not occur in a vacuum, but rather is strongly tied to the learner's environment and culture. Chomsky proposed that between language input and language production is a linguistic process that involves the activation of universal grammar principles with which the learner is naturally endowed. When explaining language development, Chomsky claims that given the right environment, children naturally acquire languages, it just happens (Chomsky and Otero, 2003). Brisk (2006) reports that good bilingual programs take advantage of students' culture and background to facilitate and enrich instruction. Cummins and Swain (1986) further add

that a perception that their first language, and hence their culture, is prestigious and appropriate for use by educated people will raise language minority students' self-concept and hence their achievement.

Baker (1996) maintains that motivation is an important aspect of language instruction and that although it might not affect the sequence or order of acquisition, it is an important factor in the speed of acquisition and final proficiency of the second language. Even Chomsky (2006), when asked directly about his views on the right learning environment to assist students in learning a second language, cited the importance of motivation. He also stressed that there are individual differences among learners and that while teaching a second language one must take care to contend with this diversity and ensure that tasks stimulate the natural curiosity through culturally appropriate instruction. Culture hence becomes a matter of basic importance when developing didactically appropriate as well as motivational English language learning programs.

Summary

The researcher believes that communicative language teaching presented the best model for describing English language instruction in the Dominican Republic. Epistemologically, symbolic interactionism was chosen because it emphasizes the standpoint of those being studied as well as giving great importance to culture. The major tenets of Krashen's language learning theories were presented in the context of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development and Chomsky's universal grammar. Other research on second and foreign language acquisition was also briefly noted while supporting the positive influence of bilingualism on cognitive development. Bilingual

education must give consideration to the developing interplay between the two languages' inputs, with the overall aim being the achievement of the best social and cognitive fit possible between each student and her or his learning environment. In order to situate this discussion within the historical, social, and cultural context of foreign language instruction, some of the different types of second and foreign language education were also summarized in view of their incidence in academic programs in various places around the world.

A historical overview of the Dominican Republic's educational background was presented. Even though there are several different models of instruction being implemented in numerous schools around the country, not much has been published on the nation's English language classes. This study was searching for more clarity on what constitutes a culturally appropriate environment for teaching English as a foreign language in the country. It has been argued here that said environment should include elements of students' native language and culture.

CHAPTER 4

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The objective of this multiple-case study was to better understand the possible differences between two separate and distinct types of foreign language instruction in the Dominican Republic by thoroughly describing the context and characteristics of each school.

More specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the framework of teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in a structured immersion school and in a mainstream school with foreign language teaching and what are the cultural elements that influence the implementation of that framework?
2. What are the teaching methods utilized in each of these programs?
3. How can students' English use in each of these programs be described?
4. What interrelationships are evident between the school's philosophy, culture, teaching methods utilized and students' use of the foreign language?

Research Sites

The study took place at two private schools in the city of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Each of these schools represents a specific English as a foreign language program. One teaches all classes in the students' first language with an EFL

component, and the second teaches most classes in the students' foreign language, English.

The schools were selected for this project based on their English language programs. A list was compiled of all the schools that teach English as a foreign language in the city of Santo Domingo and letters of intent were sent explaining the nature of the study. Follow-up calls were also made to the different school principals. The schools whose administrators were willing to participate were then visited and asked some preliminary questions about their language programs. Once participant schools for two representative cases, one from each type of program (e.g. one all Spanish with EFL once a day, and one structured English immersion), were identified, no more schools were contacted because a satisfactory sample had been reached (Yin, 2003). At that time, the principals assured full access to information at the two schools studied. Each school was referred to using pseudonyms.

One of the selected schools teaches from pre-school (3 years old) through twelfth-grade in the same campus location. The other school has two separate campuses, one for pre-kindergarten through 6th-grade and one for seventh through twelfth-grade. Each one of these schools is at least 10 years old, with one school having almost a 30-year history. As mentioned earlier in this paper, both of these schools cater to a similar middle class population. Both of these schools also declare that 100% of their graduates go on to some form of higher education. The following discussion presents a few more details on each of these schools.

Two Methods for Teaching a Foreign Language

For the purpose of this study Baker's (2001) strong and weak denomination were used to help clarify the different types of foreign language instruction. García (1997) points out that the degree of bilingualism that students attain can often be related to the importance granted to bilingualism in society as well as to the teaching strategies used. Therefore, since English is being acquired in a foreign language context where the first language maintains its strength and use in the community, Dominican students do not generally lose their mother tongue or culture due to foreign language instruction. The two schools in the study fit the classification presented by Baker and Prys Jones (1998) and later expanded by García (1997). Of the twelve categories presented by those authors, the schools looked at can be defined as traditional EFL and structured immersion.

Structured Immersion

Historically, immersion bilingual education began with an experiment in St. Lambert Montreal in 1965 for English speaking students who also wanted to become fluent in French (Lambert and Tucker, 1972). Swain and Lapkin (1982) explain that in immersion programs students receive the same type of education that they would get in the regular program except that the language through which material is presented and discussed is the second or foreign language. As Baker (2001) explains, this type of program is generally geared towards speakers of a high-status language who wish to become bilingual. Initially, instruction is solely through the medium of the weaker language, although the first language may also be progressively used for instruction. Instruction using mostly the second or foreign language continues throughout the students' education. This type of immersion program can be seen throughout Canada, in

some places in the United States, and in some places in Europe as in Catalonia and the Basque region of Spain (Arzamendi and Genesee, 1997; Baker, 2001; García, 1997).

The first participating school was given the name *Imersão*, which is immersion in Portuguese. Some of the teachers at the school are native English speakers but most are near native with Latino backgrounds (Humpert, 1998)⁵. *Imersão* has a structured English immersion program. Its program falls under the classification of weak bilingual since it does not have bilingualism and biliteracy as an educational aim (Garcia, 1997). As in other similar programs, at *Imersão* students receive the same type of education that they would get in the regular program except that the language through which material is presented and discussed is the students' second language, English (Swain & Lapkin, 1982).

Imersão can also be classified as an early total immersion program, as the foreign language is used for most academic instruction beginning as early as pre-kindergarten (Genesee, 1987). In such a program, the subjects that elementary and high school students would regularly study in their classes are used as the content for foreign language courses. As explained by Johns and Price Machado (2001) this approach is in keeping with the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) tradition, where the learner's occupational needs are identified and used as the basis for materials and curriculum development. These models, such as the one used at *Imersão* strives for the integration of language teaching aims with subject matter instruction.

Because the instructional use of students' first language does not progressively increase, but remains at one or two subjects per year throughout their schooling experience, the school follows a structured immersion program, also known as

submersion (Garcia, 1997; Baker, 2001). Proponents of submersion believe that the use of the home language delays the development of the target language (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998). This type of program seeks language shift and is most commonly seen when referring to large populations of immigrants in countries such as the United States or indigenous or minority language speaking populations in New Zealand, Wales, Japan, Kenya, among others (Baker, 2001). The term submersion is not usually used to refer to programs in countries where students are learning a second or foreign language, but the terminology seemed appropriate in the case of Imersão for the reasons stated above. Furthermore, unlike other Canadian examples of early immersion, the program at this school does not replace the 100% English instruction began in pre-school and early elementary school with a slow transition to 50 or even 80 percent native language instruction. On the contrary, English continues as the main language of instruction throughout these students' schooling, with one or two daily classes taking place in the native language. Nevertheless, the surrounding Spanish language and culture do result in the program at Imersão generally having as an outcome its students' bilingualism in a manner similar to Canadian immersion programs.

Traditional EFL

Traditional ESL and EFL educational programs are the most popular form of second and foreign language instruction around the world and are often used in cases where students' mother tongue is also considered a majority language. Classes are in students' first language. In this type of classes the foreign language is treated as any other subject in the curriculum. Students have an average of 30 to 60 minutes per day of foreign/second language instruction with a language teacher.

The second school, because of its emphasis on the Spanish language, was referred to as Cervantina.⁶ Cervantina is the high school counterpart of an elementary school that operates separately. Consistent with Garcia's (1997) classification, Cervantina follows a weak bilingual program, as achieving bilingualism is not the main goal of its foreign language instruction. At this school, the foreign language program is mainstream education with foreign language teaching (Baker, 2001; García, 1997). At this school, all classes are received in students' first language, Spanish, and the foreign language, English, is treated as any other subject in the curriculum. Students have one or two forty-five minute class periods per day of foreign language instruction with a language teacher.

Sampling Procedures

Participants' perceptions related to their school's English language instruction were examined. Individuals with the most complete views on the topic of English language instruction were considered sources of abundant information when interviewed. In order to accomplish this, subjects who were quite familiar with each school and who were associated with that area were chosen to be interviewed. In order to develop a purposeful, criterion sample, the principal, language arts subject area coordinators, teachers at the 1st, 5th, 8th, and high school levels were selected to participate in the study (Patton, 1990).

Students participating in this study were chosen based on the predetermined criteria (Patton, 1990) of being fifteen years old, having been attending at their respective school for a period equal to or greater than eight years, having not been enrolled in specialized English classes outside of the Dominican Republic, and representing the naturally occurring variability in English language proficiency within their student body.

Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) is the language ability necessary to function adequately in academic situations. On average, it takes learners five to seven years to develop this in a second or foreign language (Cummins & Swain, 1986). Hence, for the proposed study, these language learner students had a minimum of eight years enrolled in their respective foreign language programs. The choice of fifteen-year-olds is further explained below. Students who have received specialized English classes outside of the country are also excluded because of the external factors possibly affecting their performance in English classes or their outlook on the programs at their schools. A richer description of the school and its English language programs was also achieved by including students with different grade point averages.

Research participants were identified in each case by eliciting the cooperation of the school principal since these persons had already agreed to participate in the project and possessed some information useful to the study. School administrators served as gatekeepers to their English language coordinator as the first people in each school to interview as well as to the appropriate language teachers (four or five per school) at each level. All of the relevant teachers were given information in writing about the project and asked to give of their time, those that chose to do so, did so by voluntarily approaching their principal or assistant principal. Additionally, teacher recommendations were used to locate 10th-grade students that met the research sample criteria. At Immersao not enough 10th-graders met all of the criteria, hence 9th and 11th-graders were also contacted. Once identified, all research participants at each school were asked, in writing, by the researcher to volunteer their time to this project.

While conducting the study, the researcher learned that the English department at Cervantina upper school was interested in acquiring certain kinds of information about its students such as the most common schools that were feeding theirs, and students' experience in after school English programs. In order to get at these answers, they had designed a short survey and had given it to their students. Unfortunately, they had not had a chance to tally the results of this survey. In discussing this survey with the teachers, the researcher decided it wise to devise a longer survey that included some of the same questions plus others that emerged about the effectiveness of the textbooks being used and students' perceptions of their English use.

Because Cervantina upper school teachers had helped to design the survey, they were willing to give up some of their class time to have it answered. Therefore, at this school the entire population of students was enlisted to participate in the surveys. At Imersão however, the researcher had to use convenience sampling and was only able to conduct the survey in the classes that the supervisors were willing to lend access to. As a result 394 Cervantina and 101 Imersão students were surveyed.

Participants

Participants of this research included myself as participant observer and a total of 47 interviewees. The following individuals were interviewed: the principal, the general academic coordinator, the librarian, four English teachers, and twelve 10th-grade students at Cervantina upper school; the general academic coordinator, the librarian, the English coordinator, and four English teachers at Cervantina lower school; the principal, the high school assistant principal, the librarian, two ESL teachers, a high school language arts teacher, a 1st-grade and a 5th-grade teacher of all subjects in English, seven 10th grade

students, three 11th-grade students and two 9th-grade students at Imersão. A great number of other students whose teachers had been interviewed were also participants during class observations at each of the schools.

Principals

In each of these schools the principal is responsible for overseeing academics throughout the entire school. These individuals are also charged with supervising the academic department's budget and personnel issues as well as encouraging teachers' professional development by coordinating different learning experiences. Both are women, and they are accountable for interviewing and hiring, as well as supervising and evaluating, subject area coordinators, teachers, and teacher aides. These persons also perform the task of accepting new students as well as evaluating new programs being considered for the curriculum. Besides working with the rest of the administration in the development of the annual goals and objectives, they also participate actively in the disciplinary committee. They were important to this study as gatekeepers who controlled access to their schools and because they were able to answer questions concerning each school's philosophy, goals, and daily teaching activities pertaining to its foreign language instruction.

Subject Area Coordinators

All English language subject area coordinators or department heads were included in the study. These individuals work with social studies and language arts in English. These individuals determine and oversee curriculum content in their area. Subject area coordinators or department heads are in charge of revising and constantly improving the school curriculum and overseeing teachers' daily lesson plans, as well as evaluating and

supervising teachers' work in terms of content, scope, and method. Researchers seek honest access to "the insider's world of meaning" (Jorgensen 1989, p.15). Coordinators and department heads provided such access since they served as a bridge between the administrators' and teachers' perspectives on what happens in the language classrooms. Because of their expertise in their subject area and being part of the channels of communication within the complex school environment, they affect school policy directly (Johnson, 1990; Sergiovani, 2001).

Teachers

At each of these schools, the researcher worked with the educators who teach English language. The study also concentrated on individuals working in the 1st-grade, 5th-grade, 8th-grade, and high school at each school because of these levels' relevance in enriching the descriptions of the language arts programs at each school. In the first grade, students begin in earnest their literacy instruction; the 5th-grade is in the middle between elementary and high school, the second of a series of government run standardized examinations⁷ are conducted in the 8th-grade; and the students who participated directly in this study were at the level of high school. These individuals also were important interviewees to gain information on each school's actual day-to-day occurrences in the language classrooms.

Students

Fifteen-year-old participants were selected for this study. At that point, they had received the minimum required eight years of instruction in their respective English program. Piaget called "formal operations" the developmental period that coincides with adolescence, given individuals' newfound capability to imagine all the hypothetically

possible combinations of events thereby making them better able to organize and understand their observations (Siegler, 1998). Ordóñez (2005), in her comparison of bilingual and monolingual students, also used 15 year olds, as they had already received at least 10 years of bilingual education. Upon conversations with the schools' principals, it was ascertained that 15-year-olds were mostly in the 10th-grade. These participants were interviewed and asked for views of their English language notebooks in order to view and describe some of their productions in English. As those most directly involved with the instruction, the students provided invaluable information about the foreign language learning at each school.

Data Sources

Data collection took place for approximately 30 weeks during the 2005-2006 school year. The primary data sources for this study were interviews with 47 individuals, as well as descriptive and analytical field notes of observations of classroom and school events. Secondary data sources included school documents such as yearbooks, curricular standards, and historical literature prepared for anniversary celebrations, and class artifacts such as students' notebooks, textbooks, and reports. For a detailed account of the time spent at each school and collecting each individual set of data, see figures 1, 2, and 3, and appendices D, E, and F.

Figure 1	
<i>Timeline for Data Collection</i>	
Approximate Time for Data Collection (2006)	Type of Data Collected
February 13 - March 10	Audiotapes of interviews with administrators, teachers and students, and of observations of classes, meetings, and other school occurrences, field notes, and reflections.
March 19 - April 14	Data analysis. No data collection.
April 17- May 12	Audiotapes of follow up interviews with administrators, teachers and students, and of observations of classes, meetings, and other school occurrences, field notes, and reflections.
May 15 – 26	Data analysis. No data collection.
August 13 – September 4	Follow up and member check interviews and reflections.
September 5 – December 12	Data analysis and writing process
December 13	Turn in copy of dissertation

Figure 2		
<i>Data Sources</i>		
Research question No.	Participant	Data Source
2, 3, 4	Teachers and students	Observations of language classes.
2, 3, 4	Students	Structured and unstructured interviews with students.
2		Curriculum documents, lesson plans
1, 2	Administrators	Structured and unstructured interviews with administrators.
1, 2, 3	Teachers	Structured and unstructured interviews with teachers.
2, 3, 4	Students	Analysis of artifacts such as student portfolios or other student authentic productions in English.
3	Students	Survey

Transcripts of interviews

It proved very important for this study to delve into administrators', teachers', and students' views and understanding of their circumstances, for Berg (2001) claims that the nature of individuals' actions will be determined by how they define their situation. Students were believed to be a valuable source of information about the learning at each school. Eight students were interviewed at each school for approximately 45 minutes each. Classroom teachers are an excellent source of information in the context of an educational research study, as they may possess skills in observation and reflection concerning their own practice. The teacher's role therefore is not that of participant observers, but rather, of an "unusually observant participant" who is able to deliberate within and about their daily work (Erickson, 1986: p. 157). Nine teachers were interviewed at Cervantina and seven at Imersão. Each individual was interviewed formally one, two, or three times for around 45 minutes each time, then informally, they were asked questions as it became necessary. Administrators were the best suited to answer questions about philosophical decisions and students proved to be an invaluable window into foreign language learning at each school. Six administrators at Cervantina and three at Imersão were formally interviewed up to three times each, for 30 to 45 minutes each time. Interviews with participants took place at each of the schools according to the general schedule indicated in figure 1 and the more specific breakdown of time indicated in appendices D, E, and F.

This study sought to convey the participants' perspectives, perceptions, and values. For this goal, a series of open-ended questions centered on the topics of first and foreign language instruction were used to guide the interviews. As many follow-up

interviews with each participant as necessary were conducted in order to ensure data saturation, until no new information was obtained (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Transcripts and Field Notes of Class Observations

Copious notes were taken while sitting in the classes of the interviewed teachers. Class observations took place at each school according to the general schedule indicated in figure 1, and the more specific schedule developed with each school principal. Appendices D, E, and F also show a breakdown of the time spent at each school in each different data collection activity. Bruce, Lara-Alecio, Parker, Hasbrouck, Weaver, and Irby (1997) suggest that observations of at least 2 to 2.5 hours are needed to provide stable descriptions in all dimensions, and that in order to accurately describe any one teacher's classroom instruction, three different days over two weeks are necessary. In these case studies, each separate teacher's classes were observed for two to three hours in 45-minute class periods, at different times, during different weeks and different grade-levels and groups. Over a seven month period, the schools were visited almost daily in four to five week intervals, interspersed with four to five week intervals of no visits for data analysis.

These classroom observations were also tape recorded. Each tape was transcribed as soon as possible after the observations in order to have as many details from the class as possible. When transcribing all that took place in each class, notes were continuously added to the margins as categories emerged.

Physical Artifacts

It is also recommended that the case study researcher look at different physical artifacts, as they might be important components in the overall case (Yin, 2003). For

these case studies, certain student productions in English as made available by the teachers or by the students themselves were examined. They were asked to facilitate typical kinds of experiences that they considered to demonstrate English literacy abilities. By examining these documents a more precise understanding of the students' English language competence was developed and their own and their teachers' ideas about what is important in the instruction of the foreign language were ascertained. Other artifacts that were looked at include curriculum maps and teachers' lesson plans.

The different data sources served to answer different questions, indicated by figure 2 that elucidates which source corresponded with the separate research questions.

Data Collection Procedures

The study was carried out without research assistants. In order to collect data for this project, the timeline outlined in figure 1 was followed. Berg (2001) emphasizes to researchers that it is important to attempt to become invisible when conducting participant observations in order not to introduce or add reactivity to the study site. The researcher met with teachers casually before interviewing them and conducted all teacher interviews within days from each other so that all teachers became familiar with the project at approximately the same time. These introductory interviews also took place before any classroom observations to help put teachers at ease. Data were collected in English and Spanish depending on each research participant's preference and then all documentation was translated into English. The schools' philosophy, goals, and objectives as well as some of the details of their organizational structure and language curriculum were ascertained through interviews with teachers and administrators, and

through the perusal of school documentation such as grade-level standards, course syllabi, year books, and school newspapers, among others. Systematic field notes and transcripts of tape recordings were generated during participant observations of language lessons, school events, faculty and departmental meetings, and important ceremonial occasions, among others.

In her study of various private school programs throughout South America, De Mejía explains that in order to categorize bilingual education programs it is important to identify different linguistic and cultural features of these programs in relation to their institutional aims and philosophies. As pointed out by De Mejía (2002), critical discourse analysis and its use in school policy and practice assist in raising consciousness, enabling educators and students to become aware of how and why certain educational provisions develop in the way that they do thereby helping them to understand the reasons for their success or failure. De Mejía (2002) suggests the use of documents such as lesson plans to discuss with teachers and students in order to further confirm if they are reflected in everyday classroom practice. Hence, lesson plans were read, analyzed, and discussed with participants.

Interviews were conducted in order to triangulate what was perceived from observations and personal reflections. Administrators, teachers, and students were encouraged to critically analyze their practice and their learning, to look at their everyday experiences while seeking disconfirming evidence, as well as considering discrepant cases and alternative interpretations (Erickson, 1986).

In the case of the brief surveys the researcher explained its ultimate contents to Cervantina's English teachers. They agreed to let the researcher enter their classes and

explain to the students the purpose of the survey and have them answer the questions.

One by one the researcher entered the classrooms, as the scheduling allowed, and all students answered the survey. At Imerão the researcher had not necessarily met all of the teachers since she was asked to enter other classrooms of non-participant teachers.

Therefore, the supervisors introduced the researcher to the teachers while already with their classes and then the teachers were free to let her conduct the survey if they saw fit.

Figure 3

Number of Hours Spent Collecting Data at Each School

	No. of hours February 13 - March 10	No. Of hours April 17- May 12	No. of hours August 13 – September 4	Total
Cervantina Upper School	35 hrs	28 hrs	15 hrs	78 hrs.
Cervantina Lower School	0 hrs	20 hrs	4 hrs	24 hrs.
Immersao	30 hrs	22 hrs	13 hrs	65 hrs.
Document and other data Analysis	57 hrs	60 hrs	30 hrs	147 hrs.
Grand Total				314 hrs

Data Management, and Analysis Plan

As previously stated, data were collected daily over a period of several months. Data collection was halted periodically in order to conduct preliminary analysis. While assembling data, all interviews were recorded and immediately transcribed. Daily field notes and reflections were also promptly written down. The transcriptions of audiotapes and field notes were kept in a file on the computer as well as copied onto a CD-Rom for back-up.

Qualitative data analysis usually involves the development of themes, categories, typologies, and the like, based on the frequency with which a feature occurs (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Furthermore, Onwuegbuzie and Daniel (2003) point to three rationales for counting themes: (a) to identify patterns more easily; (b) to maintain analytic integrity; and (c) to verify a hypothesis (p.8). As recommended by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) the interview and observational data were content analyzed in order to seek patterns and themes that differentiate the instruction in the two separate programs.

Qualitative data were gathered from the observations and interviews with administrators, teachers, and students and were subsequently analyzed using Glasser and Strauss's (1967) modified grounded theory method in order to produce formal, substantive theory of the social interactions at the school. Persistent observation helped ensure that relevant sources of data were obtained. Case study evidence was examined using constant comparison. Actions and events observed were compared, searching for similarities and differences, or salient concepts or themes (Straus and Corbin, 1998). When analyzing data, Strauss and Corbin suggest that the researcher make comparisons at the level of properties and dimensions in order to break the data apart and reconstruct it to form interpretive schemes. When the researcher classifies, she/ he then groups concepts according to those similarities and differences. The researcher asks "not only what is going on in a descriptive sense but also how this incident compares dimensionally along relevant properties with the others already identified" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 66). From this process, underlying uniformities were identified in the indicators in order to produce coded categories or concepts. These concepts were then compared in order to sharpen the definition of each concept and its properties. Tentative theories were posed,

and compared for explanatory adequacy. Theoretical positions were revised, and the evidence reexamined from the new perspective until theoretical saturation was reached. In this way the resulting theory can be considered conceptually dense and grounded in the data.

As suggested by Yin (2003), every possible effort was made to attend to all the evidence, as well as to be exhaustive in the development of rival hypotheses and interpretations. In order to facilitate this process, memoing was practiced (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). This necessitated that the researcher continuously write memos to herself in order to elaborate the coded categories that as a field worker she developed in analyzing the data. The contents of these memos included comments on the meaning of a coded category, explanations of a sense of pattern developing among categories, and descriptions of specific aspects of a setting or phenomenon. These memos aided in capturing the researcher's thoughts and in linking categories to one another while still engaged in the process of analysis.

Researcher's Role

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that in qualitative studies the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. This individual is responsive to the context of her study, is able to adapt techniques to the circumstances, and to clarify and summarize as the study evolves. Furthermore, as participant observer, the researcher may also affect her surroundings. Consequently, it is important that the researcher disclose her background and any potential biases to aid in the interpretation of the findings.

As a young person, the researcher grew up in the Dominican Republic and learned a foreign language in a bilingual program. Later in life, she was a teacher for four years

and an administrator for three years at a dual language school in Santo Domingo. This business is owned and managed entirely by her family. Because of her close contact with the staff at her family's school and in order to better maintain objectivity and avoid a possible conflict of interest, this study was carried out at other English language programs. As a qualitative researcher, she was responsible for labeling participants' actions and codifying materials that represent empirical data on the study's issues and questions. Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991) state that despite this resulting in the study being vulnerable to the possibility of her idiosyncratic biases, it can still be descriptive of general principles found in the data. Great effort was also expended in reporting evidence fairly. The researcher has been living outside the Dominican Republic, where the schools are located, for the past five years and, as it relates to the teaching of English as a foreign language through these two distinct methods, she has no preconceived position that she might be trying to substantiate. In order to demonstrate her openness to contrary findings (Yin, 2003), the researcher reported her preliminary results, while still in the data collection phase, to a colleague who was objective and critical. This individual offered alternative explanations and suggestions for further data collection.

The researcher's knowledge of Dominican culture and the inner workings of the country's educational system also aided in data gathering and analysis. She has no relation to the administrations of these schools, but from her vast experience and insight at a similar school, she was confident that she could report more sensitively and knowledgably than a complete outsider. The analysis was also seen and critiqued by the research subjects, school administrators, and an outsider in order to ensure scrupulous interpretation and an unbiased perspective. Furthermore, as part of the researcher's

master's degree, with a colleague she completed a research study of an elementary school's implementation of instructional technology (Noble and Caron, 1998). By completing that project and others since, she has gained experience in conducting focus groups, individual interviews, and document analysis with stakeholders.

From her substantial experience and insight into Dominican education and at a school similar to the study sites, the researcher has certainly been able to report perceptively and knowledgably. The investigator needs a cultural baseline and minimum information on the research site in order to diminish her/his possible obtrusiveness and also to help increase the effectiveness of the formal research work (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Moreover, Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that the researcher's personal or professional experience leads to the potential for success in one's research endeavors. While documenting the schools' essential features, the researcher looked at the schools' institutional structures in order to construct holistic and complex descriptions of school culture and the values that define participants' actions.

Establishing Rigor

Internal Review Board (IRB)

Because this study was conducted with human subjects, IRB approval was sought before any data were gathered. The study is an IRB expedited review category 6, since voice recordings were collected for research purposes. The study required interviews from nine adult administrators, thirteen adult teachers, and twenty-four under-aged students in three campuses of two separate schools from January to August 2006. Once the schools identified student participants, they were given consent forms to sign with their parents. Teachers and administrators were also asked in writing by the researcher to

volunteer their time to this project. No deception was used and all participants were told that a study was being conducted to describe the different instructional programs for English as a foreign language.

Dependability

As in other qualitative studies, in this inquiry into the teaching of English as a foreign language, dependability depended on the researcher endeavoring to ensure that the findings were consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 2001). In order to accomplish said dependability, a thick description of the manner in which data are assembled and analyzed was provided throughout the inquiry. Furthermore, the fieldwork included a gathering of information from several different sources. These included structured and unstructured interviews with project participants and participant observations of English language classes, staff meetings, and other school occurrences.

Transferability

In naturalistic inquiries, the transferability of the study is directly related to the context in which it occurred. Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991) stress that when carrying out a qualitative case study generalizing study results to certain populations is difficult. These two cases cannot be expected to represent all similar groups or situations and any conclusions drawn are only about the participants who were observed. Therefore, no generalizations were made regarding this study's findings. Instead, the future readers of the investigation should determine if it is applicable to their own, unique situations. In order to support this determination, a rich description of the two schools, the participants, and data collection methods were provided.

Credibility

In order to establish trustworthiness of this study's findings the data gathered were triangulated by supporting events and facts of the case study from multiple sources of evidence as opposed to analyzing each source of evidence separately and comparing the conclusions (Yin, 2003). Additionally, in order to increase impartiality, the interviews performed were structured as well as open-ended in order to discern different viewpoints held by students, teachers, and administrators who were considered as the insiders in this project. Jorgensen (1989) suggests that interviews be done using casual questioning since this leads to the conversations being free flowing, and unencumbered by extensive preconceptions of how the topics will be discussed. Credibility was also aided by peer debriefing and persistent observations.

Triangulation

Data triangulation (Berg, 2001) was achieved by combining curriculum, observations, interviews, and student productions. At each school, general curricular maps that show English language programs were looked at. Classes and other school activities were systematically observed, student documents were analyzed, and key informants at each school were interviewed.

Persistent Observation

The naturalistic inquirer seeks to identify the issues, characteristics, and elements that are the most relevant to defining the complexities and culture of the group being observed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It helps to sort out what is relevant from what is not in order to better realize when atypical cases are important. Because of persistent observation, sources of data that were identified by the study's own emergent design

were sought. Lightfoot (1986) suggests that this skill, guided by purposefulness and assertiveness, results in focused attention which often results in accessibility to the required data from the research participants and this is especially important when the researcher has a relatively short time to spend in the field.

Audit Trail

When conducting the interviews, a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioral issues can be addressed (Yin, 2003). This is possible since structured and open-ended interviews and direct, participant observations were used. In order to establish the construct validity and reliability of the case study evidence, a case study database was created and the specific timeline for data collection above was followed (see figure 1). Figure 2, *Data Sources*, also indicates the relationship between specific narrations, observations or interviews, and the research questions. Organized files with all data on paper as well as electronic copies were kept. This also facilitated the citation of specific evidence in the final report.

Peer Debriefing

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the researcher can better work through hypothesis with the help of peer debriefing. This individual can also aid in uncovering biases. The preliminary results were reported, while still in the data collection phase, to a colleague who acted as peer debriefer and offered alternative explanations as well as suggestions for further data collection.

Member Check

Member check is a courtesy extended to those who have given of their time and access to their lives for the purpose of the social research in order to let them know what

has been said about them (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This also presents another opportunity to generate data and insight about the integrity of the findings while helping to guard against the introduction of bias (Miles and Huberman). Because member check also helps the inquiry become more participative and dialogical, this courtesy was extended to study participants. Additionally, emerging conclusions were also discussed with teachers and school administrators.

Study Limitations

The study was a vast undertaking with a sole researcher, which might limit the scope of the findings. The researcher sought to increase participants' comfort level with the project as well as to encourage their candid responses. Participants were assured from the start that each individual's name would be dissociated from his or her data through a key of pseudonyms. Furthermore, data were stored in the form of audiotapes and transcripts, and only accessible to the researcher. Nevertheless, the level of candor of the study's participants might have limited study results.

Two schools were chosen for this study as representative cases of EFL instruction. Inside each school, specific individuals were also chosen due to their particular characteristics. Due to this purposeful sample selection, it is not possible to generalize from these findings to other schools (Merriam, 2001). Furthermore, because of the qualitative aspect of the study, the findings could be subject to further interpretations. The possibility exists for the researcher's perceptions to give way to subjective interpretations of the qualitative data (Berg, 2001). Further limitations can be seen in chapter six.

Summary

The proposed study utilized qualitative case study methods in order to collect and analyze data from two separate programs for teaching English as a foreign language. The schools' philosophy, goals, and objectives as well as some of the details of their organizational structure and language curriculum, and the daily occurrences of language classes were ascertained. Data were collected through interviews with administrators, teachers, and students, and by observing language classes, school events, and faculty and departmental meetings as well as important ceremonial occasions, and analyzing secondary documents. By developing themes, categories, and typologies based on the frequency with which a feature occurs (Miles & Huberman, 1994), the data were analyzed and findings presented.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

Introduction

These two case studies were designed to investigate and better understand the nature of English language instruction in well-established foreign language programs at different Dominican private schools. Specifically, the study sought to explore four major questions:

1. What is the framework of teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in a structured immersion school and in a mainstream school with foreign language teaching and what are the cultural elements that influence the implementation of that framework?
2. What are the pedagogical methods utilized in each of these programs?
3. How can students' English use in each of these programs be described?
4. What interrelationships are evident between the theoretical approaches and pedagogical methods utilized and students' use of the foreign language?

The research, which took place in the city of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic was conducted at two separate private schools, Cervantina and Imersão. Following is a summary of what was found at each of the two schools. As will be explained in the next sections, the findings of the study have been organized as either a part of each school's structure or substance. Dominican culture influences and shapes

elements of both schools. Therefore, before broaching any of this study's findings, the general characteristics of Dominican society are presented. A brief introduction to the schools is also given. Every effort has been made to remain true to the story as it was told to the researcher by the participants, and wherever possible their direct quotes have been included. Each school's as well as every participant's anonymity is, of course, respected through pseudonyms.

Following is an extended discussion of culture in the Dominican Republic and how these traditions and customs affect the students and teachers observed in this study, as well as the study sites themselves. This portrayal is included here as much of the information is based on interviews with study participants.

Dominican Culture

Students

Both of the schools analyzed for this study share certain characteristics. Both Cervantina and Imersão are located in Santo Domingo, capital of the Dominican Republic. As such, both of these schools have a similar student body, with a similar cultural background. Additionally, both cater to students from similar middle to high socio economic status. As such, some aspects of Dominican culture are mentioned here in as much as they apply to both educational institutions.

Dominican students are highly motivated to learn English because of their circumstances. Some of these include youth culture and parental expectations. Popular music, magazines, television programs, and especially Internet chat sites are all in English. Additionally, their parents encourage these students to learn English as they have seen its importance for local employment opportunities. As a result, learning and

practicing English is reinforced at home in a culturally specific way. Additionally, there seems to be a rising interest among high school graduates to go to college in the United States.

- My mother has been telling me since I was a child that it's very important for me in my career and my work. She tells me that when I get older everyone is going to be bilingual. I am also practicing Italian in the afternoons. English is also important to me since I want to do international economics in two years. (Cervantina male 10th-grade intermediate student 5)

-If you go to any place, you will always find someone who speaks English. I know that I will use English, anytime, anywhere, if I don't know English it's like not knowing math, it's necessary. (Cervantina, female 10th-grade advanced student 12)

-I like English, it's fun, that's why I speak in English with my friends sometimes. I want to study outside of the country so I guess I will be using it a lot, maybe industrial engineering or psychology in the United States or in England. (Cervantina male 10th-grade advanced student 6)

- *El inglés te sirve para todo. En la vida, para viajar y conocer gente. Pienso estudiar derecho internacional y lo utilizare en la Universidad y en el trabajo*". [English is useful for everything. In life, to travel and to meet people. I plan to study international law so I will use it in the university and in my work.] (Imersão, female 10th-grade student 8)

Another aspect that affects both of these schools is that Dominican culture promotes respect for elders and those in authority. Students believe that their teachers are knowledgeable not just because of what they demonstrate but also because of their positions of authority. This relative power also helps teachers in the control of student discipline.⁸ From a historical and legal perspective, in Latin America, the family is the fundamental unit of society and is represented as patriarchal (Kuznesof, 2005). Nevertheless, out of wedlock births accounted for between 30 and 60 percent of births in most Latin American countries between the sixteenth and the end of the nineteenth centuries (Milanich, 2002). "The importance of familial networks of nuclear and extended kin in providing support to the individual's adaptation to socio-economic and

cultural environments, regardless of his community of residence or his class standing, has long been recognized” (Carlos & Sellers, 1972, p.96). When describing the history of childhood in Latin America, Kuznesof (2005) explains that beginning in the colonial period, education in the sense of learning obedience, manners, and prayers was emphasized in children beginning at age four. Furthermore, in return for parents’ obligation to clothe, discipline, educate, select occupations and sanction marital plans, children were to obey parents and work without wages. Kuznesof also argues that kinship and family continue to be an important source of identity and support for most Latin American children.

Another cultural characteristic worth mentioning is that it is commonly perceived that government employees are very corrupt and public service appointments are generally made in order to fulfill political favors. As a result, many public offices must start with brand new staffs every four to eight years. “The national education offices are used as a source of positions, bottles, and salaries for activists from the party in power” (Murray, 2005, p. 333).⁹ This type of corruption might trickle down to other private enterprises and sometimes results in bureaucratic processes being highly inefficient. Unfortunately, this also creates a misconception of acceptance of rule breaking. Despite this state of affairs, or possibly in order to counter it, values education is emphasized in most Dominican schools. The chaos can also clearly be seen in the city streets as the majority of Dominicans drive very aggressively, causing many traffic rules to seem like mere suggestions as they are rarely followed. “80% of traffic accidents are caused by human imprudence. The rest are influenced by the lack of proper signals and illumination on the streets, the dreadful condition of some vehicles the excessive number of

organizations related to traffic management, and the lack of appropriate police supervision and enforcement of traffic laws” (Melo Rodriguez, 1998, p. 6).

Even though Dominicans are commonly quite nationalistic, when comparing life in the Dominican Republic to other more industrialized nations, students in this study comment on their home country’s economic and occasional political chaos compared with the relative order in other countries. They also criticize the inefficiency of the government and other public servants. This results in Dominicans considering that some aspects of their economy might force them to need to migrate at some point, and that learning a prestigious language such as English is to be commended and strived for. “*Con mis amigas, lo uso de práctica, hablamos en ingles. El inglés me ayuda en mi desarrollo como persona, me ayuda a comunicarme, como yo pienso estudiar arquitectura fuera.*” “[I usually practice [English] with my friends. English helps me in my development as a person; it helps me to communicate, since I intend to study architecture abroad]” (Cervantina female 10th-grade advanced student 8).

Foreign students who study at either of these schools also commented that Dominicans are very happy people who are boisterous. They accept what may occur and the less than ideal circumstances without complaining. They consider that fortunately Dominicans are characterized by their sociability and trust of others. They also add that young Dominicans joke around a lot. Dominicans are friendly and quick to accept and welcome new friends. “*Como todo país Caribe, los Dominicanos son alegres, pero lentos para hacer las cosas.*” [Like all Caribbean countries, Dominicans are happy, but slow to get things done] (Cervantina female 9th-grade intermediate student 9). Foreign students

also find Dominican youth to be less politically active and to have a more positive and optimistic outlook than youth in some other cultures.

Teachers

Throughout the Dominican Republic, there is a growing interest in learning English as a foreign language. As a result, there are many private, after-school institutes that teach English to everyone from young children to adult professionals. In the city of Santo Domingo, there are thousands of students enrolled in this type of program. These students create a sizeable demand for English language teachers. Many individuals teach in these programs while they themselves attend undergraduate university programs. Many of these persons have simply learned to speak the language by graduating from similar after-school institutes, or from attending one of the many bilingual or English immersion elementary or high school programs. Some may have also grown up or spent part of their youth in an English speaking community such as New York City and learned their oral English in their neighborhood and the written and grammatical rules in elementary or high school.

In order to teach in these Dominican after school programs, interested persons are simply given a portion of the TOEFL exam as proof of their proficiency in English. If they pass with a score over 85%, they might also be asked to teach a sample class so that their supervisor might observe their classroom management style. Antonio Morla, former academic supervisor at one of the popular afternoon language institutes, also claims that once hired, these teachers might also be encouraged to take a few courses in pedagogy, teaching strategies, or class control which are usually taught at the institutes hiring them (personal communication, March 2, 2006).

While working at these after-school institutions, these persons are able to teach many different groups of people from different ages and different language levels and abilities. They also become used to the method of instruction used in these programs. That is to say, they are accustomed to classes that follow a textbook closely, take place for one hour, two or three times a week, with groups of about 25 students. In these classes, the texts are taught directly using extra audio and visual materials and each level lasts about 4 months. These teachers have very little accountability as there is usually no supervising body to ensure student learning.

In the city's average public and private Spanish-only schools, English teachers are usually chosen from a pool of professionals who do not have a degree in education or second language teaching, but rather have a large amount of practical experience. Once these persons have been teaching in the afternoon institutes or other such programs for several years, their on-the-job training and practical experience makes them eligible to teach in the English component at the all Spanish k-12 schools or in other after-school institutes. Several of Cervantina's English teachers were trained in this fashion.

As explained in chapter two, there are certain accreditation organizations that work with school evaluation and improvement in order to standardize the practice of private and independent schools. Many of the immersion and fully bilingual schools in the city of Santo Domingo are accredited by one or more of these organizations. One of the criteria used to evaluate schools is their staff and their educational background. In order to satisfy these conditions, English only schools, such as Imersão, require their teachers to have degrees in education or at least in the areas taught, and many times their personnel also has at least master's level certifications. Other Dominican schools not

fulfilling these international standards are often not as strict in their hiring, and as a result, the pay scales are also different among these different schools. For example, at one of these internationally accredited schools, the beginning salary for teachers is around U\$900 a month. At the average Spanish only school, it is usually around U\$500 a month. With the average cost of living oscillating around U\$780 a month, it is easy to see how many teachers supplement their income through tutoring or having second jobs in the afternoons or evenings.

Study Sites

The first case study was carried out at Imersão where the foreign language classes follow a structured immersion program, and most classes are taught in the foreign language, English (García, 1997; Baker, 2001). Students at all levels also take Spanish language arts and a second social studies class each day in Spanish. The student body at this school is made up mostly of children of high SES. For the 2006-07 school year, monthly tuition in high school is approximately U\$570.

Imersão's program falls under the classification of strong bilingual since it does have bilingualism and biliteracy as an educational aim and generally also as an outcome (Garcia, 1997). As in other similar programs, at Imersão students receive the same type of education that they would get in the regular program except that the language through which material is presented and discussed is the second language (Swain & Lapkin, 1982). Imersão has a total of 244 students ranging from pre kindergarten (three years old) to 12th-grade, and a teacher to student ratio of 20 to one. The school was founded in 1981 as a non-sectarian, college preparatory, for profit institution. It is owned by a private group of investors.

The school is governed by a board of directors and receives the support of a parents association. In order to help with the everyday management of the school, there is a financial consultant and an academic director. The school's organizational structure also includes an elementary school principal charged with supervising PK through 6th grade and a high school principal for 7th through 12th-grade. This school is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) which is based in Georgia. In accordance with the standards of its accreditation, Imersão requires teachers to have at least a bachelor's degree with 24 or more credits in their content area and in English. They also need 12 to 18 credits in education. Some of the teachers are allowed to complete these university requirements while teaching. Some of the teachers at the school are native English speakers but most are near native with Latino backgrounds.

The second case study was conducted at Cervantina where the foreign language program is mainstream education with foreign language teaching (Baker, 2001; García, 1997). Therefore, all classes are in Spanish, the students' mother tongue (L1), except for the English as a foreign language (EFL) class at each grade-level. Most classes are received in students' first language, and the foreign language is treated as any other subject in the curriculum. Consequently, at Cervantina, students have three or four 45 minute class periods per week of English language instruction with a language teacher. Even though Cervantina is really made up of two schools, a lower school with grades from *nido* (two-years-old) to 6th-grade, and an upper school with grades 7th to 12th, this study concentrated on the upper school. With students from middle and high school, the upper school has a total of 476 students and 54 teachers. Although that represents a student to teacher ratio of less than ten to one, because some teachers work only part time

or with special subjects such as physical education and art, classrooms really have around 27 students per teacher. Students at this school are mostly from middle to mid high SES. For the 2006-2007 school year, monthly tuition in high school is U\$415.

The lower school opened its doors in the 1960s. In 1977, when a group of 6th-graders was graduating from the school, their parents decided that they wanted their children to continue to study together and to follow a methodology similar to what they had in elementary school. The parents founded the governing board that owns this college preparatory school. All parents are participating members of the board, and when they register their children at the school, they must make a one-time donation to this panel.⁹ The board of directors is elected democratically and they meet once a week in order to make all administrative decisions. The organizational structure also has an academic principal who is charged with the day-to-day academic decisions, as well as a general academic coordinator and a subject area coordinator for each of eight subject areas.

Cervantina's elementary counterpart has a total of 494 students, and 56 teachers, in the 2006-07 school year. These are separated into 23 groups. There are two or three groups each, from toddlers (2 years old) through 6th-grade. Because students are further separated into four English groups, there are only around 15-20 students in each English language class. All students receive classes in Spanish language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, English, religion, music, dance, art, and two periods of physical education and 5th and 6th-graders also have French. Tuition is comparable to that at the high school. English classes at the elementary school were also observed because the

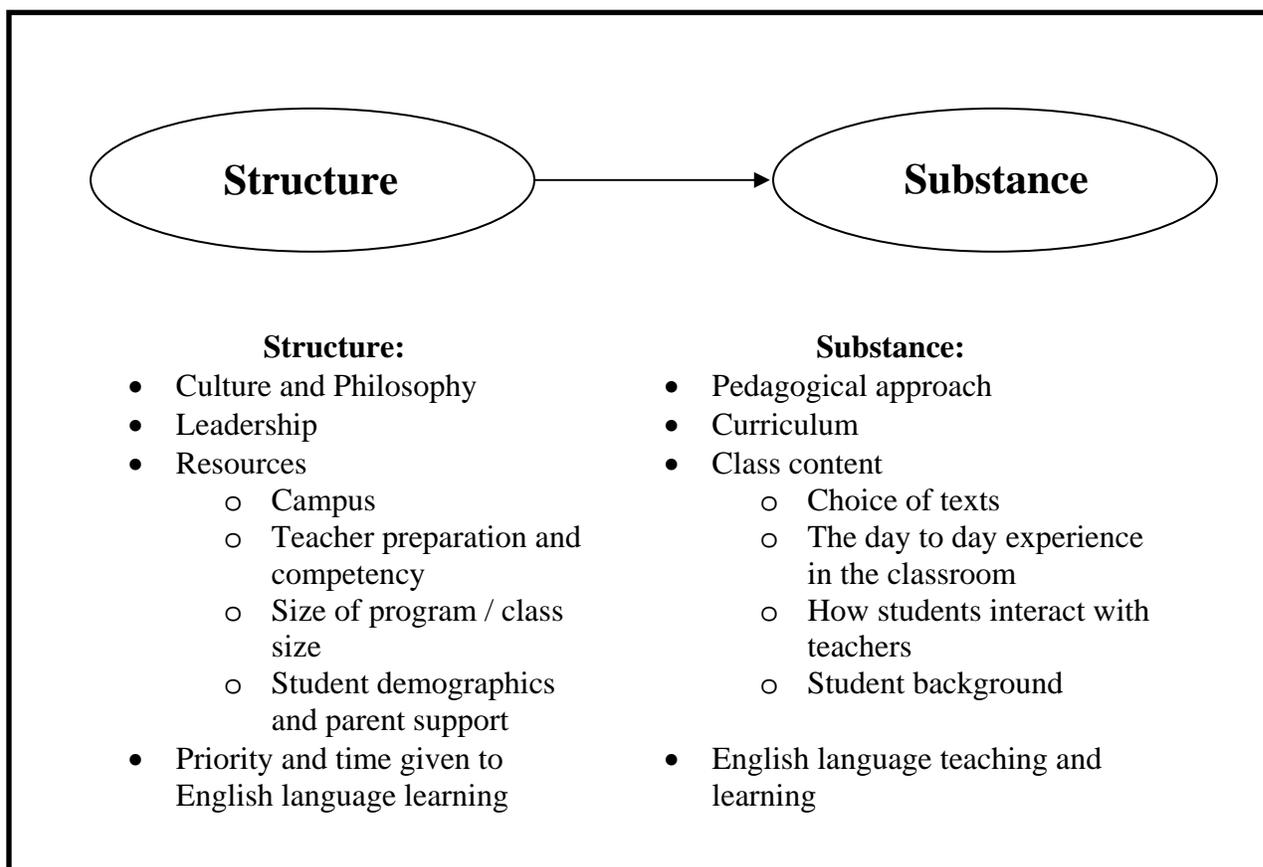
majority of upper school students come from Cervantina lower school with a similar EFL training.

Structure Shapes Substance

In the design of this study, the researcher was looking at the schools' theoretical and pedagogical approaches as the structural components of the school that might help her to better understand students' acquisition and use of English. In conducting the research, she has seen that the schools' pedagogical approaches are more substantive and are actually shaped by the schools' pre-existing structural components. In studying these two cases and comparing them to the existing literature, certain subtopics were established. The findings have hence been organized as either a part of each school's structure or substance (figure 4).

During the development of these two cases a variety of techniques were used. In observing English classes, for example, the teaching methods were discerned, and student and teacher led discussions were noted. Students were also asked for their language notebooks in order to collect sample writings in the foreign language. Interviews were held with administrators, teachers, and students at both schools. All of the actions and events observed at each school were examined individually and as components of a whole. While looking for salient concepts or themes directly in the data, the identified dimensions and properties allowed this researcher to differentiate items between and within classes, and hence to show variation along a range (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Thus, the structural and substantive elements of each school were

Figure 4 – Structure and Substance



identified as essential to the description of language learning.

Power theories make it clear that in order to understand organizational behavior, it is necessary to understand which influencers are present and what the goals of each are. The power relationship encompasses the most basic issue underlying educational politics. Sarason (1990) argues that schools, like other social systems, can be described in terms of power relationships. Based on power theories and their assertions about the methods for shaping organizational change, it is important to recognize these relationships as well as the distribution of power. Furthermore, as bureaucratic organizations (Weber, 1963), schools include top-down hierarchy of decision-making and a formalization of goals and

expectations. The structural elements of each school's culture, leadership, philosophy, resources, and priorities were identified as fundamentally consistent influencers of the particulars in the substance of each case.

The norms, policies, and job descriptions that are commonly employed in each individual school exert a strong influence on the way teachers can respond to situations in and around the classroom. Sergiovanni (2001) states that department heads affect school policy directly because of their expertise in their subject area. Furthermore, Wettersten (1992) states that teachers may rely on department heads more often than on principals or assistant principals. Subject area coordinators were hence interviewed extensively at each school. Resources such as time, the campus, teachers' preparation, and class size, as well as other players in the school's leadership, also emerged as relevant. All of these factors then aided in explaining the rationale for each school's substantive components such as its pedagogical approach, curriculum and class content, as well as students ultimate learning of the foreign language. All of these elements and their relations to each other can be seen more clearly in figure 4.

CASE 1 - IMERSÃO

Structure

Culture and Philosophy

Imersão was founded in 1981 as a non-sectarian institution. The school is a private, for-profit enterprise governed by a board of directors and owned by a group of private investors. This governing body chooses who is going to fill the positions of general academic and financial director as well as holds meetings every month in order to determine operational priorities. The general academic director is then charged with the functioning of the school's academics. The school is also supported by a democratically elected parents association.

English is considered as a first language and hence, most instruction is delivered in English. The school is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and by the Dominican Ministry of Education (SEE) and follows the guidelines of several U.S. state standards of education while adhering to Dominican regulations. As a result, its curriculum is based more on United States than Dominican models and United States' culture seems to permeate many aspects of the teaching and learning. The school's philosophy includes the belief that constant exposure to the language helps in its acquisition. "You can't learn the language if you don't use it" (Imersão high school principal). Some teachers also commented that the school allows students the opportunity to see things from two separate points of view emanating from two different cultures.

The school prides itself in the fact that administrators, teachers, students, and their families come from all over the world, thus enriching the learning environment and exposing students to different cultures, traditions, languages and modes of thinking.

“Based on their country of citizenship or birth, the ethnic composition of our student body for the 2004-2005 school year is 55% Dominican nationals, 30% U.S. citizens, and 15% of other nationalities” (IMES, 2006: students).

This is a small institution where school, home, and the wider community are integrated as a family to work together towards students’ academic and social growth. Among the emphases of its academic programming, Imersão seeks to “develop and maintain English programs that foster creativity, analysis, and effective oral and written expression in English”.² Spanish is treated as a second language along with French, and for both of these languages, the school endeavors to provide students with “basic communication skills” (IMES, 2004, p. 4).

Besides the strong emphasis on English, the school’s philosophy also includes a solid belief in the value of a liberal arts education. Because of its small size, students attending Imersão cannot choose all of their subjects. High school students do have certain elective credits where they may select among such subjects as psychology, U.S. government, and Advanced Placement world or U.S. history. Art appreciation and music are compulsory for all students. Furthermore, priority is placed on subjects such as Spanish and English language arts, history, and literature. For example, in a week with 40 class hours, 1st-grade has 27 periods that are dedicated to social sciences, 5th-grade has 29 and 10th-grade has 26. The school also emphasizes and places great importance on physical education and participation in team sports. Afternoon and Saturday practices and competitions for the different teams are common for sports such as softball, basketball, volleyball, and soccer. These sports practices mostly take place with coaching in Spanish. Several teachers mentioned that this matched their own values, and that they

too believe that organized physical activity helps students to become more well rounded citizens by motivating them and giving them a chance to succeed in different ways.

Because of the size of the school, most students are involved in some way in these sport teams. As a result, when a competition takes place out of town, classes in the grades involved are halted.

The school relishes its family environment and even though only two Spanish courses are taught to all students, the school labors to encourage pride in Dominican culture among staff and students. For example, around patriotic holidays in February, a Dominican week is celebrated. At this time, students make oral presentations and even prepare skits representing Dominican historical events. The week culminates with a celebratory pig roast and talent show. This is a free event that all families are encouraged to attend. The school roasts some pigs on site and provides other refreshments while parents bring side dishes for a shared dinner. Before the meal students from different levels from 1st through 12th-grade participate in a talent show competition. Most students and teachers attend these events alongside their families.

Imersão's main priority is the teaching of English. This concern permeates the environment at the school. Most staff members are at least near native English speakers and through classes in U.S. history, geography, literature, and art, students learn the intricacies of the United States. Dominican history is also touched upon, but to a lesser extent, and students might therefore develop greater interest in the United States than in their own culture.

Leadership

Imersão operates under a bureaucratic hierarchy model of leadership. The school is governed by a board of directors that chooses who is going to fill the positions of general academic and financial director. The general academic director then oversees the daily work of the school's instructional functions. The school also counts on the contributions of a democratically elected parents association.

Academic leadership is top down and the school has a clear structure and curriculum that teachers are expected to follow. This leadership structure consists of the general academic director who has occupied the position for two years, her subordinates include a principal for the elementary school, who has been at the school for ten years and a principal for the high school, who started as a teacher at Imersão fifteen years ago. All teachers are supervised by their level principal as well as by the general academic director. Despite the hierarchical organization of authority, there is a small school feel and teachers seem to have close or even personal relationships with their leaders and co-workers. These leaders each have an open door policy and teachers feel comfortable approaching them. Furthermore, the principals and even the general academic director each teach one high school subject.

As a small school, leaders, teachers, and students all know each other well. In fact, the teachers comment that the leadership at the school is very aware of all that happens with the teachers and the students. They are confident that their principals and the general director all stay abreast of all that takes place at the school. The elementary and high school principals read over each of their corresponding teachers' lesson plans each week. Grade level principals read over and must approve tests before they are given

to students; they also periodically look at students' notebooks, and observe teachers in class once or twice each semester. They also have follow-up meetings after the observations with each teacher. They have a general faculty meeting with all teachers once every two weeks after school. They also meet separately with teachers from their level once every two weeks after school.

Those in the school's leadership positions are Dominican English speakers with some foreign education. They also usually rise through the ranks and previously occupied different positions at the school. The high school principal, for example, used to be the counselor. As a result, she considers that she knows the students and their individual difficulties well.

Despite the hierarchical organizational structure, the school's staff creates innovative solutions to classroom challenges. For example, in order to solve a scheduling conflict, the high school principal is teaching English to the 12th-graders. In the process, she is also attempting to improve the program and add to students' learning by observing these classes first hand and giving the other teachers her perspective on the content.

Imersão has a well-defined organizational culture and a hierarchical power structure. The organization is ordered by rules and regulations and the tasks are divided among qualified workers. Power theories make it clear that in order to understand organizational behavior, it is necessary to understand which influencers are present and what the goals of each are. As Blau (1988) explains, it is important to establish cooperative intellectual communities in schools as well as for teachers to feel empowered. Even though the small size of the school precludes the existence of several individuals teaching in the same subject matter or classroom level, the school

still encourages collegiality as teachers get together to discuss matters of curriculum and standards a few times each year and through other social celebrations. As a bureaucratic hierarchy, at Imersão hard work, orderliness, and technical skills are prized and rewarded throughout the organization. Furthermore, as a small school, there is a sociable and pleasant work environment, where creativity and innate ability are also valued.

Priority and Time Given to English Language Learning

For the purpose of instruction, students and teachers consider English as a first language. At each grade-level, all lessons but two are taught in English. The school uses techniques designed for ESL learners such as modeling correct responses, cooperative learning groups, simplified directives, use of word banks during examinations, and other such teaching strategies as explained in chapter three. Nevertheless, apart from rare exceptions, materials used are designed for speakers of English as a first language. Consequently, the teachers are expected to always speak in, and emphasize the use of, English as students receive instruction in all subjects from first language texts through a literature rich environment.

Students at the school are constantly exposed to native speakers of English since several teachers and sometimes also their classmates are recent immigrants from English speaking countries. Additionally, even though most parents are Dominican, with Spanish as a first language, most students have at least one parent who speaks English and uses it for work (even if they do not regularly speak to them in English).

Teachers and students concur that learning school content in their second language widens students' understanding. Students at the different levels seem to make

connections from their native knowledge of Spanish to English. They also apply what they learn in English language courses in their Spanish class (they seem to remember vocabulary words, certain concepts, etc.). Teachers take advantage of students' previous knowledge in their native language by asking them appropriate questions or assigning activities that encourage them to tie the meanings of new words to their existing knowledge in Spanish. Teachers also endeavor to harness these connections by having students practice their writing regularly. Several teachers have students keep a journal that they write every day at home and sometimes in class. They also create many other types of writing activities to encourage students to learn and practice new vocabulary. "The connections that students make between the languages widen their understanding as they construct their own learning. They may also simply describe a similar instance, or use their schema to decipher new concepts on their own" (Imersão veteran teacher 4). Students, however, consider learning academic content in the foreign language as a mixed blessing:

Because everything is taught to me in English, that expands my mind. Because I have learned for so many years in English it is easy to understand academic topics in English but it is difficult to understand it in Spanish (Imersão 10th-grade male student 8).

At Imersão, most subject matter is taught through the target language. English language classes receive the maximum possible time that the school could allot to its instruction. Conversely, of the 40 class slots available each week, students are only given the opportunity to participate in about seven class periods, including physical education, in their native Spanish. Krashen (2003) would likely agree with Imersão's methodologies

of teaching subject matter through the target language. This type of design allows for the foreign language to be presented in authentic communicative situations.

Resources

Campus

The school's campus has a size of approximately 12,000 square meters, and has an amphitheater, a science laboratory, two computer laboratories with 20 networked computers each, and a library with Internet access. The grounds are also equipped for sports practices with a young children's playground, two soccer fields, an indoor gymnasium, and basketball and volleyball courts. The school also has a cafeteria that serves hot meals at lunchtime.

Classrooms are large, about 650 square feet, and full of teaching materials. Many rooms have closets with teaching materials, one or two extra teacher's desks, extra student tables and chairs, as well as teaching materials such as an overhead projector, dictionaries, and easels to hold up illustrations. All rooms have one or two sides with wall to wall windows. All windows are kept closed because of the air conditioning in all rooms. All windows in the elementary school (the first floor) are also covered with pretty cloth curtains.

On the one hand, educational, age-appropriate, placards as well as students' work are posted on the walls in all elementary school classrooms. The hallways in elementary school also have several bulletin boards that showcase students' compositions. On the other hand, high school classrooms' bulletins are often bare and most posters in the different rooms are related to either mathematics or science classes. No students' work was observed posted on the classroom or hallway walls in high school.

According to the school's librarian, the school's library has about 5,000 books that students can use, most of which are in English. On average, at any one time, there are about 60 books out on loan to students. Preschool to first-grade students visit the library once a week with their teacher who usually reads to them. They also have guest family members to read to them. These stories sometimes are in Spanish. From 2nd to 6th-grade students also go to the library once a week. The teachers may use the time to have students discuss a book that they are reading for class, to see a video, or sometimes only half the class attends at a time in order to carry out some research activity or borrow books for self-selected reading. In the case of 7th to 12th-grade students, these only go to the library as a group about once every two weeks. These students might use the library during their recess or at dismissal, mostly for Internet searches. During their class time, they might also use the library computers to print something or to make photocopies. The library had a computerized card catalog that had only been in use for a few months when it malfunctioned. As they await its re-installation, when students need to search for something in the library, they ask the librarian and she tells them generally, from memory, in what area to locate it. The library might also be used to view Power Point presentations made by students or by their teachers or simply to watch a movie related to a class, with their teacher.

The school's campus is a pleasant working environment. The building is large enough to accommodate all classes comfortably and the grounds are well designed and maintained and include ample green space with trees so that while in the yards, staff and students can often enjoy the sound of chirping birds. The school's emphasis on well-rounded individuals is supported by their comfortable working environment.

Teacher Preparation and Competency

In the elementary school there are eight homeroom teachers and six teachers' aides. Each class from 1st through 4th-grade has a full time aide. The 5th and 6th-grades share an aid. In high school, sixteen teachers each teach a specific subject area.

The main barrier to identifying new teachers for hire at all foreign language schools in the country, including Imersão, is their fluent knowledge of English. As a result, many of their teachers have undergraduate degrees in areas other than education. In accordance with the requirements of their SACS accreditation, a high percentage (80%) of the teachers at Imersão must have undergraduate or graduate degrees in pedagogy or related fields. To fulfill the pedagogical requirement, a local school for expatriates has partnered with a United States university to offer a master's degree in education. This is a two-year, part-time course designed for schoolteachers. Courses are offered during schools' regularly scheduled spring, summer and winter breaks, with extra reading required during non-class periods. Many of the teachers from this, as well as from other English schools in the country, participate in this master's program.

At Imersão, teachers' undergraduate degrees range from international relations, criminal justice, or fashion merchandizing to psychology. After teaching full time, many of these individuals went back to school to get master's degrees in pedagogy or in second language teaching, or at least to take short courses in teamwork or English immersion. Teachers all feel sufficiently prepared to perform the duties of their job and their students also believe them to be so. "Ninety-five percent of our teachers manage their English pretty well; they seem to know very well the subject that they are teaching which makes it easier for us to ask questions" (Imersão female 10th-grade student).

Students at the school are constantly exposed to native speakers of English. The school has numerous foreign teachers even though they do not conduct any hiring abroad. Many of these individuals had already moved to the country for different circumstances and some even apply via the Internet and then move to the Dominican Republic for one or more years. Despite many on the staff being foreign, the school has low teacher turnover. At present, over twenty members of their full time staff have been teaching there for three to seven years, and only six or seven are new. Good teachers stay for a long time. Nevertheless, like all organizations, Imersão has to struggle to find quality teachers. In certain instances, this entails transitional periods of mediocrity or teachers who are changed often. One student claimed: “At times we have had several changes in the same year when the teachers leave for one reason or another” (Imersão 10th-grade female student 6).

Students also believe that teachers’ attitudes make a big difference as to whether and how much they learn as they associate their learning to the quality of the teacher. They often mention nostalgically teachers in the past that had better teaching methods and activities, a better attitude, classes that were more interactive and hence more fun. Students also comment that when teachers are too strict, they may feel too intimidated to ask appropriate questions. Students express the importance of proper teaching methods. They seem to enjoy teachers who explain classes with emotion. They even compare among their different teachers and comment how those who are more animated give the impression of being more prepared and students believe that they learn more when they are enjoying the class.

Each teacher has their own method, but when they seem active, I think we learn more. Bad teachers don’t seem very interested in what they are doing.... The

teaching methods used by our teachers are good but they could improve in high school, maybe simply by introducing better teaching methodologies and techniques like those used in elementary school. (Imersão 10th-grade female student 7)

When asked about their English classes, students mention that they prefer when their class includes drama, props, plays, and different types of activities and teaching strategies that make their class more interesting. “Hard teachers motivate you to work. Courses are sometimes not as challenging as they could be” (Imersão 10th-grade male student 8). However, at times, their class consists mostly of reading and answering questions and having class discussions.

Our English class is not too challenging. We had to write an essay, but a 3rd or 4th-grade level, not 9th-grade level essay. We did not have to develop our sentences or give a lot of examples... My cousin who is in 5th grade, when they have a writing assignment, they have to re-write 3 or more times until it is right”. (Imersão 9th-grade female student 5)

Teachers influence the quality of classes given. For example, even as the school’s administration was attempting to promote among students the importance of their Spanish language classes, during the 2005-2006 school year, when the case study occurred, the school was struggling to give a high quality Spanish social studies class. The teacher who was teaching this class to 7th through 12th-graders also taught at the university level. As such, he was used to letting students learn at their own pace and not to monitor their progress. This individual also seemed to have difficulty managing student discipline at this level. Many of the activities assigned in this class were either too simple or too difficult for the students. As a result, the students seemed disinterested in the class and often got the teacher’s approval to use the time to finish assignments for their other classes.

Imersão struggles, like other schools do, to find highly qualified personnel to hire as teachers. In order to require each staff member to have a certain level of education and skill level, they offer very competitive salaries. Nevertheless, there are always situations where schools end up with teachers who are mediocre, and when they do, students suffer. The school has effective hiring and supervisory systems in place and therefore guards against bad teachers.

Teachers' aides.

As mentioned earlier, each class from preschool to 4th-grade at Imersão has a full time teacher's aide in the classroom to help the teacher in her/his daily work. Fifth and 6th-grades each have a part time aide. These individuals assist teachers with daily tasks such as certain paper corrections, the organization of materials in the classroom, or answering an individual student's questions.

The teachers' aides are prepared to do many more interesting instructional activities with the larger group of students, freeing up the teacher to do individualized instruction with students that might have special needs. Instructional aides may also provide individualized attention to smaller groups or individuals such as listening while they read, reviewing or reinforcing lessons, helping them find information, or simply overseeing small group target language communication. These individuals can also help in the creative aspect of teaching and possibly have many lesson plan ideas that teachers could take advantage of. However, the school does not seem to be benefiting sufficiently from this resource. In all of the classes observed in the elementary school, the teacher's aides were sitting quietly on a side desk while the teacher directed the work of the students.

Size of Program / Class Size

Classes are small. The average number of students per grade-level is seventeen and one class has only seven students. These small groups are an ideal teaching situation. In the following example, of a 1st-grade class at Imersão when all students are speaking at the same time, the noise level is manageable. As a pre-reading activity, the teacher hands each student a slip of paper with a vocabulary word on it and she calls on each one to make up a sentence that follows a story line similar to the Digger Pig story in their textbook.

- Teacher: “Now we are going to get ready to make a story. Let’s see if you remember something about the story. What was the setting, where does the story take place?”
- Student A: “In a farm”
- Teacher: “Yes in a farm. First you saw piglet.”
- Student B: “And then they were eating turnips.”
- Student C: “And then they were eating mashed potatoes and they were throwing them on the floor.”
- Teacher: “And then came Devin who cleaned up the mess and what did he use.”
- Student D: “A mop.”
- Teacher: “Yes, a mop and then we have Crystal.”
- Student E: “Then he put the mop in the corner and stepped back.”
- Teacher: “Now do you think we are ready to read the story?” ...

The environment at the school is hence permeated by that small school feeling. Students consider that they know most of their classmates and teachers. Even those who are new to the school believe that they can quickly make friends. Despite the fact that teachers and students all know each other well, when teachers are too strict, students are still too intimidated to ask appropriate questions. Even foreign and transient students usually feel comfortable sharing their problems with their teachers and counselors. The school authorities seem to care about individual students’ concerns. The small groups are

an ideal situation for teachers as well as students since it enables all learners to get individualized attention especially as it relates to timely and specialized work correction.

Classroom / Discipline Management

Dominican culture encourages respect for authority and for elders. All students at the school wear uniforms that clearly distinguish them from the teachers. Teachers dress in business casual. This notwithstanding, the teachers try to keep an open climate in class where students can feel comfortable enough to ask frequent questions. Teachers at the school also manage a system of student infractions. These are handed out at every grade-level, for minor violations of school rules such as chewing gum, talking in class, not turning in homework, etc. Teachers have the discretion of giving a warning before the infraction. From preschool to 7th-grade, after ten infractions students have an after school detention, 8th and 9th-graders have to stay after school after four infractions, and 10th to 12th-graders after only three infractions. This is carried out in this way because older students are expected to have more self control. When students have major rule violations, such as disrespecting an adult, or fighting, they must stay for a Saturday detention. When the misbehavior is extensive, students might be assigned in-school suspension. When a student has more than three detentions in a month, the school counselor intervenes to carry the matter further. All teachers must fill a form detailing all student infractions at the end of each week. At the end of each grading period, those students who do not have any infractions share in a special luncheon with the school's general academic director.

Imersão has a school counselor and an assistant who work diligently on individually counseling the students. They keep abreast of personal relations among the

students, students' social groupings such as cliques, as well as any possible learning difficulties. The counselor also teaches life skills to 7th through 12th-graders. For 7th, 8th and 9th-grades, these classes take place during one health class period per week and in 10th, 11th and 12th-grades during a civics class period. Additionally, in order to care for any major student infractions, the school has an academic counsel that is made up of the general director, the two principals, and the counselor. This group meets every Tuesday.

As is typical in Hispanic cultures, students and adults alike at Imersão will bustle about using raised voices. This situation is made more manageable by the large campus and classroom size, coupled with the small groups of students. The teacher-managed student infractions remain an appropriate system for the school to contend with any discipline problems.

Substance

Pedagogical approach

At Imersão, English is considered to be the first language. As such, and possibly to counter students' ESL background, each grade up to 8th has a strong component of English language grammar and literature and in high school equally strong components of composition and literature. Students in 9th through 12th-grade have five class periods devoted to literature, and one to composition per week. Seventh and 8th-graders have five periods of literature and four of language arts each week. Students at Imersão have many writing assignments in English. They are usually expected to complete about ten or so essays each quarter. Additionally, all other content classes, such as science, social studies, and

mathematics, are conducted as if English were students' first language. As such, text books are chosen from the large array of English language texts, written using grade-appropriate vocabulary and published in the United States, for their educational market. Students sometimes read their school assigned texts in class and sometimes they read at home. As suggested by Savignon (2005) and Fotos (2005) students at Imersao use the target language in realistic communication and for negotiated output. "In [literature] class we mostly read out loud. We try to look beyond what is read, use our imagination; give our perspectives about the things that we read. We also practice our writing skills, grammar, ordering our ideas, how to express ourselves" (Imersão 9th-grade female student 5).

Furthermore, receiving most class subjects in the target language also gives learners more opportunities to use, communicate and think in English. "We have to study the topics for all our classes mostly in English (language arts, history, math, science)" (Imersão 10th-grade female student 9).

As for the Spanish component of classes, Spanish language arts and social studies in Spanish or Dominican civics are also taught at each grade-level as part of the requirements of the Dominican ministry of education (SEE). Additionally, the SEE requires that all students take standardized tests in Spanish language arts, as well as mathematics, science, and social studies in Spanish at the end of the 8th and 12th-grades. These tests take place in July, after the regular school year is over. In a manner similar to other Dominican schools, students at Imersão receive special after school preparatory classes for the six weeks preceding these exams. These classes take place for 40 minutes, three days a week. School authorities would not show the researcher the exams but state

that students on average do well on these exams, except for the science portion where up to 50% of students fail.

At all levels, students' schedules include a majority of English classes taught using English texts, leaving time for only one or two classes in Spanish per day. This might result in students perceiving their Spanish class as a low priority. Furthermore, students do not think that they would be able to learn academic content in Spanish. Students say that for many years they have been reading, and processing information, mostly in English and believe that they would have difficulty thinking and learning subject matter in Spanish. Students seem especially concerned that they would not be able to understand mathematics or science in Spanish. "I have always seen the subjects in English so I do not think that I could study them in Spanish" (Imersão 10th-grade female student 9). It becomes harder for me to learn in Spanish because I have always been taught in English. I could not divide in Spanish, the method is different" (Imersão 10th-grade female student 6).

According to Cloud, Genesse, and Hamayan (2000), a school such as Imersão has similar objectives to other immersion programs. Some of these include students' grade-appropriate academic achievement, students' functional proficiency in the foreign language, and the understanding of and appreciation for the culture of a group of the target language. However this program seems to fall short in the usual immersion objective of developing the primary language at grade-appropriate levels. At Imersão, all classes are taught as if English was the students' first language. Since all students take up to ten subjects each year in English, they acquire advanced knowledge of the foreign language and of U.S. cultural components. Nevertheless, it also has the unfortunate

drawback of enabling the process whereby students lose touch with some of their own linguistic and cultural background.

ESL Class

When students from preschool through 6th-grade first enter the school they are given an English test. The result of this test determines if they need extra help. If they do, they are pulled out for one or two hours a day to work in a small group environment, with one of the three ESL teachers. These students are usually pulled during their English language or reading class periods. One of the three ESL teachers serves students up to 2nd-grade, the other teaches 3rd and 4th-grade, and the other, students from 5th and 6th-grade. All three of these teachers work with small mixed-level groups. For example, one teacher has two groups of three 5th-grade and three 6th-grade students working together for two consecutive forty-five minute periods each day.

ESL teachers are not given a strict curriculum to follow for these classes. Instead, they evaluate what their students need and use the available materials as they see fit. The counselor tests all new students and that examination determines in what level students are placed. These levels each have a corresponding ESL textbook. ESL teachers follow these textbooks while also complementing the material with what those students would be learning in the regular English classroom. These classes are also taught according to the individual needs of each group of students. For example, certain 5th-graders attend ESL class every day during their reading and language arts period. Their textbook for ESL is the textbook used for regular English language arts in the 3rd-grade. This book was chosen for use during the present school year because it was believed to be the most appropriate for this particular group of students. The 6th-grade ESL students,

alternatively, use the regular 5th-grade book for language arts and participate in their regular classroom's reading class each day since the teacher felt that the lessons from the 5th-grade book were not enough of a challenge for this particular group of students.

ESL classes are taught using books especially designed for English as a second language as well as English as a first language students. During the 2005-06 school year, they used: New Parade, Harcourt Brace ESL Collections (used one level behind (e.g. the 2nd-grade book is used with 3rd-grade students), and Harcourt Brace Welcome Home Set Sail practice book. ESL teachers also use Harcourt's Language Handbook and Language Medallion for extra grammar exercises.

These classes give students a lot of opportunity for oral and written practice given the small group scenario. ESL teachers also extract new vocabulary words from students' readings and then keep a word bank as these are written on the board or on the bulletin. Students copy all these words into their notebooks and define them according to the glossary in their textbook. Once a week, students also work on synonyms and antonyms for these words at the library. If necessary, they also look them up in the dictionary. They might also conduct writing activities using the new words (e.g. imagining that they are the characters in the story and solving some similar dilemma using the new words). ESL teachers always speak in English and students sometimes answer in Spanish.

Each ESL classroom also has, at times, students from different classroom levels. In these small groups, many more occasions for communicative language teaching seemed to present themselves. ESL teachers were observed to work with students one on one, in dyads, and small groups of three or four. Additionally, students carried out role play scenarios in the target language and orally discussed different situations as they

arose. These collaborative dialogues and learner-centered discourses are believed to provide scaffolding assistance and hence aid students' language learning (Swain & Lapkin 1998).

These teachers also constantly work on grammar, for example, always emphasizing regular and irregular verbs when they are found in the readings. ESL teachers also spend several weeks before midterm or final examinations reviewing with their students in order to help them to do better in their regular class tests. For these reviews the ESL teachers prepare review materials based on students' regular classes in order to aid their preparation for these tests. Teachers acknowledge that all students progress out of ESL classes within 2 years.

Even though much has been written about the pitfalls of pullout ESL instruction (see Ovando & Pérez, 2000 for a review), it seems to work well for students at Imersão. This success can to some extent be attributed to the fact that students are in a foreign language environment and still receive classes in the native language to help build their underlying knowledge base. The small school advantage permits these ESL teachers to tailor their instruction to each specific group of students. This is an ideal situation as in each case, ESL teachers are working with only three or four students at a time and are able to see each individual for one or two hours every school day. Imersão's ESL teachers also practice communicative language teaching as they individualize their instruction to the specific students of each group and are also able to facilitate extensive discussions, oral and written practice in the target language. This allows learners the possibility to reach a satisfactory level of English to return to the mainstream classroom in two to three years.

Curriculum

Curriculum includes all of the planned learning experiences of an educational system (Celce Murcia, 2001). The selection of the content that will be used in language teaching includes choosing linguistic features such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, and experiential content such as topics and themes that will be included. Imersão provides its students with a curriculum that is mirrored on United States' standards more than Dominican models. This curriculum includes classes in English language and literature, mathematics, social studies, the physical sciences, computer science, art appreciation, music, and French as a foreign language. Spanish language, Spanish social studies, and Dominican civics are also taught as part of the requirements of the Dominican ministry of education.

The school offers advanced placement classes at the high school level as well as programs for students with special learning needs. These include honors courses in history and the National Honors Society where students work on their moral character by studying service and leadership concepts and by completing social service projects. Students who are new to the country or the school and might need extra help in Spanish or English may also take English or Spanish as a second language classes (ESL and SSL).

One of the school's goals, as mentioned by its teachers, is preparing students for colleges in the U.S. As a result of the school's curriculum, Imersão students learn a lot more about the history and culture of the United States than of the Dominican Republic. Nevertheless, teachers also state that by studying in this school, and given that all of their textbooks are written from a U.S. perspective and published by U.S. companies, students

have the opportunity to compare their own culture to the culture in the United States.

Teachers believe that educational experience helps to broaden students' outlook.

Imersão has a detailed list of curricular standards that was created for the school as a whole and for each individual grade-level. Teachers write detailed lesson plans based on these standards and follow them in their classes. The curricular standards were created many years ago by a previous administration and the current teachers are revising and modifying them. In order to accomplish this task, subject matter teams were formed and they have been meeting in order to discuss the standards and each individual teacher has been working on re-vamping her/his grade-level standards. Part of the process that has been used for this update is comparing their standards to different individual U.S. state standards for benchmarking.

Imersão has set grade-level standards and course syllabi that all teachers follow in the design of their lesson plans as well as in their daily instruction. As a result, teachers' lesson plans and their classes tend to be very structured. Figure 5 is an example of such a plan for approximately one month of classes in English language arts for 8th-grade.

Figure 5 – Imersão - Lesson Plan, February - 8th-grade.

Writing Standard 2:	The student writes to communicate ideas and information effectively
Standard Subtopics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Writes reports based on research that contains a bibliography in MLA format. ○ Writes and justifies a personal interpretation of literary, informational, or expository reading that includes a topic statement, supporting details from the literature, and a conclusion. ○ Writes multi-paragraph compositions that have clear topic development, logical organization, effective use of details, and variety in sentence structure.
	Daily Plans

Writing a statement of controlling purpose	Objective: Understand the importance of controlling statements and how to properly use them. Activity: Worksheet pg. 19-21. HW: Write controlling statements
Bibliography cards	Objective: To learn how to use bibliography cards. Activity: Worksheets 23-24. HW: Create bibliography cards.
Revision	Objective: To be able to properly revise work. Activity: Class group work. Revise: "Brainstorm Clouds"
Research Outline	Objective: To properly prepare a scientific outline for experiments. Activity: Class notes, use of projection screen, use of MS Word.
Writing quotes	Objective: Understand the importance of using quotes in a paper and the different types of quotes. Activity: Worksheet pgs. 25-27
Analyzing different types of quotes	Objective: Understand the importance of using quotes in a paper and the different types of quotes.
Introductory paragraphs	Objective: To review the process of writing convincing introductory paragraphs
Evaluating proper resources	Objective: To be able to evaluate resource materials Activity: Library work searching for possible resources. HW: Continue searching other resources.
Relating ideas	Objective: Understand the importance of relating ideas in a paper. Activity: Worksheet pg. 36
	No School
Review	Revise and review Bibliography cards and note cards
Bibliography	Objective: To learn how to properly set up a bibliography page according to MLA requirements Activity: Working in notes HW: Complete bibliography page
Transitional sentences	Objective: To learn how to properly connect one or more ideas in concurrent paragraphs / pages. Activity: Class notes and lecture. Worksheet pg. 38
Experiments	Objective: To learn how to properly write experiment results and procedures in MLA format. Activity: Class notes and lecture.

All of Imersão's teachers write lesson plans based on the curriculum standards. The elementary and high school principals read over each of their corresponding teachers' lesson plans each week. These supervisors look at the lessons' structure and activities and make suggestions for possible improvements. In the elementary school, teachers' lesson plans were very detailed and classes seemed to progress smoothly. High school lesson plans appear somewhat less detailed, but nevertheless denote careful thought and consideration of content. Generally, lessons are age appropriate and correspond with the relevant instructional standards. The school's current standards are rather prescriptive. While in the process of revising these standards, teachers and supervisors should consider the possibility of incorporating more experiential learning and meaningful activities (Gamoran, et al, 1996; Kohn, 1999). Even though, in all classes observed, lesson plans as well as actual lesson included students' participation and oral interactions, more open-ended situations where students may construct their own meaning should be encouraged.

Class Content

Choice of Texts

Most of the textbooks used at Imersão are written from an American perspective and published by U.S. companies for speakers of English as a first language. Spanish language arts is taught using first language Spanish textbooks. The school does also sometimes give other lessons besides language arts in students' native Spanish. This occurs as they see fit, and sometimes given the availability only of Spanish-speaking teachers in certain areas. Physical education throughout the school is taught in Spanish.

Additionally, during the 2005-2006 school year, for example, 12th-graders received music classes in Spanish.

By studying at this school, students have the opportunity to compare their own culture to the culture in the United States. Teachers believe that helps to broaden students' outlook. Classes are taught through an eclectic array of texts from different publishing companies. For more details on some of the texts used at the school see appendix J.

The Day to Day Experience in the Classroom

Students are required to read about eight novels in English each year from 8th to 12th-grade. Additionally, at all levels there are numerous writing assignments in order to tap into students' skills in creative writing. Many students at the school are still ESL learners and as such find it easier to converse in Spanish. Two students made the following comments: "Classes are taught in English but we speak in Spanish" (Imersão 11th-grade female student). "The program is not the best, because you speak in English and the teachers correct your mistakes, but we are allowed to speak in Spanish or "Spanglish" (Imersão 10th-grade female student).

In English class the texts include fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Students have to write compositions and read novels as part of their literature class. As is frequently the case with teenaged students, teachers at Imersão find it difficult to motivate all students to read. According to students, as a result, only about five or six of 20 students actually read the novels when they are assigned. Homework is corrected orally or by physically collecting all of the students' papers. Teachers expect students to be able to create different endings to stories, establish relationships, compare characters, write essays

analyzing certain aspects of the readings, etc. Each teacher designs her/his own examinations, so the content of these is highly dependent of the individual designing them.

The classes and evaluations have been designed by these teachers in order to address the varying needs of their students. Whenever possible, these lessons represent more cognitively challenging learning processes. The teachers recognize the value of differentiated instruction within classrooms to meet the academic needs of all students, while maintaining a high level of achievement and excellence. In addition, they recognize the importance of assimilating ESL learners by integrating language acquisition and academic content through social collaboration and scaffolded instruction in mainstream classrooms (Freeman & Freeman, 2002; Gibbons, 2002; Igoa, 2002).

Nevertheless, students don't always agree with their teacher's methods:

The program is not well planned, no time for sufficient research, reading and asking questions, tests, and that's it. We have a composition class that we write essays but students don't generally pay attention, the class does not seem well thought out. (Imersão female 11th-grade student 10)

Structurally, Imersão's staff seems to believe in the importance of emphasizing students' communicative competence. The written curriculum focuses on the ability of learners to interact with other speakers, as well as in reading and writing activities in order to share their own thoughts and expressions, and to interpret and negotiate meaning (Savignon, 2005). Nevertheless, Imersão teachers often rely more on whole class and teacher-directed activities, than on student-centered interactions. This could be clearly perceived in the sample lesson plan on pages 159-160 and in other lesson plans examined by the researcher as well as during classes observed.

Conversely, and possibly because of the nature of their lessons and the small group scenario, ESL teachers were able to scaffold students' learning using the interactions of pair as well as small group work, game playing, retelling events in dyads, role play, and using different forms of expression. In regular elementary and high school classrooms, however, most of the activities observed were taking place with the entire class. Even when there were oral discussions, they usually were teacher directed. In the elementary grades, even though some pair work was observed where students discussed their work with a partner, there were only a small number of such activities. Furthermore, none of the scrutinized lesson plans or classes observed at that level included small group work.

Students' daily experiences in school are filled with the English language. Because Imersão is a structured immersion program, teachers are required to teach all subject areas in the second language, as well as emphasizing the use of English in most contexts. Most students are Spanish speakers and as such, the first language is often also used in conversation.

How Students Interact with Teachers

Leaders and teachers pride themselves in knowing all of the students personally. Additionally, school authorities seem to care about students' concerns at any given time. Similarly, students also feel that they know most of their classmates and teachers. Even foreign students commented that they feel comfortable sharing their problems with their teachers and counselors. "The people at the school act very familiar, they seem open minded to people's problems. They try to make them feel better, try to resolve their

problems. I could talk to them about most problems” (Imersão, male 11th-grade student 11).

Students are still ESL learners. Teachers and students at different levels mention students’ problems with a lack of adequate vocabulary. Moreover, middle and high school teachers seem concerned with the poor quality of students’ writing. Some teachers even admitted that as second language learners they themselves also learn new vocabulary through the students’ textbook.

Furthermore, as second language learners there is a strong need to emphasize and learn more vocabulary. Teachers may encourage students to think of related concepts in Spanish or other basic word strategies. Students often discuss topics with each other or with the teacher in Spanish. Teachers also admit to code switching to aid student understanding.

One of the teachers has worked at several different all-English schools in the country. She comments that these other schools function in a similar way to Imersão, and teach as if English were the students’ first language. She also believes that it would be preferable to use books and materials specifically designed for ESL students. “All schools here function in the same way. I think it would be ideal if we could get books especially written for ESL speakers, because sometimes they don’t understand the terms, or it’s hard for them to relate to some expressions. For example in elementary school, they work with American coins. A dime, a quarter, a nickel, that has no meaning for them” (Imersão veteran teacher 2).

On the one hand, Imersão's teachers believe that the fact that students are learning in a second language makes learning content courses somewhat more of a challenge; especially in subjects such as science and social studies:

- The students have to cope with the difficulties that they have because English is not their native language.... We have to help them to obtain more English structure and vocabulary.... We can sense that they translate when they write because of the words they use and the level sometimes is not the same that they have in Spanish. (Imersão veteran teacher 4)

- I think that in science and social studies it affects them to be learning content in their second language. My ESL 5th grade students, for example, they have problems and need extra support in science and social studies since the vocabulary in those texts is so difficult. (Imersão new teacher 2)

On the other hand, these individuals also believe that the students gain more proficiency in English from learning all subjects in that language as it helps to increase their vocabulary and gives them more practice time in the foreign language. "Because they learn all of their subjects in English, by the time they are in eight grades they have a pretty good grasp of the language" (Imersão veteran teacher 2).

Students observe a marked difference between "downstairs" (elementary school) and "upstairs" (high school). Students remember fondly their past grammar classes, and believe they learned a lot in elementary school because of the quality of their classes and teachers. Several students mention that they used to be required to write many more essays, which were more carefully corrected and they had to re-write many times and they kept portfolios with their best work. "My teachers in elementary really taught me" (Imersão male 10th-grade student 4).

Students only have one teacher for all classes in elementary school. In high school, however, they change rooms and teachers for most classes. Hence, at the high

school level, teachers seem more distant. It seems there is a lot more structure in class work as well as in how and what is taught in elementary school as compared to high school. The difference can even be noted in the classrooms themselves which seem richly decorated with age-appropriate visual aids in the elementary grades while there are not very many postings on the walls in the higher grades. This is probably due to the fact that in high school, since students rotate between the different classrooms, teachers must all share the rooms. At the high school level, the focus also seems to be more on academics than on visually motivating students. Furthermore, “it is generally considered difficult, when working with students at this age, to gain and maintain student attention” (Imersão general academic director). Teachers can be expected to dedicate more of their working hours to teaching their topic and its content than to the design or development of visual aids.

Evaluation of students.

Students receive two report cards during each of two semesters for a total of four grading periods during the school year. In order for students to have a better idea of where they stand in each subject, they also have a report of academic progress (RAP) half way through each reporting period. The school has also planned a breakdown of points for each subject. The division of grade values is a suggestion as all teachers have the freedom to adapt their evaluation schemas as they see fit. The categorization, however, in as much as it encourages giving priority to one element over another, indicates to teachers the high value that the school considers should be given to students’ day to day performance which accounts for 80% of their total grade. That is, 40 percent for class work, 20 percent for homework, 10 percent for class participation and 10 percent for

behavior and general disposition. Students' grades at Imersão also include 20 percent for tests and quizzes. Furthermore, when a student's final grade totals 94 or above in a given class, they can exempt that subject's midterm or final exam. Despite the division of grades and points, some students might still find that their examinations are easy to pass: "All that is necessary in order to do well on the exams is to pay attention the last class before each test" (Imersão male 10th-grade student 8).

Evaluations are ongoing. Students are required to write essays and other short assignments where they demonstrate the writing process. They have periodic oral presentations, and are also expected to complete quizzes and take tests at the end of each unit. Teachers have rubrics for what they look at in these. But even when students agree with the evaluation methods, they are not always satisfied with the grading scheme:

Evaluations are fair and are always based on what we have learned in class including vocabulary, essay questions, critical thinking, and certain facts. Yet the grades might hurt you when you might miss some homework a project or are absent one day. Then you lose all those points. (Imersão 10th-grade female student)

Students are evaluated periodically, with all teachers following similar evaluation standards. Most of the weight is placed on class work, homework, and participation, as opposed to on examinations. Students hence are given ample opportunity to excel. Students will generally have occasion to make up any missed credits with the system of a mid-evaluation RAP sheet.

Student background.

Thirty to forty percent of Imersão's students are foreign and transitory. In order to be accepted at the school, these students must be proficient in English, and usually no more than one level below their grade-level. Many do, however, have to take the Spanish

as a second language (SSL) class, which are offered up to 7th-grade. . During the daily periods, in all grade-levels, when Spanish language and Spanish social studies classes are taught, students up to 6th-grade who do not speak Spanish are sent to SSL classes. SSL classes are usually taught to groups of 4 to 5 students. After the students achieve a certain level in the language they are also taught elements of Dominican culture and folklore. A Spanish textbook designed by an American publishing company is used for these lessons.

While studying at Imersão, foreign students who do not wish to go on to Spanish speaking universities are able to complete an all-English program, with individualized help. Depending on their needs, these students may receive English as a second language (ESL) courses, or if they qualify, they can take the advanced placement courses which are also in English. Because English is given priority at the school, these students may sometimes prefer that their Spanish as a second language (SSL) class time be used to enforce English concepts.

Foreign or transient students in 7th through 12th, for whom English is not the first language usually use these SSL periods to reinforce their English, for advanced placement classes, or for an extra study hall period. Since these students are not expected to need a Dominican diploma upon graduation and are usually transient in the school, they are given this leeway in order to reinforce their main priority which is learning English. The school emphasizes the teaching and learning of English because when they exit the school to enter higher education in their country of origin these students are more likely to study in English than in Spanish. The school is accommodating to these foreign students and they are well served by the opportunity to concentrate on the subjects that will be relevant to their future studies in other countries.

English Language Teaching and Learning

Since all classes are taught in English at the school, and many of the students are learning English as a second language, teachers are encouraged to incorporate ESL techniques and strategies, as explained in chapter three, into their classes even though they do not necessarily use any formal ESL materials in the regular classroom. As mentioned earlier, students are still ESL learners. At the school, it is common for students of all ages, especially those with Spanish as a first language, to code switch between the two languages. The teachers, however, are expected to always speak and emphasize the use of English. Students at the school are constantly exposed to native speakers of English since several teachers and frequently also their classmates are recent immigrants from English speaking countries. Furthermore, most students have never taken additional courses in English outside of the school.

Even though they may at times not read the assignments for their literature class, many of these students have a well-developed reading habit and read self-selected magazines and novels more often in English. For several students, but not for all, English has become second nature and they feel perfectly at ease thinking and functioning in an English academic environment. Some students at Imersão even believe that their writing skills are better in English than in Spanish. Moreover, some students do not think that they would be able to learn academic content in Spanish.

Even though both of my parents are Dominican, I feel that English is my first language and Spanish my second. We learn everything in English including how to express ourselves. Our English is neutral at this school because we practice it often and in all our classes. It becomes a first language for us. I think that as a result we have good pronunciation and spelling, because we are constantly being corrected. (Imersão female 10th-grade student 6)

These students also perform well on foreign standardized examinations. Each year around December, the students from 1st through 8th-grade are required to take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). Students in high school take the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP) each year. Even though, for the purpose of this study, past test scores were not specifically analyzed, school authorities consider that in general, in previous years, the results from these standardized tests indicate that Imersão students do fairly well on these standardized tests. About 60% of the students are at grade-level, 20% are below and 20% are above. Furthermore, about half of the school's graduates go on to college in the United States, many of these with scholarships. Based on the analysis of past test scores, school authorities also state that in elementary school, students seem to have lower scores in those sections that depend on knowledge of vocabulary. In high school this does not seem to be the case. High school students do fare poorly in the social studies sections, perhaps because of different curriculum content being taught.

These examinations do not count toward students' grades or progression to the next level. In order to increase the importance that students place on these tests and hence their efforts in taking them, school authorities tied the standardized test grades to exemption of final examinations. A grade of 94 or above on the ITBS or the TAP, coupled with a similar grade in the regular class work, allows students to exempt the midterm or final examination in the English program.

Students believe that qualified graduates should know all basic subjects as well as have the ability to appropriately express themselves orally and in writing. "A graduate needs to have enough general knowledge to be able to complete higher education"

(Imersão male 10th-grade student 8). Yet, some students feel that they are ill-prepared for what lies ahead:

“Yo no se hacer los cálculos en Español; yo creo que ni siquiera se me el abecedario en Español. Pero a veces me da vergüenza hablar en Inglés. A veces me da trabajo encontrar la palabra adecuada. A nosotros nos enseñan en Inglés pero no necesariamente hablamos en Inglés. Yo creo que tenemos como dos presentaciones en clase por mes donde tenemos que expresarnos en Inglés”.
 [“I don’t know how to do calculations in Spanish; I do not even think that I know the alphabet in Spanish. Still at times, I feel embarrassed to speak in English. Sometimes I have trouble finding the right word. We are taught in English but we don’t necessarily speak in English. I feel that I have about two class presentations per month where we have to express ourselves in English”.] (Imersão male 10th-grade student 4)

Another student adds:

The school has lowered its standards. I don’t feel challenged enough; it’s not only about homework, but about how much I feel I have learned. The information in the books and the classes does not seem as complete or complex as I would like it to be. I really think that when I get to college I am going to be a little behind. I am not going to be prepared enough. I think I am going to find some summer classes before college to reinforce general subjects so I can feel more prepared. I have family members who took such courses outside of the country. (Imersão female 10th-grade student 5)

Nevertheless, the same student still feels that the program is highly effective:

I think the English program of this school is very effective. I have friends who have come here barely knowing English and in less than a year they are fluent. And even their SSL is really good too, because there a lot of foreign students who do not know Spanish and they also learn pretty quickly. (Imersão female 10th-grade student 5)

Regular classroom teachers at Imersão also incorporate ESL strategies into their lessons. Simplified speech is utilized whenever possible; Venn diagrams and other graphic organizers, simplified directions, and modeling of correct response were observed, as well as repetition, restatement and exemplification (Claire and Haynes, 1997; Snow, 2001). Clearly, students at Imersão are ambivalent about their academic

achievement in English as well as in their native Spanish. Some students also disagree with some of the methods used at the school. That does not necessarily make these methods right or wrong, however.

Grammar and vocabulary in English.

The first-grade teacher follows a basal reader and English as a first language program (e.g. feelings, calendar, parts of speech). At this level, students practice letter and word recognition. They have some simple dictations, sounding out and reading comprehension. At the first-grade-level, the language is taught through concrete examples, many times using images and synonyms to help students understand the meaning of new words. The teacher mentioned that cultural differences between her students and a middle class American can sometimes affect their performance on standardized examinations such as the Iowa test. Dominican students are not likely to have had any exposure to the snow or cold weather objects, they do not know the Pledge of Allegiance, nor are they familiar with the same children's literature, parlor games, or songs and folkloric stories.

Elementary school teachers periodically correct students' notebooks and workbooks for any mistakes, so they get to know their writing styles and catch their mistakes early. After 8th-grade, grammar is no longer taught explicitly and teachers concentrate more on content and style when students turn in written work. Nevertheless, high school teachers often find the need to correct students' oral and written mistakes in grammar and usage. In elementary school, the teachers are able to plan for lessons in vocabulary and spelling since each class has two full hours of language arts each day, for a total of ten such periods each week. Vocabulary is often practiced in class by allowing

students to simply deduce meanings from seeing words in context. The students' language arts and reading textbooks emphasize new vocabulary with each lesson. Teachers carry out several pre-teaching activities that include displaying all the new words and previewing their meanings, using them in different contexts, and having students conduct independent or group activities using these words. The new words are discussed orally in whole class activities. Students are also expected to define these words in their notebooks (usually from the book's glossary) and then write sentences with each word. The teachers at this level also help students to deconstruct the words, identify suffixes, prefixes, and roots, identify the part of speech, and make connections with other familiar topics, among other things.

Classes are brought to life through different tools. The teachers in elementary school usually take advantage of the extra materials available such as audio reading of the stories where students can listen to the story being narrated. In high school, students might watch a movie related to a reading. The students usually really enjoy these as they serve to bring the stories to life. The textbooks also have workbooks that include many multiple choice and fill in the blanks activities using these new vocabulary words. In this way, students generally learn an average of eight new vocabulary words each week from their reading or literature books. Students also read novels and keep a journal as part of their language arts class.

Students frequently have difficulty understanding their textbooks in science and social studies because of the large number of unfamiliar words. "I don't feel that they understand enough vocabulary, not even the students in advanced placement courses (Imersão veteran teacher 2). Teachers expect them to infer the meanings from the

context. They often use the dictionaries and glossaries in these subjects. The teacher might also assist them by providing the definition to a new word orally in the interest of time management.

The student's first language is not necessarily always a vocabulary handicap. Some teachers believe that students' in-depth knowledge of Spanish or some other tongue may also greatly improve their vocabulary in English for such things as the SAT. For example, many uncommon words in English have Latin roots and can be better understood when one knows a Latin language where these words frequently are of common usage.

Writing in English.

Students at Imersão believe that their writing skills are better in English than in Spanish. Students at Imersão are expected to write a lot, about ten or so essays each quarter. For these assignments, students generally do their research at home using the Internet or encyclopedias on disk. They do this work directly in English. Students admit that they rarely use the books in the library for research purposes as they seem too outdated. Teachers correct students' grammatical mistakes even in the cases when they don't take these into consideration for grading. Some of the writing assignments require several drafts before the final version, but not all writing assignments have to be re-written several times.

In 5th-grade geography class, each student created a chart describing what they know, what they want to know and what they learned (KWL chart) before and after reading a lesson on oceans. One student's chart contained the following:

I know that there are shallow and deep oceans. Wind causes waves. Fish leave the coral reefs [sic] when the tide goes down. When the tide goes up the water covers more land. I want to know how oceans form and how some animals adapt to them. I want to know how much time it takes for the low tide to go

down. I learned that even shallow water is dangerous. I learned that there is always two high tides and two low tides. ((Imersão male 5th-grade student, 15)

As part of their history class, 10th-grade students were reading an excerpt from the prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*. The following is a female student's analysis of a character.

This character represents the church. His description shows you how although monks were supposed to live in monasteries and [were] looked upon to be modest and holy men, most were not. The description of this monk gives you an insight on the status and power religion had in the Middle Ages. (Imersão female 10th-grade student 11)

The high school principal mentioned that many of the students show competency in creative writing assignments but struggle when asked to write essays that focus on specific topics. Consequently, during the 2005-2006 school year, a writing course was introduced at every level in high school. As a result, students in 9th through 12th-grade have five class periods devoted to literature, and one to composition, per week. Eleventh-graders also have two classes per week during one semester in preparation for the Scholastics Aptitude Test (SAT). During this class students learn lists of vocabulary words and they practice formulaic writing similar to that demanded on the SAT exam. Seventh and 8th-graders have five periods of literature and four of language arts each week.

Based on large scale studies of Canadian immersion programs, Swain (1996) suggests that in order for learners to increase their communicative competence, explicit attention must be paid to the productive language skills of speaking and writing. In this sense, content based approaches, like those used at Imersão, aid students by providing opportunities for appropriate language production in terms of content and language.

Summary

At Imersão English is considered as a first language. As a result, the school's transient foreign students learn English first (before Spanish). Students at the school are constantly exposed to native speakers of English since several teachers and often also their classmates are recent immigrants from English speaking countries. Since all classes are taught in English at the school, and many of the students are learning English as a second language, teachers are encouraged to modify their classes accordingly (as explained in chapter three). For example, in a manner similar to that explained by Snow (2001), at Imersão systematic activities are devised to help students with the complex vocabulary characteristic of academic texts. This notwithstanding, students up to 6th-grade who need extra help in English are also pulled out for one or two hours a day to work in a small group setting with one of the three ESL teachers. Unfortunately, in order to concentrate almost entirely on the teaching of English, Imersão falls short of the immersion objective of concomitantly developing the primary language at age-appropriate levels.

Thanks to the school's programs, for several students, English has become "second nature" and they feel perfectly at ease thinking, communicating, and functioning in an English academic environment. English grammar and vocabulary are practiced daily and explicitly in language arts classes in elementary school. At the high school level, students have demanding literature, mathematics, science, and social studies classes in English. As such, they are regularly expected to deduce meanings of new words simply from seeing them in context. They are also required to complete many writing assignments at this level. Classes in this school, even though they are taught in English,

do not concentrate on teaching English. As explained by Krashen (1984), in content based instruction, the focus is on the subject matter and not on the form, on “what” is being said rather than “how” (p.62). Teachers work on encouraging students to analyze, deduce, and think in the foreign language while learning content in each subject area: “While teaching our history class, we do not focus on English. We are also not looking for students to memorize dates; the class is more about having them determine causes and consequences” (Imersão veteran teacher 2).

Leadership is top down as the school has a clear structure and specified curricular standards that teachers are expected to follow. These standards are based on U.S. more than Dominican models. The teachers, especially in high school, try to keep an open climate in class where students can feel comfortable enough to ask frequent questions. This personal relationship between teachers and students is further encouraged by the small classes.

Generally, lessons were observed to be age and language level appropriate and to be consistent with the relevant instructional standards. Those standards however were thought to be somewhat prescriptive. Much student participation and oral interactions were observed, yet not many open-ended or experiential learning situations where students could construct their own meaning.

CASE 2 - CERVANTINA

Structure

Culture and Philosophy

Cervantina is owned by a board of parents as a not-for-profit organization and as such parent and even student opinions are taken into account. There is constant feedback and a dynamic exchange of ideas as current and former students and their parents remain involved in the school. Students observe that the school changed the content of certain classes based on suggestions from graduates. For example, as a result of suggestions from graduates, their high school history curriculum was changed to include several years of world history and not just Dominican history as was previously the case. Moreover, school authorities tout a general concern with students' current wellbeing and future success. Teachers work hard to promote students' self reliance, to establish reasoning capabilities, and objectivity. For example, during one class period per week the homeroom teacher lectures on civics. This class is taught using a modified version of the National Ministry of Education's (SEE) curriculum for this subject. Once a month, during civics class, teachers give students an opportunity to form their student government.

In addition to parents' active role in the school's decision making, teachers work on developing students' leadership skills, especially during the civics class time. During this time they discuss topics such as leadership qualities and functions of a student council. This time is also used for students to hold meetings in order to select class government. Each grade level has elections to select a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer who then participate in the selection of representatives for the entire school. During the 2005-2006 school year, the 12th-grade students decided that instead of

choosing only one representative, they would have a triumvirate and the student council presidency is being shared between the presidents from the three twelfth grades.

Students consider that the school is strict and emphasizes the compliance with rules while also giving them individual attention. School authorities give importance to such rules as using the proper uniform, completing homework assignments, punctuality, and respect for others. Teachers are concerned for students' psychological well being, often give of their time when asked, and attempt to bring quick resolution to conflicts among students. Likewise, students feel comfortable sharing even their personal problems with their counselors whom they believe to be genuinely concerned for their well being.

The school prioritizes Spanish as the axis of oral and written communication, and alongside it the Spanish language is representative of the cultural values that identify students as belonging to a nation and region with specific characteristics and problems. It also recognizes English as a tool that will aid students in their postsecondary educational pursuits, as well as possibly enhance their future employability and improve their communications with other cultures, and even act as a catalyst in their own personal and intellectual growth.

As is required by the ministry of education, and unlike Imersão, Cervantina also teaches religion. Even though approximately 95 percent of the Dominican population is Catholic (McKnight, 1999), Cervantina, like many other non-sectarian schools, mostly uses this class to teach about morality and acceptance of different religions. This is a one-credit course taught once a week at every grade level. The school strives for each student to be able to explore and cultivate their different talents in order to find their vocation and

mission in life. The school also believes that it is their mission to educate morally. They respect all different beliefs that affirm life and goodness but in attending to the beliefs of most of their student body they also advocate the teachings of Christianity. Each class also receives one group counseling session per week where different topics are discussed.

The school also emphasizes fine arts and proudly encourages its students to express themselves artistically. Students mention that as the school places a lot of importance on visual arts, festivals, and special events, these result in the expenditure of a lot of class time. Every school year, the theatre group presents several productions in Spanish. One of these, during the researcher's observations, was a comedy titled "Espantópolis" written by Manuel Galich (1913/1984, Guatemalan). The piece uses satire to reflect the social situation in Latin America as the United States, as the hegemonic super power, exerts its influence over developing countries. It was very well acted, especially by the two main characters that had long and complex scripts.

On March 10th, 2006 the students had their talent show. For several days beforehand, the students took every free moment to practice their dance routines in school hallways. During art class, students could be observed preparing posters and T-shirts for this event. In addition to the aforementioned cultural fair, the Spanish department periodically coordinates a literary contest. Some English teachers mentioned their disappointment at the fact that at Cervantina, students do not participate in English in the school's literature contest.

Another important aspect of the school is its interest in students' rounded participation in alternate ways of learning. All the students are encouraged to participate in the cultural fair held once every two years. For the fair, students are allowed to choose

what subject and topic they wish to present. Many students choose to refine projects that they had already presented in different classes. As such, that subject's teacher serves as their sponsor in the improvement of the assignment. Those students who do not participate are required to turn in written reports to their teachers where they describe some of the projects that they observed during the fair.

In their most recent cultural fair, there were a total of 73 projects. Each assignment was to be completed individually or in groups of up to six students. A total of 373 students participated this time around. There were many different genres of projects, but most were either science (38%) or social issues (37%). Overall, these projects were interesting and students seemed very enthusiastic about sharing their knowledge on a specific topic. Most of the students present a written work to their teachers and then share their projects during the fair in the form of a Power Point presentation. Some students conduct theatre-like expositions with very few visual aids. Furthermore, many of the projects were mere expositions and memorization of facts as opposed to original ideas or solutions to real problems.

Close to a week of classes is devoted to the presentation of the final projects. Students use Tuesday to set up, and the actual fair is held on Wednesday and Thursday. Students use Friday to take down their presentations. The school's media specialist and curriculum coordinator prepare a schedule whereby all students from the different grades are assigned a specific time to go visit other exhibitions. The researcher was able to observe one such cultural fair during the spring of 2006. In this particular cultural fair, out of 73 projects, only five were in English. Three groups of 7th-graders, one group of 9th-grade students, and one group of 12th graders chose to present English projects. Most

of these students were in the advanced English sections. From all the different groups whose presentations were in English, about 75% of the students came from English-speaking schools, like those described in chapter two. The presentations included the students speaking from well-rehearsed scripts for around seven minutes each; several also had Power Point slides and even gave the entire presentation in Spanish as well. The presentations were well thought out and the information was current, and even though some of the students had heavy accents when they spoke, their diction was understandable.

The main aspect of this school's culture can be considered its humanism. The cultural fair, talent shows and frequent theatrical plays are only a few examples of the emphasis on liberal and visual arts. During recess, it is common to see a teacher or student sitting in a group of peers playing a classical guitar or looking up something interesting on someone's laptop computer. Art, theatre, and music classes are given important places in students' daily schedules. During class time there is often a group of students in the yard painting posters or billboards, preparing scenery, or otherwise planning or promoting the school's latest production. The library is also often bustling with students researching or meeting about an event.

Teaching Through Competencies

The entire school is attempting to change its paradigm in order to work towards competencies. This approach is explained further in chapter three. As a result, for the last several years, all of the school's teachers and other academic staff have been working on curriculum changes with an outside consultant hired to help them to incorporate competencies. In some cases, both the elementary and upper school teachers have met

with the consultant together and in other cases, they have worked separately. The outside consultant is not necessarily present at all meetings concerning competencies. The consultant mentioned that it takes three to five years just to write appropriate lesson plans or evaluation criteria based on competencies (Consultant, 2006)¹¹.

The consultant observed that Cervantina is working towards changing from a “pedagogy of information to one of formation” (Consultant, 2006)¹¹. Nevertheless, he admitted that in many instances, the structure necessary for school teaching (e.g. subjects divided by grade level and the lack of continuity in topic areas) has unfortunately fragmented thought and separated mechanical computations from the real-life tasks that they represent. In this manner, students have difficulty answering word problems in mathematics even though they can compute a similar problem when it is presented as an equation or they might be able to underline an adjective in a sentence but not use qualifiers to enrich their writing.

As part of their transformation process, and working as a team during the past four years, the teachers and academic administrators at Cervantina’s two schools have operationally defined each one of twelve competencies that should guide instruction in all areas, and chosen the ones that are directly relevant to each subject area. The English department, for example, applies seven of these competencies. These are: creative and systematic thought, creative and meaningful communication, effective social interaction, self-knowledge and self-esteem, ethical and moral conscience, aesthetic sensibility, and civic and historic conscience.

In the spring of 2006, the upper school hosted the consultant for a day of meetings with small groups of teachers. This was done during each group of teachers’ free period

during a regular school day. The researcher was present at these meetings. While meeting with the school's staff, the consultant mentioned that implementing competencies has been difficult for the school's teachers because of their conceptual framework and the status quo. Students' attitudes also probably make it easier for teachers to simply give students information and then expect them to repeat it. The consultant pointed out that the current banking-like system of education (Freire, 1995) is the status quo and is difficult to do away with. As is customary in most Dominican schools, classes taught directly from textbooks, following a curriculum, and state sponsored standardized tests all contribute to this status quo. They also add to teachers' entrenched beliefs that students are to be receptors of information that is later verified through questions and examinations. Additional roadblocks for this type of change are teachers' own concepts of what and how they should teach as well as social processes such as students' attitudes and what they are used to. These, in turn, greatly encumber the mental change necessary to teach through competencies as it is much harder to attempt to influence intellectual development. The consultant also attempted to illustrate to the educators present at the meetings that competencies need to be applied to the curriculum, teaching, personnel development, and especially to student evaluations.

The researcher observed a meeting with the consultant that was about just that, student evaluation. Teachers were bringing to the discussion personal examples of where and how they had applied competencies in their classrooms and as a group they discussed the effectiveness of these examples. Furthermore, the consultant worked with the teachers in the establishment of learning objectives preceding lesson and evaluation design. These suggestions included the need for teachers to create concept maps in order to have a

clearer idea of the concept to be taught before beginning their lessons. He proposed that since competencies require an integrated process, teachers first explore competencies, then conceptualize, and finally apply them in their teaching. He went on to encourage teachers to create concrete real-life examples that place students in pertinent situations where they could apply these abilities. He also contended that teachers should provide students with evaluation criteria before lessons so that they will be better prepared to succeed.

While working with small groups of around ten teachers, the consultant discussed the effectiveness of certain examples that some teachers had tried with their students. Throughout the day, different groups met with the consultant and presented examples they had used. By the end of the workday, it had been established by the group that teachers needed to integrate their class contents with those of their colleagues in order to attempt a more coherent curriculum. Likewise, when designing evaluation instruments, as well as daily learning activities, teachers should ensure that enough communication is included alongside the computations in order to ensure that students are required to think.

During this meeting it was also discussed that the students, who are beginners in English, even though they have a harder time because of their lack of vocabulary knowledge, may still work with competencies at their level. The consultant also stressed that separating students into levels is not recommended for most subjects, as heterogeneous grouping aids students in learning from each other. In the case of a second language class, however, he did believe that leveled grouping was a good idea as it does facilitate the teacher's ability to make adjustments in the semantics of her or his instruction. Nevertheless, he stressed that students should be grouped according to

Vygotsky's (1962) zone of proximal development, taking into account not only what they know but what they are able to learn with the teacher's help (Consultant, 2006)¹¹. The consultant also mentioned Krashen's (1988) affective filter and suggested that English teachers not constantly correct students' errors as this might sometimes encumber student participation (Consultant, 2006)¹¹. During these meetings it was also commented that the English teachers and the program at Cervantina do apply constructivist principles in their curriculum design as well as in the daily practice of teaching.

In many aspects the staff has been able to incorporate competencies and project based learning into their classes. The school is well underway in transforming their practice by nurturing students' decision making skills and encouraging students' active participation in their own learning process. As will be seen in the next section, this process is aided by the school's leadership which encourages teacher's decision making authority and active participation in changes such as the current constructivist paradigm shift.

Leadership

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) argue that teachers are in the best position to assess the needs of students. Teachers at Cervantina consider that the leadership at their school is reasonably horizontal since, as professionals, they have choices in what they teach and are also able to distribute some of that choice to the students themselves as they many times determine together what is taught. These teachers also deem that the administrators are always available should they need anything and they also feel free to openly voice their opinions. Teachers in the upper school feel that

they have a lot of professional freedom to determine student needs and to control their work environment. They also feel that they can speak directly with the principal:

Leadership at the elementary school is more vertical, at the upper school, it's more horizontal. Here a teacher has a lot more freedom. I can go straight to the principal with an issue and not feel that I am going over other people's head. Our principal is very organized and promotes teachers' creativity.
(Cervantina new teacher)

Furthermore, teachers don't feel like they are being overly controlled and share what they are doing with their colleagues: "The principal is very supportive and open, not a micromanager. It creates an environment where teachers share what we are doing, and enjoy other people's talents and triumphs" (Cervantina veteran teacher 3).

Cervantina's principal believes that teachers' creativity and personal involvement in the instructional process encourages students to work harder. If she knows that a teacher has a certain expertise, she will support that individual as she/he takes advantage of that skill in their classroom, especially as it encourages student creativity. Some teachers believe that exercising their imagination in lessons makes them better teachers. When they feel personally attached to a certain project, they contribute more time and energy to it which may also stimulate student investment and creativity.

The principal is very organized and open-minded. She once told me that as long as you follow the program and the students are learning, be creative and do your own thing. That was the first time I was ever told that by a principal.
(Cervantina new teacher)

Teachers also mention how the principal creates a favorable workplace by allowing teachers to take personal leave for special family occasions as long as they identify proper substitutes to take their place during their absence. Teachers appreciate that planning, teacher, and parent conferences usually end at the regular dismissal time of

1:45pm. Low salaries are common in the Dominican Republic, as are second and third jobs. Therefore, teachers are only expected to fulfill the responsibilities of their class schedule. Teachers also comment that there is a comfortable working environment and very little gossip among the staff.

At Cervantina, the professional growth of teachers is strongly encouraged (e.g. through staff development opportunities and advocating for creativity). The distributive leadership structure (Elmore, 2000) at the school includes the principal, a general academic coordinator, several subject area coordinators, and the teachers. The general academic coordinator has responsibilities similar to an assistant principal in a United States school and the subject area coordinators are similar to department heads. In her role as teacher supervisor, the general academic coordinator focuses on teachers' classroom management and teaching strategies while leaving the quality of the content to subject area coordinators in each case. The general academic coordinator also attends meetings with the teachers, the counselors, and if necessary, the parents, when there are discipline or other student problems. Although she can understand English in writing, this person does not speak English, which puts her at a disadvantage when observing English classes or when reviewing these lesson plans or semester exams. Each subject area has a coordinator who also teaches in that subject area. The position entails a few more responsibilities than classroom teachers have. These responsibilities include observing their fellow teachers, attending coordination meetings and typically more conferences with parents as well as extra time spent on textbook selection as well as more involvement in decision making. These individuals sometimes have a reduced class schedule to meet their additional obligations, but they are compensated at the same salary

rate as their fellow teachers. In an attempt to maintain equitable work loads, and as dictated by different circumstances, coordinator duties may rotate among the teachers in each department. With sporadic coordinator changes, today's supervisor can easily be tomorrow's supervisee. Even though coordinators observe their fellow teachers' classes, there is no official form to document the observation. They have a feedback meeting with the teacher observed. This is done in order to reduce teachers' perceptions that they are being judged.

All of the school's leaders are Dominican with Dominican educations, and they all participate in evaluating teachers' work. Each teacher's end-of-year evaluation includes the opinions of the principal, the academic coordinator, the school counselors, the corresponding subject area coordinator, and a sample of students, as well as their own self evaluation. These evaluations scores are composed of 30% for their participation and institutional commitment (10% for their subject area and 20% for the entire school), 50% for the quality of their teaching (which includes their classroom practice, the systematicity of their practice, and their lesson plans). During the month of May all teachers are evaluated by students. The academic coordinator decides which 3 classes will evaluate each teacher. The averages of these perceptions constitute 20% of each teacher's end-of-year evaluation.

When talking to Cervantina teachers, one gets the impression that they feel vested in the school and understand that their input is valued. Instructors and administrators at Cervantina practice distributive leadership (Elmore, 2000). The principal encourages teachers to think for themselves, as she considers it important to engage teachers in their work so they feel empowered and free to choose their content, teaching style, and other

details of their daily work. Consequently, at Cervantina, the individual English teachers adapt the content of their class according to student needs, the specific groups' interests, and their own knowledge and available materials.

Supervision in the Specific Case of the English Department

Even though the school's English coordinator is a native Dominican, he learned English as a youth when he lived in the United States. Part of his university education was done in New York City as well. The English coordinator appears to be a hard working man who often takes work home. He also coordinates and teaches some English classes in the afternoon at the school and, on most days, his schedule keeps him on campus until around 5:00pm. In addition to teaching his classes, the English coordinator must oversee the work of the other English teachers. He must ensure that each English class has a teacher and otherwise find an appropriate substitute (this is usually done by using other teachers' free periods). Once or twice each semester he also observes the English teachers in class in order to possibly suggest improvements. He coordinates the weekly English team meetings and also must approve each English end of semester test. His students also believe him to be good teacher:

Mi profesor de inglés es el mejor profesor que yo he tenido. El explica hasta que todo el mundo entiende. Algunos profesores, cuando uno no entiende, siguen con su clase y como que no escuchan a uno. El explica bien, para que uno entienda. El te da consejos para escuchar y entender mejor y para seguirle la lógica al cuento. [My current teacher is the best English teacher I've ever had. He explains deeply and well and until we all understand. Some teachers when you don't understand, they just continue on with the class, they don't seem to listen to you. He explains well, so that you can understand, he gives you advice so that you can better listen and understand and follow the story's logic]. (Cervantina female 10th-grade advanced student 8)

Contrary to the more open and distributive leadership style of the school's principal, the leadership style of the English coordinator is that he makes some decisions unilaterally without asking for input from his team. He often finds this to be a necessary *modus operandi* as he is sometimes faced with deadlines without necessarily any help from the other English teachers. For example, at different testing occasions, he single handedly compiled the leveling tests given to the different groups. The other teachers are expected to proctor and correct these tests. The English coordinator claims that he has become more hands on and more involved in other teachers' test preparation in order to ensure quality. Additionally, several teachers mentioned that they have on occasion presented articles written by their students for publication in the "English Corner" section of the school newspaper. Nevertheless, the coordinator chooses what is important and writes the column himself for each publication.

Even though the English coordinator seemed to set out directions clearly and expect compliance, he seemed to invest much of his time on office work, meetings and other responsibilities as opposed to observing his teachers more directly. As a result, several of the English classes observed might have lacked some organization or planning. Glickman et al (1998) point out how classroom observations aid teachers to improve their classroom practice by the observer simply serving as a descriptive mirror which helps the instructor see themselves in a different light.

Schools, because of their service-oriented nature, have a strong dependence on staff members' individual responsibility, initiative, and constant intercommunication. Nevertheless, and despite modern advances in technology, management, and leadership theory, the techniques, materials, strategies, content and especially the power structures

existent in today's classrooms are remarkably similar to those employed 100 years ago (Conley, 1991). Teachers' authority in schools is usually limited to instruction in their own classroom. In contrast to the more typical vertical hierarchy seen in many schools, Cervantina has a supportive, horizontal organizational culture and a distributive leadership structure. Demonstrating distributive leadership qualities, Cervantina's principal has put forth a concerted effort to be transparent, inclusive, and forthright in her goal setting. It is clear to all that the school's goals are developed through a participative process. Nevertheless, it is a good idea for supervisors to also make time from their busy office work in order to meet with and observe their teachers (Glickman, et al, 1998).

Priority and Time Given to English Language Learning

As previously stated, the amount of time dedicated to the English language curriculum is a great indicator of the type of language program that the school can offer. At Cervantina English is taught as a subject, and is worth five credits in some grades and four in others, depending on their scheduling constraints.

Because the school has a large number of students, three groups at each grade level, it is able to reshuffle them for certain classes each day. Both foreign language classes- English and French- are taught with students separated by language level. For both of these languages, students are separated into basic, intermediate, and advanced. Out of a school week consisting of 35 class periods lasting 45 minutes each, students generally have two periods of French, while they have five class periods of English per week (French as well as English are required by the SEE for all students from fifth-grade up). As can be observed, however, at Cervantina English is given a much higher priority than French. The English coordinator, for example was quoted in the school year book:

“We have to make an effort to learn and use English daily in our environment, taking into account that English is the language that is spoken by more people all around the world” (Cervantina English coordinator). A student was quoted during an interview: “They give English a high priority- five credits, the same credits and importance as math or history. French only has two credits. You have enough time that way in order to learn” (Cervantina male 10th-grade intermediate student 9).

Based on an apparent increased interest among Cervantina graduates to go to college in the United States, additional sections of English have been added to the afternoon schedule. The English coordinator assumes that there are at present several possible explanations for this increased interest. There could possibly be more opportunities for scholarships for undergraduate students. Students could also be encouraged by their classmates leaving and decide to also go through the application process. In order to aid students in this process, Cervantina has begun to offer an afternoon class that helps students to prepare for taking the TOEFL. These classes are taught to groups of fifteen to twenty 11th and 12th-grade students on average, for ten week periods, two days a week, for two hours each time. Students at Cervantina believe that their morning program is effective in teaching them English:

I think the program in Cervantina is really good. Sometimes when I talk to my friends in English they ask if I’m in a bilingual school. Because of my way of speaking they can’t believe that I’m in a Spanish school. That’s a great achievement in this school that you speak with fluency and you can learn it easily and without complications. (Cervantina female 10th-grade advanced student 8)

Some groups have a total of three and some four class periods of English per week. The program is organized in such a way that many times two English classes are

scheduled consecutively into a ninety minute block. Because of the double periods, most groups end up only having English twice a week and usually only have homework one of those days. It seems, based on classroom observations, that when there are two of these longer periods per week, it becomes tiring and boring to the students. “Two periods together is boring and tiring, one day with a long class is OK but not two” (Cervantina female 9th-grade advanced student 16). These long periods also result in teachers having to give students the last fifteen or so minutes of class as free time since they are too tired by this point to be productive.

A language class’ success, like that of any other subject area, will depend on many elements. One very important ingredient in language learning will be the time that students have to dedicate to such classes. Because Cervantina’s main focus is Spanish, all courses including English language have similar weight and focus. Organizational priorities are often reflected in the resources dedicated to them. Cervantina has just that type of alignment between its values and its structures. The English language curriculum is of course a priority that must be balanced against the host of others. In that context, teachers and students put forth their best effort to achieve proficiency given the limitations of time

Resources

Campus

The school is approximately 6,000 square meters in size. That is roughly half the size of Imersão. The first sights upon arrival are the basketball and volleyball courts where students are usually having physical education classes or playing during recess. All soccer practices and competitions take place in the afternoons and on Saturdays. The

students use the fields in a nearby university for practice, because there are no fields at the school. At the end of the field is the main office which is crowded with trophies won by the soccer and other teams. Behind this office is a large teacher's room divided into cubicles to allow each teacher an independent working space.

Classrooms are moderately sized, about 500 square feet each, which is about a third smaller than those at Imersão. Every room has windows on one or two sides that are mostly open since fans air the rooms. Several rooms that are directly surrounded by the yards are air-conditioned in order to somewhat reduce the level of noise coming from the outside.

The walls in the classrooms are bare. Most rooms have a map and an empty bulletin board, some rooms have a television and VCR hanging on a corner wall. There is no culture of decorated walls or showcasing student work at the school. There are no specific classrooms for specific subjects. The teachers and the students change among the different rooms throughout the day. Therefore, teachers are apprehensive to hang anything on the classroom walls, especially student work, for they do not want other students tearing them off. The art teachers are in charge of decorating and selecting what is hung on the hallway bulletin boards. These boards had brightly colored two and three-dimensional drawings and sculptures made by the students.

The school is cheerful and inviting. As is the case in many Dominican schools, the teachers and students both rotate between classrooms. As a result, no one teacher or group of students feels that a certain classroom is their personal space. The students all spill out into the yards for their recess where they sit around picnic tables, buy food in the cafeteria, or practice some sport.

Teacher Preparation and Competency

Cervantina's English department is made up of four teachers, one of which is also the department's coordinator. As explained earlier, at present, the school has a total of 18 groups. This results in two of the English teachers having a total of five groups each and two of them having four groups each. Substitutions are facilitated by the fact there are only three simultaneous English classes and four teachers. These teachers' schedules provide a few planning periods each day which gives them time for meetings and corrections. Teachers still assert that they are very busy with corrections, planning, making photo copies, and other tasks. Furthermore, with each one of those groups consisting of around 27 students, each teacher is responsible for the learning of about 120 students.

The English teachers seem to get along and work well as a team, helping each other out in their daily work and having periodic meetings to discuss the program, assignments, specific students or issues, and teaching strategies. The English team meets for at least 30 minute every Thursday. These meetings are mostly informative where teachers are notified about new policies and procedures. Sometimes English teachers discuss what is happening in their classes (e.g. a teaching strategy that worked especially well for a certain teacher, some specific difficulties that a teacher might be having with a student, or some issue that a teacher would like the team to suggest solutions for). Teachers get along well and try to be available to lend their colleagues a helping hand whenever necessary. For example, one English teacher who had problems getting organized greatly benefited from the close help provided by a colleague who visited his

class and gave him advice on teaching methods, lesson planning, and organizational strategies.

In all cases, the English teachers' first language is Spanish, and they learned English as a second language while living in English-speaking environments. As second language speakers, some of the teachers at the school might need refresher courses on English grammar and pronunciation. On occasion they make grammatical mistakes orally and in writing:

- ...The point is to arise [sic] our interest so that we will want to look up more information when we leave here. (Cervantina new teacher)
- We [sic] always in meetings. We discuss what we are doing, and how they [sic] progressing and all that. (Cervantina veteran teacher1)
- Where were they on their way [sic]? What store they were looking for? (Cervantina veteran teacher 2)

Teachers are encouraged to attend professional development courses in order to keep their knowledge up to date. The school pays for a percentage of all such courses. Some staff members take advantage of this opportunity to pursue advanced degrees. The teachers from the English department however, admit that there are not very many opportunities to attend quality programs that are relevant for them. Annually, one of the English institutes sponsors a teaching conference for ESL teachers. There are also a few workshops that are offered by publishing companies. While the study was being conducted, three out of the four English teachers were immersed in an online, three-month course from a university in Spain that has a partnership with a Dominican book publisher. The topics varied from leadership to teamwork. This was the first time in at least four years that any of these teachers had signed up for any professional development courses.

The teachers at Cervantina lower school have comparable training. One teacher has a bachelor's in marketing and the pedagogical degree offered by the SEE, and fifteen years of teaching experience. One recently finished her bachelor's in psychology and has four years of teaching experience, one has a bachelor's in economics, and is new to teaching, and one is currently finishing a degree in industrial engineering, and has only taught for two years. The coordinator studied elementary education and later completed a one year post baccalaureate degree in the teaching of English and supervision and has taught for ten years. Their English backgrounds are also diverse. Three of the current teachers studied in Dominican all-English schools or learned English at an afternoon institute; one also went to the United States for specialized courses in pronunciation, one of the teachers graduated from Cervantina and also studied English in the afternoons, and the other two lived in the United States during their childhood and youth and hence went to schools all in English.

Teachers also have a sociable relationship with students. Rapport with the teachers seems to be very important to students and they mentioned specific instances when they thought that the relationships between students and teachers were improved when the English teachers gave them an opportunity to do things that they enjoy during the class period (e.g. watching a popular U.S. TV show or having a shared snack out in the yard). Students also notice the use of appropriate teaching strategies. They believe that for the most part, their English classes are interactive and interesting and this appeals to them.

Students believe their teachers to be knowledgeable and their classes to be well taught. Even those students that admit to not paying attention in class but still attested to

their teachers' high quality: SP "Classes have been very interesting. They give very good grammar classes, even though I do not take advantage of them" (Cervantina male 10th-grade basic student 10). Students value what is happening in the classroom- they consider that their English classes are useful, their program is of high-quality, and their teachers are well prepared: "English is very important here at the school. They try to be the best, I believe that this school has one of the best English programs of morning schools" (Cervantina male 10th-grade intermediate student 9). Another student also adds: "This program is the best English class I have known as far as teaching me" (Cervantina female 10th-grade advanced student 8).

Additionally, Cervantina's students also believe their upper school teachers to be better prepared than those they had in elementary school or in their afternoon programs. Students also believe that their English teachers have a good foundation in English and speak the language correctly, albeit with minor grammatical mistakes.

Despite the fact that Cervantina's English teachers do not have formal training in pedagogy or in ESL, these individuals seem to be achieving the goal of teaching these students English. Most of the students are excited to participate in their English classes and feel that they are learning. Teachers also keep a good rapport with each other as well as with their students.

Size of Program / Class Size

Even though students are mostly respectful of their teachers, discipline was found to be somewhat of an issue at both campuses of this school, mostly because of the large number of students per class, on average around 27 in high school and 25 in elementary. Students often comment that the English program is interesting and the grammar

instruction is very good, but they unfortunately don't pay attention or complete their assignments. Students also often arrive late to class. During student presentations, some students were observed having unrelated conversations or working on material from other subjects.

- *El programa de inglés es interesante pero yo no presto atención. Las clases de gramática son muy buenas pero yo no las aprovecho.* [The English program is interesting but I don't pay attention. The grammar instruction is very good, but I don't take advantage of it]. (Cervantina male 10th-grade basic student 10)

- *Si uno aprende o no depende del tema, de como se enseñe la clase, y a veces de como los estudiantes difíciles se sientan esa semana, a veces estan en humor de aprender y a veces quieren perder tiempo y si el resto de la clase aprende o no a veces depende de ellos.* [Whether we learn or not depends on the topic, how the class is taught and often on how the problem students feel that week, sometimes they are in mood to learn and sometimes they want to lose time and whether the class learns sometimes depends on them]. (Cervantina male 10th-grade basic student 11)

School counselors also participate in overseeing student- teacher relationships.

Whenever a student is having difficulties with academics or behavior, the teachers ask the counselors to call the parents and a meeting is held with them, the teacher, and the coordinator or counselor. On average, the English teachers might require around three or four of these meetings per group taught per year. As a private school, this institution has the prerogative of accepting and dismissing students as its authorities see fit. When students have excessive absences, bad grades, or misconduct, they know that they can be suspended or even permanently dismissed (Cervantina, 2001). One teacher acknowledged that this fear of dismissal keeps her worst students in check and somewhat motivated to complete some of their assignments and not to completely disrupt the class.

As mentioned before, Cervantina has a separate elementary school. At this campus a lot of English class time also seems to be wasted. When students do not have

homework, their books remain in the classroom. English teachers usually spend the first 15 minutes of the class handing out students' books or checking that the students completed the homework if they did have an assignment to complete before the class. This leaves only about 30 minutes for class work. When the class is scheduled immediately after recess, physical education, or any other class that takes place outside the regular classroom, students are late returning to their room. As a result, class can be delayed for as much as 15 minutes. Consequently, lessons that lasted as little as 17 minutes were observed.

As explained earlier, the classrooms are scattered across several acres of gardens. In certain occasions the students, as opposed to the teacher, need to change classrooms for their English class. On these instances, especially when it is 1st and 2nd-grade, class change can take up to ten minutes. These young children were observed walking slowly, especially while lined up and following their teacher. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the English teachers have to go pick up and drop off the students from these levels. Apparently in an attempt to diminish the waste of time that results from constant class changes, many of the English classes are scheduled back to back. When teachers have one of these double periods, however, it is common to observe that about 15 minutes before the class period is over the students are mostly finished with their work responsibilities. Teachers use this time mostly for collecting students' papers, looking at their daily planners, and having students put the classroom in order for their next class. Additionally, in the classes observed, there were many instances, like the example below, of students misbehaving and teachers having to spend precious class time with discipline.

- Teacher: "Class, quiet please, Mary, stop eating in the classroom."
- Mary: "I'm sorry everyone's eating too."

- Students Chattering...minutes go by
- Teacher: "Ten minutes you guys blew away, ten minutes." (Students quiet down and class begins).

As was stated earlier in the section in reference to the number of class periods dedicated to English instruction, time is one of the most precious components in the structure of a class. Cervantina is attempting to strike a balance between classes being long enough for lessons to be completed and short enough to maintain students' attention. It also struggles with fulfilling an English curriculum while also contending with lapses in student discipline.

Student Background

High school students admit to not having much of a reading habit (in English or Spanish). The school's library was recently remodeled so that it became a reading room with large windows and plenty of comfortable seating areas. The room also has four computers connected to the Internet, magazines, newspapers, and reference materials. Teachers, and especially substitutes, frequently use the library to give classes. When a student wants to borrow a book, she/he inquires about a topic and one of the two librarians finds the relevant book in the stacks (which are locked away in a separate room). Only a handful of these available books are in English (they are mostly old textbooks and some fiction). The librarian admitted that in a school of over 450 students, at any given time, there are about 150 books borrowed and out of the library (and only a handful of these are in English). One of the veteran teachers commented: "Dominicans don't like to read, they don't have the habit, and I really believe that reading helps them, especially in their English class, they learn new vocabulary and the new language as a whole".

Beginning with the youngest students, there is an increasing effort to improve that situation. The elementary school's library is used year round for most subjects, but only rarely for English. The library has around 4,500 books that are loaned mostly to students from 3rd to 6th-grade. Each student is allowed up to 4 books for up to two weeks depending on how many books she/he have taken out. On a given day, a little over 200 books were out on loan to students. The elementary school library also has around 200 books in English. The English teachers sporadically take their students to the library to conduct activities or read these books. Nevertheless, most library activities take place in Spanish. Each grade goes to the library once a week with their teacher and at those times most students take out a book or two. At these times, the teacher and librarian work together to carry out activities that encourage reading. Some such activities are guest readers, lectures by authors of children's book, story time, and dictionary activities. For example, during the current school year the librarian organized several lectures by Dominican authors to encourage students to participate in the literary contest.

The elementary school staff works hard to emphasize the social sciences. For example, for the last two years, the staff has held a book club with 5th and 6th-graders. Once a week, during their library period, classes are divided in half. On the first week one of the groups works with their classroom teacher, the other with the librarian, and vice versa. While in these smaller groups, they are able to discuss a chapter of the book in question. The librarian does not give the students a grade; their teacher includes their participation in the book club as part of their Spanish language grade. Both of them strive so that students consider the book club, and reading in general, a fun activity. The reading club is sponsored by a book publisher. The company sells students the books at

reduced prices. In this fashion, each student read five novels in Spanish during the 2005-2006 school year.

The school also holds a literary contest in Spanish where students participate by writing a short story, poem, or anecdote. The contest is open to all students from 3rd to 6th-grade. In category A, where 3rd and 4th-graders competed, the most common entries were stories, and in category B, the 5th and 6th-grade students wrote mostly poems. There were no entries for this contest in English.

At Cervantina, school responsibilities seem to be limited to what takes place from 7:45 am to 1:45 pm. Part of this way of thinking seems to imply not encouraging lesson plans or corrections outside of school hours. This also seems to result in not much of a culture of homework or extra work assigned to students. Teachers have after-school responsibilities that are unrelated to the school (e.g. family, second job, university classes). Hence, teachers are also able to have other forms of employment after school hours.

Furthermore, circumstantial and historical occurrences at the school have also influenced its English program. The elementary school has a very unique history. The school was founded by its current owner in 1972. Cervantina's principal was raised in a multicultural household, with a Dominican father and European mother. At the time, English was not valued in the Dominican Republic as important for students' knowledge. Nevertheless, the principal's cosmopolitan view of education was complemented by several Cuban Jewish founding families who also believed that English was important for their children's education.

Similarly, the upper school's first English teacher was a Dominican who had studied for a brief period in the United States. She was very emphatic and spoke with correct pronunciation. Hence, from its inception, the English program at Cervantina strived for excellence. For several years this teacher worked hard to organize the program and hire well-prepared teachers. Upon her departure and after several years of struggle to find qualified teachers, the school subcontracted its English classes to an English institute. This institution was chosen because it is the oldest and at the time was also the most well-known English institute in the country. Teachers from the institute's afternoon programs would then teach at Cervantina during the morning hours. In 1983-84 the person who directed the English program at the institute changed jobs and went to work for a local university. The school then decided to change its contract from the English institute to the university. Ten years later, the administrators at Cervantina were convinced that they were as capable as the university to hire similarly qualified English teachers, at a significant savings of funds. They hence decided to terminate the contract and manage their own English program. At this point, many of the same teachers stayed on the staff to teach English at the school. From 1994 to 2000, the school again enjoyed a quality, well-renowned program for the teaching of the foreign language.

Cervantina's English coordinator was offered a government job in 2000. The principal admitted that the following 5 years were ones of crisis and transition for the English program at the school. During that time, there were several young and inexperienced teachers in the English department. Because they changed often some students saw up to five different teachers in one school year. The principal also admits that they are currently, slowly improving beginning "only days ago" (Cervantina high

school principal). In 2001, the school had 2 native English speakers and 3 Dominicans and every year since all of their teachers have learned English as a second or foreign language. The English department has since enjoyed a fairly steady workforce. The new teacher who has been there the longest started in 2002. The English coordinator started in 2004, and the teacher who started in 1994 has been there on and off. One teacher is new this year but she had taught for three years at Cervantina's elementary school.

As can be seen in this section, schooling and learning are an amalgamation of component features. These can be internal, external, as directly tied to an institution as its history, or as out of its control as students' reading habits. Cervantina has made the most of these circumstances and its English program continues to adapt and strive for excellence.

Substance

Pedagogical Approach

Cervantina's English program's goal is to ensure that students are proficient enough to speak the foreign language; so that upon graduation, they may be prepared to take the TOEFL, the SAT, or any other similar English language or college entrance examination that they may need to take. This is done by separating students in groups according to their level of knowledge in the foreign language.

All students take the leveling test in order to be placed in one of three levels - basic, intermediate, and advanced. The test has historically been given at the beginning of the school year. The leveling test does not count towards students' grades, and so sometimes students admit to not answering it earnestly: "The leveling test is not graded, and so I did not take it seriously" (Cervantina male 10th-grade basic student 10). Those

students might end up in an English level below their capabilities. Students might also sometimes purposefully try to be in a certain level in order to be with their friends. This school year the process was changed as the English coordinator decided that it would be advantageous to give students the leveling test as their end-of-year test in order to have it count for their grades to see if it can more truthfully represent their real knowledge level. All students who are new to the school are also given a leveling test upon arrival.

In the case of upcoming 7th-graders, three English teachers from the upper school went to Cervantina elementary in late May and tested all 6th-grade students to determine their English level upon arrival at the upper school next school year. Once they finish the school year, these upcoming 7th-graders who come from Cervantina elementary school will also have a record of their grades and a student profile that is written by their 6th-grade teacher. The information on these profiles might also be used in the decision making process when deciding what English level these students should be in. Based on this profile, the student's previous grades as well as the grade on the leveling test, the student might be approached in order to recommend her/him for a higher level. Teachers then try to motivate these students to work harder and meet their potential by accepting the more challenging higher English level.

Testing duties are divided equally among the English teachers and each individual corrects the tests that she/he proctors. If upon correction, some tests do not clearly place students in one of the levels, then the team of teachers gets together to discuss those individuals' placement. Students are split up into levels according to their results on these tests. If there are too many students in one level or another, teachers will use their

discretion to re-classify those with similar test grades into different levels according to their previous performance at the school.

Even though most students come from Cervantina elementary school, about thirty-two percent come from other schools across the city. The general belief among teachers and students in elementary and high school is that the students who studied at Cervantina elementary school generally make up the intermediate level of English when they reach the 7th-grade; the advanced level is made up of students coming from all English schools and those in the basic level usually learned English in other all-Spanish schools. The administration was very interested in learning if indeed there was a pattern to the make-up of the different English levels. To this end, they conducted a survey of students' English language abilities (see appendix H). Because the survey had not been tallied, a similar survey with some added questions was conducted for the purposes of the present study (see appendix G). Despite the prevalence of afternoon programs and the students who come from English schools, the survey showed that 47 percent of Cervantina's students believe that most of the English that they know they learned at the school.

Each teacher gets different class assignments based on her/his skills and preferences. Teachers are given their class assignments by the subject area coordinator during the pre-planning period in August. In previous years, this was done without knowing which students would be in each group, but since the tests in 2005- 2006 were given at the end of the school year, the group planning will now include student allocation. Because the leadership style at the school encourages it, once assigned their groups, teachers often adapt their lessons to fit the students' specific needs and even the

teachers' personal preferences. In order to determine the specific goals of each class, teachers declare that they must take the time to get know each group, to see what they need:

We have weekly meetings in which talk about these kinds of things and during the first two weeks we really observe and test the kids to see what each group needs. Despite the fact that we have a book and the book has a program, you have to answer to the kids' needs, some groups had to change their books, and some groups are working with different parts from different programs.
(Cervantina veteran teacher 3)

However, what changes in most cases are the teaching strategies and not so much the content. Teachers change "the how" not "the what" they teach. They also change the time given to a topic. If a topic seems below the students' level, they eliminate it.

Similarly, at Cervantina's elementary school the overall goal of the English class is helping students to communicate in English. "Our goal is for the students to learn to communicate in English but not necessarily to be bilingual.... We do not have specific goals separated by grade level, it's more of a holistic process" (Cervantina elementary, English coordinator). This is not an impossible goal, but she admits that the program results in only a few of their students becoming bilingual. Some of the teachers also mentioned that basically the same general topics are taught at each grade-level, with different levels of difficulty. Teachers simply call attention to what they believe that students need to emphasize more in each case. Each year, they mostly emphasize writing, oral communication, and grammar. Class objectives and the lessons themselves are mostly based on the textbooks and teachers tend to follow these texts chapter by chapter in order. "In order to determine our teaching goals, we follow the book that we have at the time" (English coordinator, Cervantina elementary).

At Cervantina's elementary school the teachers ask the students many questions that require them to do simple recall or complete partial sentences. During the English classes students often take turns reading out loud from the textbook or answering specific questions that entail recollection of facts. Classroom activities are simple enough that most students complete the required coursework in about twelve minutes.

Similarly, in preschool, the English teacher works mostly through games, songs, and physical activities in the foreign language. In first-grade, students are required to recognize certain words but not read. Consequently, in the first-grade, students' textbooks contain a lot of cutting, pasting, identifying, and coloring activities. The teachers read the instructions in English and make any required clarifications in Spanish. The students then recognize the word that they are identifying (e.g. blue shirt, purple pants, green hat) and do the required coloring or cutting and pasting. Teachers are prepared with worksheets on similar topics to those in students' textbooks in order to assign more busywork to students who finish their work faster than their classmates. Students were observed to ask each other for crayons and other utensils in Spanish.

By the time the students reach middle and secondary school, however, and as their level of English improves, teachers are able to implement a more communicative approach to teaching the foreign language. Consequently, in Cervantina upper school classes observed included many group activities, student-selected topics, and student oral presentations. Furthermore, the target language was also applied in realistic activities such as reading unedited fiction and non-fiction in stories, reading articles from magazines and newspapers, and later discussing these as well as writing letters for real purposes.

The survey conducted by the researcher showed that 72 percent of Cervantina's students have taken some form of extra curricular class in English. Teachers observe that parents, always concerned about their children learning English, demonstrate this by registering them in afternoon English classes from when they are very young. These same parents also buy toys, music, and DVDs in English to encourage their children to practice the language. Teachers believe that this parent involvement mostly serves to influence student motivation

Students remember their afternoon classes and those in elementary school as being quite similar. Both revolved mostly around grammar practices, from their textbook. These lessons also include some reading comprehension and pronunciation practices that included choral as well as individual repetitions of specific reading material. In high school, English class started to include literature and history in the foreign language.

Several students also sign up for extra afternoon classes right at Cervantina in order to improve their English proficiency. These classes are taught in three sessions per year: one from September to December, one January to March, and one April to June. The teachers who work in the morning language program do not also teach these afternoon groups. This study did not look at the effect of this afternoon program as most of the students who attend these classes are not Cervantina students. However, on one occasion this school year, a group of Cervantina students had a special set of needs and they asked their teacher to create one such section in the afternoon for them. As such, the group took advantage of the extra time twice a week for six weeks to follow up on what they were working on in the mornings.

Curriculum

At Cervantina, the English as a foreign language program is currently taught through a literature-based curriculum that emphasizes excerpts of authentic American literature. The English coordinator points out that the English program currently in use at the school has been in place for around four years. It was updated with the new subject matter coordinator who chose to change the previous grammar-based approach in order to “emphasize on reading excerpts of American literature. We wanted to find a program that gave the kids the opportunity to develop a passion for reading in order to facilitate learning” (Cervantina upper school, English coordinator).

The curriculum, however, seems to be extensively linked to the textbooks. For the most part, teachers at Cervantina do not consistently plan their lessons. The Dominican ministry of education has inspectors who sporadically visit all schools, public and private. In the case of lesson plans, they usually ask to see unit plans and certain sample lessons from each teacher. In order to fulfill these requirements, there is a system in place whereby teachers turn in their lesson plans to the academic coordinator. She expects teachers to turn in a general plan for the entire school year, plus a sample unit at the beginning of the school year, and she also randomly asks for other units later in the year (usually one in November and one in February). The academic coordinator admits that outside of these minimum requirements, the English department teachers rarely turn in their lesson plans.

Since teachers do not have formal pedagogical training, they find the task of lesson planning even harder. Most teachers seem very reluctant to write formal lesson plans. Some have a notebook with descriptions of what their lessons will look like. Most

teachers just seem to keep an idea in their head of what they plan to teach and some notes of what goes on in their classrooms. Additionally, the general coordinator feels that even though teachers in other subject areas write objectives in their lesson plans, English teachers mostly develop content that comes directly from the textbooks. One such general plan for the school year for 7th-grade lists the content exactly in the same order as the scope and sequence from the introductory section of the textbook. The teacher's lesson plan as well as the introduction in the book are identical and as follows:

Vocabulary: antonyms, synonyms
Reading strategies: preview, draw conclusions;
Grammar: articles, present tense, regular and irregular verbs, adjectives;
Writing: writing a personal narrative.
(7th-grade yearly plan; Chamot, Hartmann, and Huizenga 1999, pp. 16-17).

Other English yearly plans at the school include an ambiguous explanation of how students are to be evaluated. The theme lesson plans examined by the researcher were vague and disorganized. In the case of English classes, there were very few daily lesson plans. In certain classes teachers were observed to clearly be improvising their lessons. In one case, when a teacher was absent for several days in a row, the substitute English teacher simply did some grammar exercises that he assumed were relevant at the time. Upon her return, the absent teacher then had to continue her lesson where she had left off two weeks earlier. Moreover, one of the English teachers admitted to not planning lessons because she often has to change what she intends to teach and because she does not like the format of the planning document used at the school: "The smallest plan I've written, I have had to change it" (Cervantina new teacher).

Additionally, each English teacher ideally writes the general principles that will guide their general plans for the school year based on the agreed upon set of

competencies. In practice, the textbook's units actually guide the separation of the content of the plan. These units are built around a story. The teachers are guided by the book to specify the vocabulary, reading, grammar, writing, and oral topics that will be taught during each time period. "Problems of rigor ensue because teachers do not clearly articulate their teaching objectives" (Cervantina, curriculum coordinator). The competencies consultant went as far as to suggest that the school might be well served by having an official format for lesson planning that is used by all teachers throughout the school. Following is an excerpt from a month's lesson plan for 8th-grade, advanced.

Figure 6 – Cervantina - Lesson Plan, 8th-grade, advanced.

Topics	Black history month and Voice of freedom
Subtopics	Martin Luther King Jr's "I have a dream speech"; Civil rights Movement; The Statue of Liberty; Declaration of Independence.
Reading	Vocabulary, text types, metaphors
Grammar	Present perfect
Writing	Outlining, Essay
Listening and Speaking	Speech, poetry, main ideas and details.
Activities	Scan the reading for unknown vocabulary
	Read the text, give participation to all students
	Critical thinking questions on the reading
	Page T91 discuss the theme
	Quick write changing to Dominican reality
	Oral presentation
	Discussion

Some students really enjoy and have benefited from the new literature-based program and others find it objectionable:

- *En las clases del colegio yo no creo que he aprendido nada, lo que se, lo aprendí en las clases de la tarde. En el colegio lo que parece es que las clases son para cumplir con el programa. [At the school I think I have not learned anything, what I learned was during the afternoon program. At school it seems that the program is to fulfill a requirement].* (Cervantina female 10th-grade intermediate student 12)

- *Nosotros leemos una historia en clase (yo me duermo), entonces ella hace preguntas sobre gramática y yo me reintegro a la clase, pero nunca aprendo nada y me quemo en los exámenes.* [We read a story in class (I sleep), then she asks questions about grammar and I reintegrate myself into the class, but I never

learn anything and then I fail the exams]. (Cervantina male 10th-grade basic student 10)

- *El libro de inglés tiene algunas lecturas interesantes. Por ejemplo, una vez aprendimos sobre diagramas de VENN y otro día sobre mapas conceptuales.* [The English book has some interesting readings. For example one time we learned about VENN diagrams and another one about concept maps] (Cervantina male 10th-grade advanced student 11)

- *Los profesores son buenos y fáciles de entender. La clase de ahora con literatura me ha ayudado a aprender mucho vocabulario, a mejorar mi inglés escrito y la comprensión de la lectura. Este programa es el mejor de todos los que yo he estado en cuanto a enseñarme.... Yo he estado en dos programas distintos por las tardes por tres años cada uno.* [Teachers are good; it's easy to understand them. The present class with literature has helped me to acquire a lot of vocabulary, to improve my writing and reading comprehension. This program is the best of all the programs I have had as far as teaching me... I have been in two different afternoon programs for three years each]. (Cervantina female 10th-grade advanced student 8)

Cervantina's program also includes extracurricular classes during the school day.

For these classes, students are separated by level or by interests. The school has three groups at each level from seventh through twelfth-grades. Both foreign language classes- English and French- are taught with students separated by levels. Once a week students also have artistic appreciation. For this two-hour period, they are separated so that some students take visual arts, others music, and others theatre. When making the schedules at the beginning of the school year, the academic coordinator chooses how to separate 7th and 8th-grade students into one of these classes. After 9th-grade, students are allowed to choose which one of these they prefer so that students with aptitudes in visual arts, music, or theatre can grow in that aspect. In theatre class, students work with their instructor on oratory and this helps students to lose their stage fright. There is always a production put together by these students at the end of each semester. In art classes they usually learn different techniques for painting, or even how to use Adobe Photoshop, and complete a

final project. Music appreciation might include playing in a small band, reading music, or singing in the chorus.

At Cervantina, the English coordinator has added to the creative curriculum through a partnership with a public school. As a part of students' mandatory social service, six 11th-graders are carpooled to a public school twice a week in order to teach English to 5th-graders. This is a very interesting project as the students are responsible for planning the classes, teaching them, and evaluating students.

Class Content

Choice of Texts

The texts currently in use for Cervantina's English as a foreign language program are Pearson Longman's *Shinning Star* in 7th and 8th-grade and Holt's *Elements of Literature*¹ in high school. Some teachers mentioned that they preferred the textbooks used in 7th and 8th-grade that incorporate the teachers' extra materials, such as teaching guides, grammar explanations, and practices. Beginning in 9th-grade, however, because of the high cost of textbooks, the coordinator was forced to assign Holt's Interactive Work Texts as the main textbook for most classes. These workbooks have some short stories and grammar exercises that are linked to them but they are two-toned as opposed to full color.

Because the 7th and 8th-graders use a regular textbook, the students and teachers themselves complain about the change to the different format and monotone books by high school. Furthermore, the books do not include many grammar explanations and teachers are then often forced to make photocopies or have students copy these clarifications from the board. The teachers do have available to them the extra materials from the publishing companies, but they find it harder to incorporate them into the

classes since lessons were not originally designed to be taught exclusively from the work texts. Furthermore, these texts were designed for English as second language learners not English as foreign language students. One teacher suggested that they should be using a textbook series designed specifically for foreign language learners.

Some students like the new “all literature” program while others do not. With the new method, some students believe that the vocabulary is easier to remember because it is applied to a storyline. During English classes and regardless of the level, there were frequent casual conversations based on subject matter (usually the literature stories) in the target language. Most students seemed eager to comment and participate orally. The change has been good for some: “Our previous book was boring, too many exercises that were the same, but now we have reading comprehension” (Cervantina male 10th-grade advanced student 11). Nevertheless, some students find following the stories somewhat hard while others think that reading stories can be boring at times. “The readings are boring and it’s not a good investment of time to read; where you’re following with your eyes just to know where they are but you’re really not getting it” (Cervantina female 10th-grade intermediate student 12).

Students admit that their English textbooks do not seem like other real life books that they read and that English classes are not really related to other subjects except possibly to an 11th-grade, one-semester course on research. Some students also acknowledge that they prefer when the stories that they read are not science fiction, but rather are based on real characters that are going through situations similar to their lives.

The teacher connects with the students by making the issues in the story similar to what they go through as teenagers. We like it that way. It’s important to us to not do so much grammar, to see more real life, not just the book. Some of the stories are boring; the Martian chronicles had too much

fiction. I like it better when it's more realistic and related to us and to the present time. (Cervantina female 9th-grade advanced student 16).

But ultimately, students and teachers believe that the literature-based approach, by bringing real content to the language class, enriches their vocabulary, and ultimately aids their language learning.

The Day to Day Experience in the Classroom

Research shows that there is variation in the manner in which school staff approach lesson plans. It is not clear that lesson plans result in high student achievement. At many schools, staff develops intricate and complete lesson plans yet significant deficiencies in student achievement persist.

Cervantina's English program has the beginnings of a curricular structure, which is modified regularly by the teachers depending on the students, their learning, and other circumstances. English classes are structured around the stories in the texts. Teachers make an effort to encourage all students to participate, especially in oral practice and answers. Pronunciation is practiced daily through authentic communications. On one occasion, for example, the advanced 12th-grade class was reading a fictional story that debated destiny vs. coincidence:

- Teacher: "What do you believe? Do you believe in coincidence or do you believe that things happen for a purpose?"
- Female student A: "We were born to do something and everything that happens in our life is for a purpose."
- Male student A: "Fate makes no sense to me, because if everything was predetermined then life would have no meaning, and it would be completely effortless. Because if fate stipulates that I am going to be a rich successful banker then I can stop studying. And at the same time if I am destined to be a bum then no matter how hard I work I will be a bum anyways, so what's the point of living?"
- Female student B: "But you don't know if you are going to be a rich."

- Male student A: “You are going to go from point A to point B, no matter what happens because that is your fate, no matter what you do in your life. That makes no sense.”
- Male student B: “I don’t know if fate is true or not, but I believe that people shouldn’t believe in fate, because if you truly believe in it then you would do what he just said and not do anything in life.”
- Female student C: “Maybe things are pre-destined to occur, but it serves no purpose to wait on it.”
- Male student C: “I don’t know how fate could exist. Maybe, like he said, there is the potential for something to happen. Like maybe you are born with some kind of cancer or some other disease, maybe you have the potential to die early, that’s not fate.”

At the elementary school level, during the English classes, the teachers often code switch. Instructions, permissions, and explanations are usually given, or at least repeated, in Spanish. When students ask questions they usually do so in Spanish. On some occasions when the teachers answer students’ questions in English, they also repeat themselves in Spanish for clarity. The following 2nd-grade class illustrates a typical exchange in English class:

- Teacher: “Good morning class.”
- Students are all talking at once.
- Teacher starts to sing a song and the students join her
- Teacher and students together: “Hello, hello, hello, what’s your name how are you today I am Ok, my name is ___ would you like to play. Today is Monday, Monday is reading, all the boys and girls come and have some fun, today is Tuesday....”
- Teacher: “Today we are working with short vowel sounds. Raise your hand if you want to participate. Tell me one word that has the short A sound”
- Student A: “*Cómo?*” [“How?”]
- Student B: “Apple”
- Teacher: “Melissa tell me a word with short I and with short u”
- Student C: “Big, bus”
- ...
- Students are talking and calling out answers all at once. The teacher draws some images on the board and students begin to copy these in their notebooks.
- Students all talking at once
- Teacher: “OK, who can tell me the vowel sound in this image?”
- Student D: “*Seño yo no he terminado todavía*” [“Teacher I am not done copying yet.”]
- Teacher: “What do you see?”

- Student D: "*Lapicero*" ["Pen"]
- Teacher: "In English please."
- ...

In the upper school, however, teachers try to answer all questions in English and students are encouraged to always use English. Obviously, many of the basic and intermediate groups still ask questions in Spanish and teachers sometimes need to clarify details in Spanish as well. Students' background knowledge in Spanish is also used at times to clarify English content

- Veteran teacher: "... Mark tell me about the verbs."
- Male basic student 1: "A verb is an action."
- Female basic student 2: "Teacher, how do you say "*estado*"
- Teacher: "State"
- Female basic student 2: "*No como yo he estado*"
- Veteran teacher: "That's the verb to be - I have been."
- Female basic student 2: "*Pero los verbos no siempre indican acción porque a veces es un estado*" ["But verbs don't always indicate action, because sometimes it's a state."]
- Veteran teacher: "That's a good point. Can anyone name a verb that does not indicate an action?"
- ...
- Veteran teacher: "There is a difference in usage, in how we place adjectives in English and in Spanish, who knows what that difference is?"
- Male basic student 3: "In English we place adjectives before the nouns, in Spanish it's after the noun."
- ...

In most cases, English classes are taught around the stories in the work texts, which some of the teachers and many of the students find somewhat boring: "the teacher himself thinks that the readings are pretty boring for us" (Cervantina female 10th-grade intermediate student 12). English classes follow a predictable pattern. There is often some form of teacher- directed pre-reading activities, usually a conversation about the story, the setting, or the characters. Next, students usually read the material once to themselves to find any unknown words, once out loud to practice their pronunciation, and sometimes

once more while listening to an audio recording of it. While the students are reading, the teacher corrects some of their many pronunciation mistakes, as appropriate. After they finish these readings, they try to define the words that the book suggests as new and any words the students marked throughout the reading as unknown. Students and teachers offer possible definitions in English and sometimes in Spanish, as they are able, for new words or phrases. Students then answer the questions posed in the book about the reading, orally and in writing. The textbook also includes grammar exercises, which are sometimes complemented with teacher-designed grammar lessons or exercises. Some teachers might also take the students to the library for extra reading material.

On Mondays we read a story in the library. We choose a book and read a chapter, the teacher gives us general questions to answer about the reading. On Wednesday we read a story from the book. Everyone reads out loud in class, sometimes it takes 2 days to finish the story. On Friday we do grammar exercises from the book.... [The] HW is always for that day [the following week]. Grammar sometimes is about the story sometimes about new things. (Cervantina male 10th-grade basic student 10)

Sometimes a class activity is also accompanied by an audio tape in order for students to practice their listening comprehension. The audio tapes are prepared by the book publishers and usually consist of native speakers reading the stories or other materials from a unit. In elementary school, the audio tapes contain many more songs and group activities but from 7th to 12th-grade audiotapes are rarely used and students prefer it to be that way since they generally do not like them because they find them very difficult to understand and follow. A student from the basic group declared: "We prefer to read it and not listen to the tape since sometimes it's hard to understand when you do not know the language well, they speak too fast. Also we want to learn proper

pronunciation like listening to the teacher who speaks slowly, which is easier”
(Cervantina male 10th-grade basic student 11).

The 12th-grade English classes are highly influenced by the fact that at the end of the year these students will be graduating and hence they have special learning needs as they prepare for college. At all levels (basic, intermediate, and advanced), and despite what the official content of the class might be, the English teachers concentrate on more individualized activities directly geared to the seniors. Some examples of these activities are further explained below. These are aimed at teaching essay writing, letter writing, and oral and written discussions of current events, and practices for standardized tests. Students in all grades appreciate the work appropriate to their knowledge level that they carry out in their English class: “From elementary, we have the base of vocabulary and then the grammar and then the literature that is the most difficult part (like a stairway or a process)” (Cervantina male 10th-grade intermediate student 9).

At any time throughout the class, students also raise their hands when they come to a word that they do not understand. In most cases, the teacher attempts to explain the meanings of these words in English. Some teachers also have students try to discern their own doubts or get help from other classmates on such things as pronunciation and word meanings in order that they may better construct knowledge. Students in all levels are required to have conversations in class which many times involve critical thought about the readings: “English teachers always try to explain everything in English except for rare exceptions. They also try to have students always speak in English” (Cervantina female 10th-grade intermediate student 12).

Nevertheless, English classes are sometimes monotonous or consist of busywork. During the English classes teachers often simply expect students to sit and complete pages from their workbook texts. In order to make this task somewhat less tedious, they sometimes allow students to roam around the school in small groups. In this way, one can often observe a small group of English students gathered in a picnic table in the yard, sitting on the floor in a hallway, or clustered in their desks in the classroom. Students would like for their English classes to consist of more varied and dynamic activities where they are required to create in the foreign language. They state that monotony is tiresome. Students also believe that their oral skills are improved with in class discussions, and this encourages them to participate.

Use of time at the school seems wasteful especially during class changes or special events. Students dawdle in hallways and once they're in their rooms. In preparing for special events, students and teachers readily give up class time. There also seems to be no culture of extra work assignments to take home. According to the students, most English homework can be completed in less than 30 minutes. There are some occasional longer assignments, however. In the 11th-grade, for example, they had an assignment during the 2005-2006 school year where they had to invent the characteristics of a person. They were to describe this character's physical and personality traits in writing and graphically and then present this person to their class.

Students admit to using on-line dictionaries to find English definitions of unknown words, or to translate specific unknown words from Spanish. Moreover, students often use the Internet for their research projects. When the assignment is in Spanish, they find information that is already in that language. Similarly, for English

projects, they might look up the information directly in English, or they might choose to translate it from Spanish sites if they feel the information is good enough to merit that extra step. For more profound information, they tend to use encyclopedias. Students also claim that when they have to write an opinion piece for their English classes, they do so directly in English, without first needing to pre write in Spanish.

At the elementary school, teachers also only prepare several sample lesson plans each semester. The classes observed, although brief, demonstrated some variety in types of activities. The sample lesson plans viewed also denoted that teachers use a variety of tasks and learning strategies in their classes. For example, following is one week's work in a 3rd-grade class.

Figure 7 – Cervantina - Lesson Plan, 3rd-grade, advanced.

Week #2, Unit # 4	
Monday:	
Learning Goal	Talking about ability; using can and can't
Activities	Students cut out the animal pictures on pg. 111 (yellow) and hold them up when mentioned. Students say what they can do, then what they can't do. Students paste in notebook and write a sentence for each using either can or can't do. Students exchange notebooks and check if all statements are true.
Wednesday:	
Learning Goal	Talking about ability; using can and can't
Activities	(Teacher has written animals and actions on a poster so students can sing and act out song). Go to student book pg. 44. Play CD#50. Students listen, sing along, and act out the song. When ended, students answer the questions in exercise #2. Explain homework.
Homework	Workbook, pg. 40
Friday:	
Learning Goal	Practice the use of ongoing actions with is, isn't, are, aren't
Activities	Check homework, students' book, pg. 43. Students for pairs and cut little papers with the letters and numbers of the columns and rows. Each student takes turns choosing a paper and asking their partner for example: "What is happening in C3" The other will respond and both will then copy in notebook until all questions have been asked.

At Cervantina upper and lower school, the English programs have developed a cursory curricular structure, which is modified regularly by the teachers depending on the

students, their learning, and other circumstances. English classes are mostly structured around the texts and the stories therein. Teachers endeavor to encourage all students to participate in oral and written practice. Even though most classes seemed somewhat teacher-centered, the instructors at both schools do attempt to vary the presentation style and the types of classroom activities used from day to day.

How Students Interact With Teachers

Teachers at Cervantina have a professional attitude towards their work. They feel that what students learn is their responsibility. Because the English team meets regularly and students will go on to the next level possibly with a different teacher each subsequent year, teachers seem to feel the pressure of “team work” to do a good job. “I am responsible for what they learn because their next teacher will hold me accountable” (Cervantina veteran teacher 2).

There seems to be consensus at the school that the rapport between students and teachers greatly influences ultimate learning. Each teacher has her/his own style of teaching, and students as well as teachers recognize these styles and comment about how it affects learning. Additionally, all of Cervantina’s English teachers mentioned the need to individually assess each group’s needs as well as their likes in order to present class in a way that is attractive to them. “The students have to be motivated; they are not going to learn what they are not interested in. I think that as a teacher you have a responsibility to give students different opportunities to learn” (Cervantina new teacher).

Teachers also believe that they are free to try their own teaching methods and strategies:

I believe that right now every teacher has the freedom to work in their classrooms with a different methodology, we have to work with the basic communication

skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking but you can do that through basically anything. For example, one teacher he is very interested in history, he knows a lot about American history and I think he focuses on that and the student have an experience in English that has to do with US history. From a very interesting point of view because he's Latin, and he grew up in New York in a black community, so he has an interesting point of view to give to the kids. I work a lot through art and I am very creative. I tell my students to tell me what they want to learn and we can create a methodology together, I am very open, because I know that so many things work. I have done different things with different groups depending on their needs. I do work a lot through art, I do crazy things, because I am a pianist, an actress and I draw, so I do work a lot through that.

Another one of my colleagues has been teaching for many years and she focuses a lot on grammar and reading and so she has a lot of basic groups that have specific problems that [as a team] we were very worried about so she's working on that. And I am not really much acquainted with the fourth teacher's methodology, but I do know that he is very artistic in class and he is a lot into projects and having the students do plays and other similar things. I think that he does a lot of projects and he also takes a little bit from the more expert teacher. Everyone has their own teaching style and each class is very different. Even though I am new I have had the opportunity to observe the other teachers in class. (Cervantina new teacher)

While at the school, some examples of stylistic differences between teachers were also observed. The twelfth-grade advanced class, for example, is being taught this year without a textbook. In his classes, the teacher includes practices in essay writing. Unstructured analyses of movies were also conducted through oral and written discussions and question and answer sessions. One teacher's personal teaching style includes giving students what he describes as a "day off" each week. During this day, students use their class time to copy information (e.g. grammar explanations) from the board, but are not required to think or work. While they copy they are allowed to listen to their portable music players or to talk amongst themselves. These conversations are usually in Spanish and not related to the class. The importance of copying the information is emphasized as each student takes their notebooks to the front so that the

teacher can ensure that they copied it. The grammar rules on the board, however, are not discussed during the class period.

The school has held several meetings each school year for the past several years where all teachers participate with an outside consultant in order to share in the development of their core competencies. During one such meeting, teachers were asked to present different examples that illustrate how the collaborative work done during such meetings was being applied in their respective classrooms. Teachers were observed to talk at length about their personal skills and abilities and about their department's recent achievements. Besides, when interviewed, teachers often mentioned their interest in improving their teaching:

- *Con los alumnos del nivel básico de inglés, que lo que les debo enseñar es algo elemental y simple, como llevo las competencias a ese caso específico y como las evaluó en ese caso específico, y lo he discutido con mis colegas. Si se tiene una lectura ya es diferente, puesto que se pueden trabajar el pensamiento crítico y otras cosas más.* [With the students from the basic level who need to be taught simple and elementary material, I wonder about how to use competencies and how to evaluate them in that specific case. I have even discussed this with my colleagues. When you have an actual passage to read, it's different, you can work on principal thinking and other things.] (Cervantina veteran English teacher 3)
- *Estamos dando pasos en enlazar la planificación con la evaluación.* [We are taking steps to tie the planning to the evaluation]. (Cervantina veteran English teacher 1)
- *Mi inquietud es mostrarle qué yo hice, cuáles competencias estaban dimensionadas en esta clase y si al evaluarlos estoy en la vía de lo correcto, si me estoy aproximando, o si me falta todavía mucho camino por transitar... Mi pregunta es si estoy aproximándome a las competencias referentes al pensamiento sistemático, creativo y crítico si es idóneo lo que hice.* [My interest at this point is to show you what I have done, which competencies were contemplated in my class and if when evaluating the students I am on the road to correctness, if I am approaching it, or have yet much road to traverse... [he explains a sample class activity] My question is whether I am approaching the competencies that refer to systematic, creative, and critical thought and if what I did is ideal.] (Cervantina Spanish language teacher)

Each teacher has her/his own style of teaching. Additionally, all of the English teachers at Cervantina's upper and lower schools individually assess each group's needs as well as their likes in order to present class in a way that is attractive to them. With the help of the outside consultant, these instructors are also working to vary their presentation as well as evaluation methods.

Evaluation of Students

At Cervantina upper school, students agree that teachers correct written assignments in a timely manner. Students at most levels do not have very many essays or other complex writing assignments. This results in students' written assignments at times being of poor quality. Sometimes when they write in English they are expected to write several drafts and these get corrected and re-written. The students seem to think in Spanish and then translate in their written assignments. They might even at times be using an on-line translation program. When grading these papers, teachers seem to give more weight to the content than to students' possible grammatical mistakes.

Moreover, at the elementary school, English teachers are quite generous in their grade assignments and strive for all students to succeed. Students' grades are mostly based on their work in the classroom. For English classes, class work is worth 50% of the total, oral participation is 15%, conduct represents 15%, homework is 10%, and special projects and tests are 10%. Additionally, when correcting homework, teachers only verify if students have completed their at-home assignments, they do not get penalized if they make mistakes. These teachers are also lenient when writing and correcting examinations since they believe that young children might not do well on tests. In most cases, teachers give one test per grading period, sometimes none. Each teacher decides how s/he will

calculate their grades. They are very lenient, and in doing so try to be as forgiving as possible. For example, many teachers choose to average all assignments out as opposed to making grading cumulative because they believe this gives students a better opportunity to total higher grades: “Some teachers calculate their final grades by adding all the points, but I do an average, because I think that the other way it’s too hard for students to get a good grade” (Cervantina elementary veteran teacher 6).

English teachers want their students to succeed and as such they value their hard work. At both campuses, when grading students’ assignments, teachers seem to give more weight to each individual’s effort and to the content than to any possible grammatical mistakes. They also vary the style and value of their assignments each grading period as the occasion necessitates.

English Language Teaching and Learning

Despite what the administration views as recent problems in their teaching, those inside and outside of the school believe that Cervantina’s English program is of high quality. The school’s reputation makes everyone believe that the program is effective. Rocío Billini, (Educational Consultant for the Bilingual Programs of the SEE) asserts that previous students graduating from the school have “very good English” (personal communication, March 2, 2006). The teachers deem that the school’s English program needs to continue to be recognized, and so they keep that as an unstated goal in their mind while they teach. Teachers also believe that the program’s goal is to ensure that students are proficient enough to speak the foreign language; that upon graduation, students are prepared to take the TOEFL, the SAT or any other similar exam that they

may need to take. One teacher admits that subconsciously she feels pressure to have students perform well in English because of the school's reputation in that area.

According to Cervantina students, teachers should be creative. They overwhelmingly appreciate when their classes contain a variety of activities and teachers invest time correcting the assigned homework. Students also value the opportunity to participate orally in English class as they understand it requires them to think in the new language. Students also believe that a prepared graduate must demonstrate a general knowledge of a lot of different topics, while at the same time being prepared for the challenges of the real world. "A prepared graduate is someone who knows not only the language but everything that happened, literature, history.... They can really put their opinion on what they are talking about" (Cervantina female 9th-grade advanced student 16).

Students in the basic, intermediate, or advanced levels might seem to have differing workloads. Classes seem harder for the beginner and intermediate students as they have to struggle even with understanding teachers' instructions and do not have as complete a schema for new learning as the advanced students do. These students also demonstrate greater difficulty in expressing themselves, orally and in writing. Those students who are especially undisciplined tend to also be the students who do not complete homework assignments or pay attention in class and are also usually placed in the lowest level (basic). "Those who do not learn are in beginners because they are lazy or don't care to learn" (Cervantina female 10th-grade intermediate student 12). Students in the advanced levels sometimes complete much more complex assignments than those

in other levels. “I demand more in 11th advanced than 12th intermediate” (Cervantina new teacher). Nevertheless, classes seem harder for the beginner and intermediate students.

Students at the advanced level seem to be self-motivated to work, possibly by the ease with which they can tackle the content. Teachers believe that these are the easiest to teach and students not in these groups believe that these are the hardest levels to succeed in. The teachers of the intermediate and especially the advanced groups like to use movies as part of their instructional tools. Unfortunately, many times the activities that follow these movies are not complex; the teachers do not plan deeper, more involved, pre- and post-viewing activities. When they decide to use a movie it usually takes two to three class periods to watch it and then have a group oral or written discussion about it. Nevertheless, the students in the advanced groups think that their books and lessons are too easy. Students in the intermediate level of English however, do believe that they have the opportunity to learn in their class and even apply this knowledge in other subject areas.

- Nosotros aprendemos muchos temas extras porque la clase de ingles es tan interesante, como por ejemplo acerca de la guerra, y otros temas de historia que quizás no tenemos la oportunidad de ver en otras clases. Ahora mismo estamos en el proceso de escritura y haciendo lluvia de ideas que me ha ayudado en la clase de español. Y también la investigación acerca de un tema me ayudó en la clase de español. [Because the English class is so interesting we learn a lot of extra topics, like about the war, and other history topics that maybe we don't get a chance to see in other subjects. Right now we are on the writing process and brainstorming and that has helped me in my Spanish class. And also the research on the topic was useful in my Spanish class]. (Cervantina male 10th-grade intermediate student 7)

- Sometimes our homework is hard and sometimes it's easy. In our level they probably wouldn't assign very difficult things. Right now we have to write sentences with the vocabulary from the readings, but we are doing mostly readings. (Cervantina male 10th-grade basic student 11)

- Tests always have questions about the stories, the characters, the plot, the problem, consequences, grammar (the word, meanings, multiple choice), at the end of the story there's always a writing where we give our opinion about something that happened in the

story. The tests are easy (about 30 minutes) multiple choice and just that one writing. (Cervantina female 10th-grade advanced student 8)

- I have a good base of English. It's not too hard to understand the classes; I find it easy so that makes me think that it is good English. (Cervantina male 10th-grade advanced student 13)

During English classes in the elementary school there is a lot of practice of oral skills. Students share their thoughts and ideas orally by discussing different topics, they are also often asked to read out loud and then talk about these issues. They also usually read the answers to their homework out loud in order to correct any possible mistakes. In order to give elementary school students extra practice in oral comprehension, teachers often use the audio tapes that accompany their textbook. These include songs, games, stories, and other activities. Frequently, these teachers also have to repeat some of the tapes' content themselves, at a slower pace since the tapes tend to be too fast for students to understand. Following are a few examples of the written work turned in by different students in their English class.

A 5th-grade student was asked to write a paragraph about his plans for the next summer vacation.

Next summer I going [sic] with my family to Puerto Plata Village Hotel. Probably we will stay one week. During that week I want to do different activities. For example, I want to go to the beach, of course. Right there I will do some snorkeling, ride the banana boat, swim and play in the sand. Usually there is very good food in this hotel. There is a nice swimming pool, and lots of activities.... (Cervantina advanced male 5th-grade student)

Similarly, when describing the setting for a story in her notebook, one 10th grade student wrote:

“I arrived about ten minutes after six. Shadows started to welcome the night and a cold chill started to take over the warmth of day. A shrieking of the wind came to my ears. Street lights started to give their lights, and as I opened the door I felt the

smell of dinner. I knew this was the place I wanted to be. (Cervantina intermediate female 10th-grade student 4).

Students believe that their English classes at Cervantina aid their knowledge and confidence in the foreign language, and especially as concerns their oral skills. Upper school students also have frequent discussions to practice orally. They also usually read the answers to their homework out loud in order to correct any possible mistakes. Students also particularly enjoy when class conversations are about current events, politics, music, or other personal likes and dislikes. Students declare that the teachers encourage everyone to participate. Furthermore, as their English improves they attempt to speak slower as they become less concerned with having the teacher and their classmates notice their mistakes. During English classes, students also frequently have teacher-directed conversations about the stories they read. The frequency and length of these discussions depends on the depth of the questions posed by the book, the teacher, or by the students themselves. Nevertheless, some students still complain about a lack of proper oral practices.

- The present class using literature and stories has helped me to acquire a lot of vocabulary and to improve my writing and reading comprehension. (Cervantina female 10th-grade advanced student 8)
- I don't feel that I am able to speak in English. (Cervantina female 10th-grade intermediate student 12)
- *Las clases de inglés han cambiado mucho. Antes teníamos mucha escritura y palabras sencillas.... Entonces empezaron a darnos las clases como si fuéramos Americanos, primero el idioma y luego la gramática. Aquí tenemos más gramática que conversaciones.* [English classes have changed a lot. Before we had a lot of writing and simple words.... Then they began to teach as if we were American, first the language and then the grammar. Here, we have more grammar than talking]. (Cervantina male 10th-grade intermediate student 11)

Part of the emphasis in the communicative language approach is on classroom situations being as close as possible to real life. For example, those students in 12th-grade

who are in the basic level of English, they seem to feel that it is important to take advantage of the class to learn conversational skills in the second language, as well as to gain practical knowledge that they can immediately apply. As such, the students asked their teacher at the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year if she might help them with their writing skills for practical purposes, such as application letters and extra practices of oral conversations.

In order to fulfill the students' wishes as well as her curricular requirements, the teacher decided to divide each week's work, one day a week the students would read different selections (newspaper or magazine articles or stories), the second, they would practice conversations, on the third day they would work on grammar, usage and writing (poems, essays, letters and applications) and on the fourth day students would debate or do oral presentations on pre-determined topics.

The teacher also decided to have several projects throughout the year, one of which would be a writing assignment where the students would simulate application letters to English speaking colleges. The system seems to work, and the students spend much of their time practicing communication. One such activity is to have a group of students select several topics that they think might interest their classmates and do some research. These students then present a brief introduction of these topics to their classmates at the beginning of the class; the rest of the group chooses the order and then debates about each topic in turn. In the following example, it was presenting student B's responsibility to direct the flow of the conversation, so she ensured that all students participated by calling on each one, in turn, by name. Those names have been omitted here.

- Presenting male student A: “Now we will talk about euthanasia”.
- Male student D: “What is Euthanasia?”
- Presenting female student B: “Euthanasia is when someone has a terminal disease and he decides to end his life and the doctor gives him some medicine to help him die.”
- Student D: “Who decides?”
- Different students speak at once
- Presenting male student A: “In most countries you can decide, for example, if you are connected to a machine in a hospital and you only can live while connected, then you can decide, if there are other things that can make you still alive, then it’s illegal to let you die. Now, the question is, do you approve, if you can live, but you are going to be a person like a vegetable, do you approve that they apply the euthanasia?”
- Male student E: “If you are in a coma for example”
- Female student F: “You can decide”
- Female student E: “What if the doctors are wrong? If she could come back.”
- Presenting Student A: “When the people come to the hospital and they are feeling pain, they are feeling bad. That is no problem since they can easily decide for themselves for euthanasia, but maybe there’s some treatment that long term can relieve their pain and leave something better. But that pain, and that feel of (sic) they can’t live with more medicine can bring euthanasia. Do you think it is correct that people can decide if they want to live or they want to be dead?”
- Female student G: “There are different situations, because if you are sick, you think that you can’t help that, and then you really might prefer to die. Because *pa ‘que ta asi?* [why be like that?]”
- Teacher: “Truly you can write a will or something like that. But for example if you get sick in a moment and you fall into a coma, you cannot decide if you want to live or die.
- Female student G: “If I have kids and I have my husband and my parents and they have different opinion.” “*en el sentido de que si soy yo*” [“in the sense that if it’s me”].
- Teacher: “In English”
- Female student G: “If I can make the decision, I do whatever I want.”
- Female student F: “It’s something that if I don’t know, I prefer to die, because why be in that state.”
- Female student E: “Nowadays you can write a will.”
- Female student H: “I think I agree with euthanasia because if the people doesn’t [sic] want to live like a vegetable.”
- Female student F: “But you don’t know if the people want to live or not.”
- Female student H: “If I will be [sic] in vegetable state. I don’t think I want to live like that.”
- Teacher: “Yes but that is what I was telling her, if you decide now while you are alive and well, then that is OK. Like she just said, you write a will with a lawyer, perfect. But what if you get into a coma because you fell, or hit your head? Then you cannot decide, at that point, you do not have a choice.”
- Several students speak at once. One student brings up cremation and several others argue that it’s not the same point.
- Presenting male student A: “Do you agree with assisted suicide?”
- Female student J: “I think that nobody can (eh) have the, eh take [sic] the decision for the weak people. Not the family, not the husband, *ni la persona* (eh) not the same person,

because while your body (eh) is (eh) *funcionando* [functioning], in the hands of the humans, [eh] they can do something for you. You can keep the person living because we are nothing to decide when a life can stop. If the humans and the technology can do something, then you have to keep fighting”.

- Male student K: “I agree with euthanasia because that will make out a [sic] obstacle for the parents and the people would like. If they know it is bad that she can’t do anything by herself.”

- Female student H: “I think that the people who are in a vegetable state have to give to that person a sign, because it’s like, I don’t know, I think that it’s stupid to leave a people [sic] like fifteen years (eh) in a hospital (eh) doing nothing.”

- Presenting female student C: “I read an article (eh) about a doctor saying that sometimes the patients go with him and tell [sic] that give you something to die. But the doctor... ¿*Como se dice, no se lo da?*”

- Teacher: “Doesn’t give it to them”.

- Presenting female student C: “Doesn’t give it to them, but he gives them another medical [sic] and later the patients feel better and he say that the doctor has to. *Lo puedo decir en Español?* [Can I say it in Spanish?]. And he say [sic] that *en vez...*”

- Teacher: “Instead of”.

- Presenting Student C: “That instead of give [sic] you a medicine to die he gives them something else *para calmarlo* [to calm them down]....”

Students are also required to research certain topics of their choosing in order to give oral presentations before their classmates. Students at all different levels research, read, and summarize information on a particular topic. They then present the material orally to their class. When speaking to those students, it was surprising to find that some students prefer books over the Internet: “We usually don’t trust the Internet so much since the best information is always in books” (Cervantina female 10th-grade intermediate student 14).

One of the major concerns of English teachers, their stated goal of preparing students for tests such as the TOEFL, seems to be achieved as many of the school’s graduates do take this examination and are accepted into foreign universities. Even so, English classes might not fulfill all of the students’ needs. Because language classes concentrate on teaching grammar and vocabulary, they sometimes lose precious opportunities to make the content somewhat more interesting by tying it to real life, a

disadvantage that is not shared by immersion programs where students are learning the language through real content in the different subject areas.

Summary

Cervantina is made up of two sister institutions that are operated separately, one teaches students from pre-school through 6th-grade and the other from 7th through 12th-grade. In order to explain certain aspects of the English language program, the elementary school was visited, classes were observed, and teachers and administrators were interviewed. Nevertheless, this study mostly concentrated on the upper school.

Cervantina's high school is owned by a board of parents as a not-for-profit organization and as such parent and even student opinions are given great importance. There is constant feedback and a dynamic exchange of ideas as current and former students and their parents remain involved in the school. The school prioritizes Spanish as the axis of oral and written communication, and alongside it the cultural values that identify students as belonging to a nation and region with specific characteristics and problems. The administrators and teachers also recognize English as a tool that will aid students in their communication with other cultures as well as their own personal and intellectual growth.

The principal practices distributive leadership, and encourages teachers to think for themselves. In all content areas, subject coordinators feel responsible for managing curricular content and ensuring that the teachers have a clear understanding of their responsibilities.

In a manner similar to other Dominican students, those at Cervantina are highly motivated to learn English. One clear indicator of this is the fact that 68 percent of

students at this school have studied English in an afternoon program for at least five years, most beginning in early elementary.

The school struggles to give students the best possible program with their limited resources of time and money. Teachers work hard to individualize class content according to students' capabilities, interests, and needs. It was observed, however, that teachers did not consistently plan their classes. Additionally, the curriculum is derived mostly from the textbooks which results in English classes sometimes being monotonous. Furthermore, in some classes, because of the price of the texts, the books being used are actually the workbooks that should accompany the text, challenging teachers even further.

The English program is currently taught through a communicative approach that emphasizes excerpts of American literature. The vision of this program is to ultimately turn out high school graduates who are fully bilingual. The teachers admit that this is not necessarily realistic for many of their students, especially those in basic and intermediate level of English. According to the students, those who work hard in these classes do achieve communication skills in the foreign language. Because the foreign language is not the school's main priority, those students who do not choose to make the effort to learn the language may graduate while still in a basic level. The program does meet its more immediate goal of raising students' level of English language and in the process helps to prepare them for the US and European admissions tests.

A humanist institution is the best way to describe Cervantina. The school is non-apologetic about its shortcomings. The staff and students work hard on a daily basis to achieve their collective and respective achievement goals. The school represents a great

example in the field of foreign language teaching in Santo Domingo. With only five periods of English per week, students learn the language and are able to communicate intelligibly in English orally and in writing. The school is also working hard to transform its curriculum and processes in order to apply competencies. This is an interesting process that is ongoing and should be observed throughout the upcoming years as the administrators and teachers change their paradigm and shift to problem based instruction.

Findings

The specific activities that the teachers carry out in the language classroom are extraordinarily important. Individuals' vary in their language abilities, and in their strengths and weaknesses, in receptive skills such as reading and listening and in productive skills like writing and speaking. Language learners' abilities can also demonstrate strength in any combination of these. This notwithstanding, the work that is carried out in the classroom is a key factor in determining individual language learning. García (1997) points out that the degree of bilingualism that students attain can often be related to the importance granted to bilingualism in society as well as to the teaching strategies used. In fact, Wenglinsky (2000) found that the strongest effect on student achievement (eighth-grade mathematics achievement), after taking into consideration the students' social class, was related to classroom practice. Because classroom practice is so important to students' language learning, a great deal of this study's findings describe what goes on during lessons at each school.

Both *Cervantina* and *Imersão* seem to represent Krashen's (2003) argument for communicative language as each school's second language instruction attempts to parallel the process of young children acquiring their first language by creating an

environment in which language can be presented in authentic communicative situations. If considering the language learning goals as put forth by Cummins (1984), one can conclude that there is a difference in the learning at these two schools. At Cervantina, students demonstrate basic interpersonal communicative skills or BICS while Imersão students seem to possess higher cognitive academic language proficiency or CALP. Even though students at both schools are able to communicate orally in English, Imersão students appear better equipped to contend with complex academic situations in the second language.

In conducting these two case studies, and in searching to describe the theoretical approaches and pedagogical methods utilized at each school, it was determined that each school's structure is made up of its culture, leadership, philosophy, resources, and priorities. These are also understood as fundamentally consistent influencers of the particulars in the substance of each case. Likewise, resources such as time, the campus, teachers' preparation, class size, as well as other players in the school's leadership also emerged as relevant. All of these factors then aided in explaining the rationale for each school's substantive components such as their pedagogical approach, curriculum and class content, as well as students' ultimate learning of the foreign language. Good leaders put forth a concerted effort to be transparent and forthright in their goal setting, as well as making this a participative process. How these elements of each school compare to each other, some conclusions to be drawn from this study, and some general policy recommendations will be presented in chapter six.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Current educational policy makers in the Dominican Republic are very interested in improving public school teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. The country's president has stated that he is interested in overhauling public schools such that they emerge as bilingual schools where the English language takes center stage. Several private schools in the capital city of Santo Domingo have a long-standing tradition of effective foreign language instruction. Two such schools were examined for this case study. The first, *Imersão*, follows a structured English immersion program, where all subjects, except for Spanish language arts and Dominican social studies, are taught in English. The second school, *Cervantina*, teaches all subjects in Spanish, and English as a foreign language receives a similar weight as other subject areas (e.g. four to five 45-minute class periods per week).

In the design of this study, the researcher was looking at the possibility of the schools' theoretical and pedagogical approaches as the structural components of the school that might help in the understanding of students' English use. In conducting the study, the researcher found that the schools' pedagogical approaches are more clearly discernable as elements of each school's substance and are actually shaped by the schools' pre-existing structural components. Because they did not fit the original research

questions, the findings have been organized as either a part of each school's structure or substance.

Background of the Problem

The Dominican economy is in great need of individuals fluent in the English language. As a result, improving the quality of English instruction in all of the country's public schools is among the current government's highest priorities. The Ministry of Education's stated plan includes the integration of strategies and methods already found in the country's private bilingual programs. Consequently, at this time, it seemed appropriate to look at this real-life context and interpret the social interactions of those involved using case studies. This qualitative method would hence facilitate the study of long existing and successful models of English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction and their relationships with students' use of their foreign language in order to possibly inform public policy in this matter.

Criteria for Effective English as a Foreign Language Programs

Teaching a second or a foreign language correctly is never an easy endeavor. While analyzing English as a second language (ESL) programs in the United States, Brisk (2006) maintains that when devising curricula, schools must make difficult choices including how to use and teach language, how and when to introduce English, and what to teach in the home language, as well as approaches to teaching students who are not literate in either language. She also adds that many times availability of qualified personnel and appropriate materials may determine language use in the curriculum.

Similarly, there are many difficulties and limitations to all quality teaching. Teachers' isolation and individualism has been observed in many major studies of their

work environment. Dreeben (1973) noted: “because teachers work in different places at the same time, they do not observe each other working” (p.468). This author also adds that teachers unfortunately do not have the opportunity for apprenticeships, that work and training are forced to occur simultaneously in classrooms. Hargreaves (1994) further states that teachers face certain psychological dilemmas and frustrations that result from present increased accountability and even greater time demands. Glickman et al (1998) point out that in successful schools, however, supervisors are able to break the routine and isolation of teaching in order to “promote intelligent, autonomous, and collective reason... to shape a productive body of professionals” (p. 29).

As has been seen throughout this study, the Dominican government’s policies as well as the decisions made by each school’s administration become significant when determining the structure of a school. Similarly, the substance and the daily learning activities carried out by teachers and students on a regular basis will influence and be influenced by those policy decisions.

Questions Which Guided this Study

The main questions which guided this study were:

1. What is the framework of teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in a structured immersion school and in a mainstream school with foreign language teaching and what are the cultural elements that influence the implementation of that framework?
2. What are the pedagogical methods utilized in each of these programs?
3. How can students’ English use in each of these programs be described?

4. What interrelationships are evident between the theoretical approaches and pedagogical methods utilized and students' use of the foreign language?

Method

A qualitative two case study approach was employed. Structured interviews of administrators, teachers, and students were conducted. Several months were spent observing classes and other daily activities at each school.

Following the audio taped classes and interviews, and subsequent qualitative analysis of these and the field notes (Miles & Huberman, 1994), the school principal and English language coordinator at each school was presented with a detailed summary of the themes and categories for their school, including direct quotes taken during the classes and interviews. These participants were given the opportunity to clarify, add, or delete information. The researcher met with each principal to determine if further changes needed to be made. Glasser and Strauss's (1967) modified grounded theory method was then used in order to produce a theoretical model of the social interactions at each school.

Results

Conducting this study showed that the answer to the first research question was that each school's underlying structure (i.e. its culture, philosophy, leadership, resources, and the time given to English language classes) determined its theoretical approach, curriculum, and class content. These structural elements were born directly from the data analysis and the researcher's basic finding can be summarized as structure shapes substance. Questions two and three, the pedagogical methods as well as students' English use, in each of these programs was explained in great detail in chapter five.

The following section answers the study's fourth question of the interrelationships between the theoretical approaches and pedagogical methods utilized and students' use of the English language at the two schools studied.

As was mentioned at the beginning of this study, Dominicans have great admiration for many things associated with the United States. Therefore, in this culture, it is considered trendy to do things in English. Nevertheless, students from both schools admitted that, based on their comfort level with their native language, many of their casual conversations take place in Spanish, although more and more of this communication occurs in English, and their on-line chats, Internet research, movies, TV programs, magazines, and self selected books are also habitually in English. As a result, students are highly motivated to learn English by United States' pop culture and by their parents' wishes. Students seem to be further encouraged in this endeavor by their thoughts of how the language can positively influence their future. There is also a growing interest among graduates from both schools to go to college abroad, particularly in the United States.

Leadership is of great consequence to all that takes place in a school. The principals at both of these schools have collaborative leadership styles and encourage teachers to think for themselves. Cervantina, however, is managed in a more constructivist manner while Imersão has a set curriculum that teachers and students at all levels are expected to follow. The teachers at both schools are divided into teams by content area in middle and high school and by grade-level in elementary school. At Imersão individual teachers may consider themselves somewhat limited by their inadequate authority to affect substantive change at their school. Consequently, these

teams mostly meet two or three times per semester in order to work on the revamping of their curricular standards or to solve specific problems that might come up during the school year. At this structured English immersion school, leadership is top down as the school has a clear structure and specified curricular standards that teachers are expected to follow. Even so, the small class sizes at the school encourage an amicable class climate as teachers promote student involvement and decision making.

Unlike the situation at Imersão, the teachers at Cervantina achieve genuine team work. They meet at least once a week to discuss the matters concerning each subject area; teachers also meet by grade-level once a week and teachers sporadically visit each other's classes in order to observe their function. Moreover, because of the change process in which the school is immersed, all teachers also meet several times a year in order to discuss matters related to problem-based instruction and transforming their curriculum to be more coherent overall and to contemplate competencies. This difference in teachers' group work might be due to the differences between the schools' leadership and management styles or it could result from the disparity in their size. Given the greater number of teachers and students, Cervantina, which is quite larger has a better opportunity to form teams. In contrast, at Imersão, there is clearly no opportunity to form a team of teachers by subject area or by level because most subjects and grade-levels are taught by only one person.

The English coordinator at Cervantina, who for several years set out directions clearly and expected compliance, evidently did not fit in with the systems in place at the school. Besides teaching his own classes, this individual spent his days working to ensure that everything worked well in the rest of the department and that all paperwork and other

bureaucratic needs were fulfilled on time. Ironically, he did not seem to invest enough time on the task of directly supervising other English teachers in the classrooms, nor did he give enough weight to the quality of their lesson plans. Even though Cervantina's administration does promote teacher creativity and does accede to staff determining their own priorities and teaching style, the new English coordinator has already assured her teachers that she will be visiting their classrooms with some regularity to ensure quality instructional practice.

Furthermore, there are some interesting differences between Cervantina's lower and upper schools. Because the high school is owned by a board of parents as a not-for-profit organization and the lower school is run as a private enterprise, student and parent involvement is disparate. While the upper school demonstrates horizontal leadership where the teachers exercise considerable influence on the curriculum, and other decisions, Cervantina's elementary school follows a top-down approach and policies are decided by the administrators and then handed down to the staff. Perhaps this also influences the type of leader the parents' board chooses to run the upper school or possibly it shapes the type of leader that person becomes once she/he is in that position.

As is the case in many ESL and EFL contexts, Freeman, Freeman, and Mercury (2005) point out that in Latin America the teachers of the English curriculum are generally native Spanish speakers who have different levels of preparation in English. In a situation similar to that presented by Freeman et al, students in the schools that were studied in this project are from upper and middle-class homes and their parents are well educated. Most of the teachers studied were native Dominicans who had themselves learned English as a second or foreign language. Both of these schools have to contend

with the availability of only a limited number of qualified teachers who are also fluent in English. This topic is covered further in the policy suggestions later in this chapter. Additionally, Cervantina's teachers' efforts to individualize class content according to students' capabilities, interests, and needs is significantly curtailed by the school's limited resources of time and money.

It would seem that of the programs looked at in this study; the more expensive school is able to have smaller groups because it can also afford to pay for more teachers. Although this is true in part, Imersão has also undergone some restructuring and other circumstances that have affected its enrollment and this has had obvious implications on the school and its class sizes. Whatever the reason and however schools are able to accomplish this, smaller class size has obvious benefits for students attempting to learn a foreign language. Teachers are able to dedicate more time to each individual student as well as to correcting their written work. Students would also have more opportunities to participate and interact in the foreign language.

Cervantina prioritizes Spanish as the axis of oral and written communication while Imersão's emphasis is on the English language. Consequently each school and its students identify with the cultural values and mores of either the Dominican Republic or the United States respectively. Both schools however, recognize the importance of English as a tool that will aid students in their communication with individuals from other cultures as well as their own personal and intellectual growth. As such, both of these institutions have very strong English as a foreign language programs. Nevertheless, the daily schedule at Imersão reflects a much higher emphasis on courses in the English language.

Teachers at both of these schools have to employ particular strategies in order to teach students English grammar and vocabulary. Literature classes are very similar at both schools, except for the length of the stories and the complexity of the vocabulary. At Imersão because students have many more hours of instructional time in English they are also able to read selections written in a much more complex level of vocabulary. This means that while 10th-grade students at Cervantina are reading selections written for approximately a 6th-grade reading level, the students in that class at Imersão are reading material at a 10th-grade level.

The smaller classes, and resulting reduced workload, also allow teachers at Imersão to emphasize student writing:

Creative writing is always emphasized in class, we had to write about many topics, Almost every day we had a writing assignment that the teacher would take home to correct and give it back to us to correct the mistakes. Students write several drafts of their essays and the teacher corrects them for style, content and grammar. (Imersão, 10th-grade female student 7)

Nevertheless, the methods used in both schools are very similar.

We read a lot out loud to improve our oral skills, then each concept we write about them, we also discuss a lot in class, which is part of what I like about the program in this school is that we are able to discuss a lot with our teachers, in English of course, as well as read. We have a good balance between writing, reading, and discussing. (Imersão, 10th-grade female student 5)

English classes are interesting. In conversations, the teachers introduce themes that are related to life. In [the] literature [class] we do reading, grammar, vocabulary. We usually read the stories in class, or at home and complete some exercises in the book, we have to choose words from each story that we want further explanations on. Sometimes we use dictionaries to look up these words. Sometimes we complete extra grammar exercises that the teacher suggests. (Cervantina, 10th-grade male intermediate student 7).

It can be said that both of these schools follow a communicative approach to language teaching (Savignon, 1983; CelceMurcia, 2001). As such, they seek to engage learners in realistic communication in order to develop their communicative competence. More specifically, Cervantina's current method falls under the characteristics of a literature-based approach (McKay, 2001) and *Imersão* uses structured immersion instruction (Snow, 2001).

There is an identifiable psychological process in vocabulary learning that takes place through reading. Devitt (1997) indicates that reading in the second language has potential as a major source of linguistic input of various types at the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. Studies have indicated that extensive reading at appropriate levels promotes general language ability (e.g. Elley and Mangubhai, 1983). However, as Alderson (1984) explains using Cummins' (1979) thresholds hypothesis, a certain minimal level of linguistic competence is required in order for learners to be able to read in L2. In a manner similar to that suggested by Taillefeur (1996), teachers at both schools place much of their emphasis on vocabulary. In his study on French L1 adults reading in English L2, Taillefeur recommends that an effective way to help readers achieve the necessary threshold in L2 competence when reading for meaning is to concentrate more on vocabulary than on grammar.

At Cervantina, the English as a foreign language program is currently taught through a literature-based curriculum that utilizes selections of authentic literature. However, the specifics of instruction are derived directly from the textbooks which results in English classes sometimes being monotonous. Grammar is also taught directly. Most teachers have a standard procedure that they follow each week, dedicating one day

to reading and discussing the stories, one day to grammar explanations (in most cases these appear only in the teacher's texts and not in the students' version), and one day to completing grammatical and story-related, fill in the blanks, questions, in students' textbooks.

At Imersão, the language arts class in elementary school and the literature class in high school are somewhat similar to the English classes at the advanced levels at Cervantina. Nevertheless, since English is considered as a first language, other content areas are also taught in English, hence giving students more opportunities each day to interact in that language. Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to incorporate ESL techniques and strategies, such as those delineated in chapter three, into their classes even though they do not necessarily use any ESL materials per se. Additionally, students who need extra help in English have the advantage of small group work one or two hours a day with a specialized ESL teacher.

Cervantina is engaged in a multifaceted restructuring process that has all teachers and other school staff rethinking their instructional goals and strategies in order to implement competencies. With this transformation, the school is attempting to adapt its processes, curricular priorities, and educational style in order to emphasize more self-directed learning and problem-based instruction. Even though, as Jensen (1998) recognizes, it is increasingly important for students' to have the opportunity for introspection as well as external experiences as these are related to the thinking and learning processes, in many of the observed English classes at Cervantina the teachers still seemed to follow a positivist instructional methodology. As a result, students might find it easy to memorize important facts and keep their knowledge at a surface level, not

taking the time to analyze situations further or to do the critical thinking that is necessary for authentic learning. At Cervantina, the English coordinator has added to the creative curriculum through a partnership with a neighborhood government school where several 11th-grade students are responsible for teaching the groups of 5th-graders' English class.

The activities of teaching and learning are not easily captured in a reductionism formula of inputs, outputs, and feedback loops (Starratt, 2003). Cervantina is well-served by encouraging teacher participation in curriculum development as well as setting aside specific times in their working schedules for participation in team work and ensuring that the teachers' working environment is inviting, reflexive and teachers' evaluations take many aspects into account. Imersão, however, should further strive to encourage teachers' input, in goal setting, assessment design, and in shaping staff development needs.

Imersão's structured English language immersion program has proven successful and many of their students boast that English has become "second nature" and they feel perfectly at ease thinking, communicating, and functioning in an English academic environment. English grammar, vocabulary, and writing are practiced daily and explicitly in language arts or literature classes, as well as indirectly in the other subject areas. As students become fluent in the foreign language, their teachers expect them to constantly read, write, think, and orally communicate in English. Furthermore, the small class sizes give students and teachers the advantage of more direct interactions and more opportunities for essay correction than at Cervantina.

For students at Cervantina, the level of English is somewhat lower. Students' proficiency in the second language in many cases seems to depend, not surprisingly, on

the level attained. Those students in the advanced or intermediate groups are able to think and communicate competently in English while those in the basic level still struggle to convey simple ideas or thoughts.

Discipline is managed in a similar fashion at both schools. All students at both schools must wear a uniform which also helps to clearly distinguish between the staff and students. Students seem to demonstrate a reasonable level of decorum based on respect for their teachers and other school authorities. Even though the existence of larger groups of students at Cervantina makes the students appear more disruptive, at both schools students seem to reserve their most active behavior for their outside play. From what could be observed, at both schools students do not openly challenge those in authority. Conversely, when major discipline infractions occurred at either school, the students were similarly penalized by the counseling department.

Conclusions

Rocío Billini, further states that even though second and foreign language teaching and learning have been studied extensively throughout the world, the topic has not been sufficiently scrutinized in the Dominican Republic (personal communication, March 2, 2006). Given that the process of conceptual and language development involves meaning construction, it is important to include sociocultural variables when broaching the topic of foreign language learning. In the context of Dominican schools as well as sociocultural theories, this study sought to identify and describe the elements constituting this context's second language learning environments.

Through the process of observing classroom activities, interviewing staff and students, and reviewing teachers' lesson plans and student products in the second

language, common and disparate characteristics of these schools emerged. Their similarities include their difficulties in finding properly trained staff and to a certain degree their instructional methods. Even though each school works with readings at very disparate vocabulary and difficulty levels, both schools engage in literature-based, communicative language approaches. Their main differences lie in the available resources and the priority given to the English language class, and to a lesser extent each schools' organizational structure and leadership style.

Krashen (2003) argues that second language teaching should attempt to parallel the process of young children acquiring their first language, by creating an environment in which language can be presented in authentic communicative situations. Fotos (2005) suggests that for an optimum condition and effective second or foreign language instruction, an ideal foreign language teaching methodology would combine elements such as grammar, translation, and vocabulary with abundant uses of target language structures and providing opportunities for negotiated output. This study has exemplified two successful programs that do just that. Grammar knowledge and practice is important, but so too is making certain that students have an opportunity to communicate in the target language in a culturally relevant environment.

Colleague collaboration is an important part of the equation at Cervantina. English teachers, for example, meet periodically as a team; they also frequently visit others' classes and give each other advice and help when needed. Teamwork among teachers can be very effective in enhancing the educational experience for students by improving teacher motivation and buy-in to certain policies. It can also contribute significantly to creating the type of environment that is ideal to foreign language

learners. Marks and Louis (1997), for example, believe that teacher empowerment is a necessary condition for improving student academic performance. They deem that it is imperative for teachers to be able to influence policy and practice pertaining to instruction in order to function effectively in a collaborative environment. Several studies have found significant improvement in reading, science, and social studies achievement of students in the early elementary grades, middle, and high school among schools that successfully implement programs that give teachers real authority, flexibility, and participation (e.g. Lee and Smith, 1995; Marks and Louis, 1997). In their study, Mark and Louis (1997) also found a marked difference in the level of influence that teachers could have over student achievement depending on whether or not all teachers were working together towards common goals.

This study also reveals the impact that environment, culture, and other “structure-based” organizational components have upon both the design of each school’s educational approach and the resulting outcomes. The acknowledgement that there is rarely a clean slate upon which administrators can first develop a pedagogical approach that would serve to drive all other aspects of a school’s design allows school administrators and staff to better understand the elements that in fact shape the final student experience. Students hail from differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds; they also have varying innate abilities, upbringing, and cognitive development levels. As a result, all learners are distinct and each individual has specific strengths and weaknesses. In order to meet the academic needs of all students, it is necessary to make differentiated instruction available within classrooms. In ideal situations, the learning process should strive to create an environment that does not just present information but rather facilitates

interactive learning for individuals. Additionally, it is indispensable to encourage students' own ideas and emphasize the development of their ability to reason, and to express themselves appropriately depending on the purpose and the situation.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher's findings are limited by the time spent observing the processes at these two schools and by the fact that the study concentrated on a minuscule portion of their programs, their English as a foreign language classes. More time to observe classes might have allowed for different situations to be observed, and certain themes might have been revealed in more depth. These two schools were chosen because, in addition to being examples of two different English as a foreign language programs, their programs have obviously been achieving superior results for many years.

As mentioned in chapters two and three, the students attending the two schools studied in this dissertation come from middle and upper class families whereas public school students are almost exclusively from families in the lowest SES segments of the population. The Dominican government has difficulties satisfying the demands of quantity and especially of quality in public education, which has paved the way for the Catholic Church as well as concerned private citizens to step up and fulfill the need.

This study could have further been improved if the researcher had access to a mainstream bilingual program. As expressed by Garcia (1997), in this type of program, the use of two languages is compartmentalized throughout the curriculum, depending on the particular teacher or subject taught at a specific occasion. In some cases, this is also achieved by allocating a specific language to a certain time of day, a certain day, certain subjects or specific physical locations, such as different classrooms. This study took an in

depth look at a program where students receive all classes but one in the first language, Spanish, and another school where students receive all classes but one or two in the foreign language, English. These would seem like the two opposing ends of the spectrum. Having the opportunity to also do in-depth analysis at a mainstream bilingual program would have given the researcher the balance of a program in the middle of the scale. Further limitations to the study can be found in chapter four.

Some Suggestions for Improving
the English Language Programs at these Schools

Imersão

By the time Imersão's students reach high school, they have been reading and processing information mostly in English for many years and therefore believe that they would have difficulty thinking and learning subject matter in Spanish. These students seem especially concerned that they would not be able to understand mathematics or science in Spanish. Additionally, each year a high percentage of Imersão's students fail the government standardized tests in Spanish. It is not necessary for these first language Spanish speakers to struggle with certain specialized vocabulary or with complex writing in their native language. Consequently, the researcher would suggest that the school emphasize its Spanish curriculum further in order to encourage student learning in their native language.

Furthermore, despite students' apprehensions, every Dominican Imersão student interviewed seemed to feel comfortable holding a conversation in Spanish. They were able to think about their learning and discuss intelligibly in both languages about the topics at hand. Most of them did find it necessary to change back and forth between the

two languages in the middle of many sentences. Nevertheless, if pressed to stay in one language they would probably be able to do so. At first they would struggle with certain specialized vocabulary and especially with complex writing, but they certainly could succeed in an academic setting in either language.

In addition, some school authorities mention that the school struggles to encourage pride in Dominican culture among staff and students. The curriculum touches upon Dominican history and they have special celebrations particularly around patriotic holidays in February. Nevertheless, at all levels, students' schedules include a majority of English classes with very little time dedicated to Spanish per day. Moreover, some students seem to perceive that the two Spanish courses they receive are taught merely to fulfill the government requirements of Spanish language arts and social studies. This perception could be caused by the seeming misuse of time observed in some of the Spanish social studies classes. Students hence do not give these lessons much importance. If the school is really interested in emphasizing the importance of its Spanish language courses, the principals can ensure instructional continuity and more consistent teaching through a closer supervision of those teachers, more class time allotted to classes in Spanish, and possibly even more subjects taught in that language.

It is essential to ensure differentiated instruction within classrooms, especially when trying to teach a foreign language. Limited use of small group and pair work was observed in classrooms at Imersão. Because teaching needs to be viewed as more than merely a technical exercise to transmit a static body of knowledge to passive learners, the English curriculum, as well as teachers in their practice, should recognize the complex nature of teaching students to be critically thinkers in our increasingly complex, global

society. More varied, constructive, experiential learning and student-centered activities need to be incorporated into the classroom structure.

The school gives its teachers the authority to change its curriculum and standards and during the 2005- 2006 school year teachers did just that. Besides improving the curriculum, this process aids teacher empowerment. On the issue of teacher burnout, for example, researchers found that teachers who are empowered to affect school-wide policy actually put forth more effort in all arenas, working more closely with colleagues on pedagogy as well on as issues of governance, especially in schools where the same level of participation is demanded of all staff (Lee and Smith, 1994; Mark and Louis, 1997).

Each class from pre-school to 6th-grade has a teacher's aide to help the teacher in their daily work. However, this resource did not seem to be capitalized on. It might be necessary for the school to invest in special professional development to help teachers plan their lessons in order to better incorporate the invaluable resource that is that classroom assistant. These individuals are well suited to work with the larger group of students while the teacher does individualized instruction with students that might need special help.

Cervantina

Because of limited resources, there are only four English teachers and eighteen groups of students at the school, which results in each teacher having four or five leveled groups. This is not an ideal situation as each group has up to 30 students. Each teacher then is responsible for the work of upwards of 120 students. The school should work towards improving this and hire at least one more English teacher for the next school year

which will result in a maximum of 22 students in each group for the foreign language classes. This would also mean that teachers can assign more writing projects as they would be responsible for less students overall and could hence dedicate more time to correcting student exercises.

Students could be further challenged in their foreign language classes. They are capable of completing additional as well as more complex tasks in English. Students in the advanced levels complete more challenging activities than their counterparts in the intermediate and basic levels. Nevertheless, judging by their skills in the foreign language, these students could work even harder. Additionally, students comment that in most cases their English homework is simple and can be completed in fifteen minutes or less. The precious resource of time after school can be better utilized and students can be required to complete critical thinking and analysis activities even if they have to work in groups in order to not overburden teachers with too many corrections.

Cervantina students are limited to learning the foreign language almost exclusively from the collections of stories available in their text books. Teachers sometimes take their students to the library to share the few available books or magazines in English. The school may also consider subscribing to one or more periodic publications. English language newspapers, for example, would be a good source of inexpensive, original, current material for use in the foreign language classroom. These are especially helpful in strengthening skills in the language arts and the social studies. The newspaper is one of the most readily available and highly motivating resources for teaching at all levels. According to Rhoades and Rhoades (1980), in that year already more than 3,000,000 youngsters and 90,000 teachers in 16,000 schools were using the

newspaper as an instructional tool. They also point out that newspapers contain information relevant to students of all ages and abilities, and to almost every area of the curriculum.

The school library at both Cervantina campuses is sorely lacking in available, age-appropriate, attractive, reading material in English. This situation could be easily remedied by adding more English books at all levels and in several different interest areas to the repertoire in both libraries. Cervantina elementary school also has a book club and a literary contest for its students. Unfortunately both of these events take place exclusively in Spanish. It seems that once more books in the foreign language are available, students should also be encouraged to take part in these activities in English.

The researcher also suggests the design of a program to encourage students' appreciation of literature through self selected reading that could be named "just read." The upper and lower schools could use this as an added motivational component to increase reading outside the classroom and help parents promote literacy behaviors at home. Its design purposefully would integrate the cognitive, motivational, and social aspects of reading. The overarching goal of the program would be to increase independent reading for students of all achievement levels while improving attitudes toward books and reading. It could include several at-school and at-home activities encouraging shared, independent, self-selected reading in all areas and levels.

If it were possible, and if teachers were paid for this time, several times a week teachers could stay after regular school hours. This time could be used to offer individualized help to certain students. Additionally, teachers could take advantage of the time to prepare for their classes or to do corrections. Unlike at Cervantina where most

teachers leave when the students' bell rings at 1:45 pm, at Imersão, all of the teachers' schedules include an enrichment period from 2:25 to 3:15pm from Monday through Thursday. Staff meetings take place on Wednesdays during this time, and teachers can have meetings, do corrections, or work on their lesson plans during this period each day. Cervantina's teachers would greatly benefit from this sort of extra work time each day. This would give teachers the possibility to arrange more challenging lessons that require deeper thought on the part of the students. Moreover, as second language speakers, some of the teachers at the school might need refresher courses on English grammar and pronunciation.

Additionally, having teachers copy large amounts of information on the board is not a good idea. Time in the classroom should be invested on oral discussions, problem solving, small group work, and other activities that better take advantage of teachers' and students' face to face time. If it is necessary to copy information from the board it should be key examples that clarify important information or give students an opportunity to practice newly acquired skills and to benefit from the oral and written interactions in the new language.

Block periods would be more effective if used less often. Because of the double periods most students end up only having English twice a week which results in them having home assignments only one of those days. Observations seem to show that when there are two of these longer periods per week, it becomes tiring and boring to the students to the point of teachers losing more time because of students' lack of concentration near the end of the longer periods. Therefore these classes might be better served by having one extended period and two regular 45 minute periods per week.

Students could have more homework and it would also not be necessary to waste up to 30 minutes per week by giving students free time at the end of their lessons.

Furthermore, the researcher also observed how it is easy for those in supervisory positions to become overloaded with office work, meetings, and other responsibilities and how these sometimes detract from supervisors' critical responsibility of aiding teachers directly. It is of crucial importance for coordinators and other administrators to set aside time from their busy office work in order to meet with their teachers and observe their classes as it ensures better organization and planning on the part of instructors.

The English classes observed at the lower and upper schools were rich in whole class discussions that included many examples of the instructor's directions, repetitions, assisting questions and other devices that Antón (1999) states help to achieve scaffolded assistance. Nevertheless, as mentioned in chapter three, communicative activities such as pair and small group work encourage linguistic production while providing practice and opportunities for negotiation of meaning and form (Swain & Lapkin, 1998). English teachers at Cervantina need to remember to encourage more dyads and small group discussions alongside the whole group discussions that frequently take place in class.

The school should continue its progress toward the visionary transformation towards competencies. Teachers need to work harder on lesson planning and modifying their curricular content and instructional strategies in order to truly apply those competencies. A good first step might be to reward students for harder work during everyday assignments, special oral presentations, and even during special events such as the cultural fair. Teachers can require that students broaden assignments past simple recall. Critical thinking and in depth investigations could be encouraged further.

General Policy Recommendations

As mentioned at the beginning of this dissertation, there is a growing interest among Dominicans to learn English as a foreign language. There are many different methods that students can choose to gain knowledge of English. Among them is the option of studying the foreign language during the regular school day. There are different methods by which schools can go about teaching a foreign language. This study has looked at only two, structured immersion and mainstream education with foreign language teaching. By carrying out this investigation, it has been established that English language learning is indeed taking place at both schools, albeit in different ways and in varying degrees.

As was stated earlier in chapters two and four, in the Dominican Republic there is a shortage of highly qualified, well trained teaching professionals who are also fluent in English. It would be advantageous for the country's high schools with high quality English programs to join their efforts with local universities to encourage those individuals already articulate in the English language to study pedagogy. Moreover, these efforts should be accompanied by a renewed commitment from the SEE to improve teachers' salaries and working conditions.

Additionally, because of this lack of highly qualified teachers of English many individuals go into teaching with degrees in other areas and get on the job training. School administrators believe it to be advantageous to keep teachers once they have trained them in their school, and they hence make an effort to do so. As a result, many teachers have worked for a long time at each of these schools. Most of the teachers spoken to really enjoy the professional and personal fulfillment commensurate with

teaching. It is unfortunate that it is necessary to do so for such little pay. The country needs to re-evaluate its priorities so that teachers in the public as well as the private sectors can be paid a living wage, alongside better professional development opportunities, and retirement plans.

It might be interesting to further determine the functionality of structured immersion for public schools. On the one hand, there are not enough properly trained educational professionals who are also fluent in English available to transform all of the country's public schools into schools that teach through English immersion, or even fully bilingual programs. On the other hand, this study has attempted to establish that it might be quite possible to teach English well to Spanish speakers without devoting the entire curriculum to the foreign language.

When being interviewed, several of Cervantina's students made similar suggestions concerning the possibility of enhancing their English program by expanding it. These students seem to consider that their English program is of such high quality and their teachers are so well qualified that they could take several of their content courses in the foreign language. Another possible policy outcome of this research is to suggest that the government program be implemented in a manner similar to Cervantina's with the added element of having mathematics, science, or technology taught in English. If it is true, as Krashen (2003) stipulates, that second language programs should attempt to emulate authentic communicative situations, then these programs must also take into account the learner's surrounding culture.

As far as the national English language curriculum, rather than placing too much emphasis on students' knowledge of unrelated bits of information, it is essential for

schools to encourage students to learn how to study and research and to participate in hands-on learning activities and problem-solving activities. This can be accomplished by providing children with opportunities to have personal and actual live experiences through hands-on learning activities in the environment and in the community and by encouraging group activities in the foreign language.

For those Dominicans wishing to study abroad, the first step is being able to pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). It is highly likely that students could have a successful TOEFL score after studying in either of the programs looked at in this study, whether they undertook an additional afternoon program or not.

Nevertheless, if the student were interested in being accepted at one of the more selective United States' colleges, they might need to study at an immersion or a fully bilingual school in order to have the depth of knowledge required for entrance exams and admission essays, as well as to succeed in the college level courses in English.

Both schools studied mostly conduct status quo evaluations of their students. Conversely, as explained in chapter three, authentic assessments, in their open-endedness, may better allow students to apply their knowledge and construct meaning from their learning environment. As teachers work to assess individual learners' needs, alternative, more realistic methods of evaluation should therefore be used to provide a more sharply focused picture of student progress and achievement (Kohn, 2001). The researcher believes that students should learn beyond the levels of knowledge and recall to exhibit evidence of comprehension through relationships, predictions, and generalizations. Furthermore, more open-ended forms of assessment may also motivate students, promote reflection about their learning, and ultimately serve in the determination of future

learning goals. The researcher suggests that the schools can try to integrate some authentic evaluations such as self assessments, interviews, book clubs, rubrics, self-selected writing and drawing, portfolios, observations and anecdotal records, journals, and learning logs.

As was mentioned in greater detail in chapter three, if empowerment is intended to positively affect academics, then it must support teachers in changing their instruction so that it involves and challenges students through authentic tasks (Gamoran et al, 1996; Marks and Louis, 1997). At Cervantina, the staff, administrators, certain community members, and to a lesser extent even some students are envisioning what they would like their school to be. This quest to systematically change their practices in order to implement competencies has resulted in a visioning process, similar to what is suggested by Golarz and Golarz (1995). Other schools can learn from this example and also implement distributive leadership and problem based instruction through the cooperation of entire school communities.

Recommendations for Further Research

A broader depiction of the teaching of English as a foreign language in the Dominican Republic could be achieved if a future researcher is able to gain access to a mainstream bilingual school where both languages are used throughout the students' education. Additionally, other investigators might wish to explore where the threshold of optimum exposure to the foreign language inside and outside of the classroom might be in order to achieve language proficiency. This would aid in establishing what the government needs to do in order to give all public school students this balanced exposure.

This study has argued that it is not necessary to give up students' abilities in their native Spanish in order to accomplish proficiency in the English language.

The Dominican government's pilot project to improve preschool and early elementary teaching of English began in 2005 with seventeen participating elementary schools. By the time the project entered its second year, it had expanded to include twice as many schools, more teachers, and many more students, and signified an investment of US\$640,000 (Apolinar, 2006). Along with training English teachers to work in pre-school and first-grade classes, the project also graduated the first group of specially trained administrators to work in all the country's school districts, in August of 2006. This program is in its infancy as it tries to slowly design and implement curriculum and teaching strategies benchmarked from the country's bilingual and English only private schools. Several interesting studies could be designed to inquire into the project's effectiveness or to examine the feasibility of further expansions of the plan.

Individuals interested in further analyzing the government's pilot project can also look at the elements of Dominican culture that would be appropriate to include in the instructional scenario. Communicative language teaching (CLT) dictates that in order to select and develop language methods and materials that are appropriate to a particular context, the specific needs of the language learners should be analyzed and socially defined for each individual educational setting.

Summary

Both of the schools looked at in this study have implemented programs that develop their students' functional language ability through practice involving realistic communication in the target language, as prescribed by Chomsky and Krashen. This

notwithstanding, they also teach grammar and vocabulary in both English and Spanish directly. Both Cervantina and Imersão concentrate on these as well as ensuring that their students receive adequate input in the target language and have abundant opportunities to produce their own output.

Teaching English as a foreign language has become one of the main priorities of the Dominican Ministry of Education. These case studies were conducted at two separate private schools in the city of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, each with a different method of foreign language instruction, in order to inform public policy on the teaching of English as a foreign language. Through this research, it was determined that each school's structure is made up of its culture, leadership, philosophy, resources (e.g. time, the campus, teachers' preparation, class size), and what it chooses to emphasize. Subsequently, the pedagogical approach, curriculum and class content, as well as students' ultimate learning of the foreign language were identified as critical components that make up each school's substance. Each school's structure was then found to shape its substance.

This study concluded with some suggestions for foreign language instruction which included building the underlying base for the native as well as the target language, emphasizing the importance of authentic communicative situations, as well as teaching grammar and vocabulary alongside culturally relevant authentic communication opportunities. Some suggestions were given to the Dominican government such as following the leadership of EDUCA, and working to improve teacher salaries, their working conditions, and retirement plans, in order to attract highly qualified individuals to the teaching profession. Additionally, leadership qualities also proved important as it

was significant for teachers to be granted control of the learning environment as well as given opportunities for teamwork and quality professional growth.

ENDNOTES

1. Some of the information pertaining to these meetings came from personal communications received from some of the school principals and other participants at these meetings.
2. The SEE keeps statistics of students enrolled in schools separated by students who repeat, are promoted, or re-enter after being away. The average dropout rate is calculated by comparing one year's students with those from the previous school year (SEE, 2005b).
3. The provisions of the Civil Rights Act were challenged in the case of *Lau v. Nichols* before the United States Supreme Court in 1974. This was a class-action suit filed by Chinese parents in San Francisco who claimed that because their children did not speak English, the school district's failure to provide them a specially designed program to teach them English was a violation of their civil rights (Baker and Prys Jones, 1998).
4. The selection criteria included English proficiency and years of practice as a teacher in the school or area in question (Ducy, 2005).
5. Humpert (1998) explains that native speakers are likely to have acquired the language because they were immersed in it, in their homes, in social activities, and at school, and hence had many opportunities for natural conversations in that language. Given substantial exposure to multiple cultures, some children may grow up as native speakers of several languages. In contrast, a near-native speaker usually acquired language skills after childhood, and likely struggled through second or foreign language classroom instruction, self-study books, cassettes, or software.
6. Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616), Spanish novelist, playwright and poet. Along with his considerable literary production, he created *Don Quijote*, the most famous figure in Spanish literature
7. These examinations are also conducted at the end of the 6th, 8th, and 12th-grades (SEE, 1999).
8. As pointed out by Hecht (2002), in Latin America, historically, children born into legitimate, two-parent families are subject to the rule of their fathers (*patria potestad*).
9. As explained in Clark, de Fana, Figueras, and Lozano (1992), the term *bottle* is used in Cuba (as in the Dominican Republic) to denote the illicit acquisition of funds by naming an acquaintance to a government position simply to collect a salary without any regard for the fulfillment of the position's duties.
10. As per a conversation with the academic principal, this donation is returned to parents without interests once their children graduate.

11. Cervantina is working with an outside consultant on improving teachers' practice in teaching through competencies. Because the individual is well known, and in order to maintain his and the school's anonymity, the researcher has simply called him consultant.

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APPENDIX A

Structured Interview Questions for Coordinators and Principals

1. Please give me some details about your professional experiences before coming into this school.
2. What is your personal philosophy of learning?
 - What is the philosophy of learning at your school?
3. Can you please give me a general overview of the English as foreign language or English reading programs in use in your school?
4. What are the ESL literacy goals for your school?
 - How are these determined?
 - Please elaborate on some of the student outcomes that you expect from the program?
 - Can you share some examples of specialized activities carried out at the school due to its ESL program?
5. Tell me about your everyday responsibilities as an administrator at your school (a brief description of your day-to-day activities)
 - How do your daily activities reflect/neglect the EFL program goals?
6. I am interested in what you think about the EFL program and its role in student learning.

APPENDIX B

Structured Interview Questions for Teachers

1. Please give me some details about your professional experiences before coming into this school.
2. What is your personal philosophy of learning?
 - What is the philosophy of learning at your school?
3. Can you please give me a general overview of the EFL or foreign language reading programs in use in your school?
 - How/why/when was this program implemented?
 - What theories do you think have influenced the choice/use of this particular program over others?
4. What are the EFL literacy goals for your school?
 - How are these determined?
 - Please elaborate on some of the student outcomes that you expect from the program?
 - Can you share some examples of specialized activities carried out at the school due to its EFL program?
5. Tell me about your everyday responsibilities as a teacher in the English department at your school (a brief description of your day-to-day activities)
 - How do your daily activities reflect/neglect the ESL program goals?
6. I am interested in what you think about the EFL program and its role in student learning.

APPENDIX C

Structured Interview Questions for Students

1. Tell me about how you use English inside and outside of school.
 - What are some reasons for learning English?
2. Can you please give me a general overview of the EFL or foreign language programs in use in your school?
3. Tell me about your everyday responsibilities as a student in a typical English class at your school.
4. Please describe what currently happens in your English classes.
 - Please describe what you remember about your English classes in years past.
 - If you look back, can you remember what was emphasized?
 - What did the classrooms look like?
 - What were some of the teaching methods used?
5. Please tell me more about your English teachers.
6. Tell me about some of the evaluation methods used in your EFL classes.
7. I am interested in what you think about the EFL program and its role in student learning.
8. What is your opinion about the effectiveness of the EFL program at your school?
9. Describe how you see yourself using English in the future.
10. Please bring in some samples of your writing in English.

APPENDIX D

Detail of Data Collection: Cervantina Upper School

	No. of Individuals	No. of Occurrences	Average Length of Time Each	Total Time
Administrator Interviews	3	3	30 min	4.5 hrs.
Teacher Interviews	4	3	40 min	8 hrs.
Class Observations for Each Teacher	4	4	45 min	12 hrs.
Observation of other Everyday School Occurrences	NA	48*	25 min	20 hrs.
Student Interviews	8	1	45 min	6 hrs.
Outside Consultant Meetings	1	8	1hr	8 hrs.
Cultural Fair	5	1	30 min	2.5 hrs.
Survey	Whole class	18	20 min	6 hrs.
Follow up Student Interviews	5	1	30 min	2.5 hrs.
Theatre Production	1	1	2.5 hrs	2.5 hrs.
Member Check Meetings	2	4	40 min	5.33 hrs.
Total Time				77.33 hrs.

* While waiting for research participants to be available for interviews or for the appropriate classes to observe other every-day school occurrences could be witnessed.

APPENDIX E

Detail of Data Collection: Cervantina Lower School

	No. of Individuals	No. of Occurrences	Average Length of Time Each	Total Time
Administrator Interviews	3	1	30 min	1.5 hrs.
Teacher Interviews	5	1	40 min	3.3 hrs.
Class Observations for each Teacher	5	2	40 min	6.6 hrs.
Observation of other Everyday School Occurrences	NA	30	20 min	10 hrs.
Leveling tests	whole class	4	40 min	2.6 hrs
Total Time				24 hrs

APPENDIX F

Detail of Data Collection: Imersão

	No. of Individuals	No. of Occurrences	Average Length of Time Each	Total Time
Administrator Interviews	3	2	30 min	3 hrs.
Teacher Interviews	7	2	40 min	9.3 hrs.
Class Observations for Each Teacher	7	3	45 min	15.75 hrs.
Observation of other everyday school occurrences	NA	44*	25 min	18.3 hrs.
Student Interviews	8	1	45 min	6 hrs.
Family day celebration	1	1	2.5 hrs	2.5 hrs.
Survey	Whole class	6	20 min	2 hrs.
Follow up Student Interviews	4	1	30 min	2 hrs.
Member check meetings	2	4	40 min	5.33 hrs.
Total Time				64.18 hrs.

* While waiting for research participants to be available for interviews or for the appropriate classes to observe other every-day school occurrences could be witnessed.

13. How do you prefer your English classes to be? Indicate the percentage of each.

Literature ____% + **Vocabulary** ____% + **Grammar** ____% + **Writing** ____% +

Other (specify)(_____) ____% = 100%

14. Please indicate the efficacy of your English classes:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not effective at all

Very Effective

15. Please indicate the efficacy of your Spanish classes:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not effective at all

Very Effective

16. Where do you think that you have learned most of what you know in English?

17. ¿In what language(s) do you usually read for pleasure? Eng. ____ Sp. ____ Both about the same ____.

18. How many do you self-select and read per month?

Newspaper articles: Eng. ____ Sp. ____
Magazine articles: Eng. ____ Sp. ____
Books: Eng. ____ Sp. ____ (Specify type _____)
Information on the Internet: Eng. ____ Sp. ____ (Specify type _____)
Others: Eng. ____ Sp. ____ (Specify: _____)

19. In what language do you think? Eng. ____ Sp. ____ Both about the same ____.

APPENDIX H

Original survey given to Cervantina students
by the English department

Name: _____ Grade: _____

English level: Basic Intermediate Advanced

1. Name of all schools previously attended and corresponding grade-levels.

2. Please indicate the grade at which you entered Cervantina:

7th 8th 9th 10th 11th

3. Have you studied English in some afternoon program or with a tutor?

Yes No (If the answer is yes, please indicate the name of the institution).

4. Have you attended foreign summer camps in English?

Yes No (If the answer is yes, how many times?). _____

Where _____

5. Do your parents speak English?

Mother: Yes No

Father: Yes No

6. Do you enjoy speaking English?

Yes No

7. Do you think that English is a necessary language?

Yes No Why? _____

APPENDIX I

Some sample schedules from both cases

Case 1, Imersão: 1st-Grade Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:50 - 8:30	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
8:35 - 9:15	Language Arts	Language Arts	Language Arts	Language Arts	Language Arts
9:20 - 10:00		Spanish			Music
10:05 - 10:45	Library	Computer	Computer	Spanish	Library
10:50 - 11:30	Lunch				
11:35 – 12:15	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics
12:15 – 12:55	Art	Science	Spanish	Health	
1:00 – 1:40	Science	Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education	Health
1:45 – 2:20	Enrichment	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Reward Club

Note: Spanish classes are indicated in **bold**.

Case 2, Cervantina: 1st-Grade Schedule

	Lunes	Martes	Miércoles	Jueves	Viernes
7:50 - 8:00	Acto de Bandera				
8:00 - 8:45	Lectura y Escritura	English	Lectura y Escritura	Matemáticas	Educación Física
8:45 - 9:30	Lectura y Escritura	Lectura y Escritura	Lectura y Escritura	Matemáticas	Arte
9:30 – 10:15	Sociales	Orientación	Religión	English	Lectura y Escritura
10:15 - 10:45	Recreo				
10:45 - 11:30	Matemáticas	Biblioteca	Educación Física	Educación Musical	English
11:30 - 12:15	Matemáticas	Matemáticas	Matemáticas	Danza	Naturales
12:15- 1:00	Cómputos / Audiovisuales	Sociales	Naturales	Sociales	Juego y Trabajo

Note: English classes are indicated in **bold**.

Case 1, Imersão: 5th-Grade Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:50 – 8:05					
8:10 - 8:30	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
8:35 - 9:15	Reading	Reading	Reading	Novels	Reading quiz Language Quiz Creative Writing
9:20 - 10:00	Language Arts	Reading	Language Arts	Language Arts	Spelling
10:05 - 10:45	Mathematics	Spelling	Mathematics	French	Health
10:50 - 11:30	Lunch				
11:35 – 12:15	Music	French	Sociales	Computer	Physical Education
12:15 – 12:55	Social Studies	Mathematics	Art	Mathematics	Sociales
1:00 – 1:40	Science	Social Studies	Social Studies	Sociales	Mathematics
1:45 – 2:20	Science	Physical Education	Health	Science	Reward Club or Detention Club

Note: Spanish classes are indicated in **bold**.

Case 2, Cervantina: 5th-grade Schedule

	Lunes	Martes	Miércoles	Jueves	Viernes
7:50 - 8:00	Acto de Bandera				
8:00 - 8:45	English	Francés	Matemáticas	Lenguaje	Matemáticas
8:45 - 9:30	Sociales	Danza	English	Francés	Religión
9:30 – 10:15	Naturales	Matemáticas	Música	Sociales	Lenguaje
10:15 - 10:45	Recreo				
10:45 - 11:30	Lenguaje	English	Lenguaje	Matemáticas	Orientación
11:30 - 12:15	Informática	Lenguaje	Educación Física	Educación Física	English
12:15- 1:00	Matemáticas	Sociales	Naturales	Naturales	Sociales

Note: English classes are indicated in **bold**.

Case 1, Imersão: 10th-Grade Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:50 - 8:30	Biology Lab.	French	Biology	Biology	Biology
8:35 - 9:15	Biology Lab.	Geometry	Geometry	Geometry	Geometry
9:20 - 10:00	Spanish: Latin American History and Geography	Physical Education			
10:05 - 10:45	Geometry	Physical Education	Art / Speech	Physical Education	Basic Electricity/ Computer Science
10:50 - 11:30	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Art / Speech
11:35 – 12:15	World Literature	World Literature	World Literature	World Literature	World Literature
12:15 – 12:55	Lunch				
1:00 – 1:40	World History	World History	World History	World History	World History
1:45 – 2:25	Basic Electricity/ Computer Science	Basic Electricity/ Computer Science	Composition II	French	Spanish: Dominican Civics

Note: Spanish classes are indicated in **bold**.

Case 2, Cervantina 10th-Grade Schedule

	Lunes	Martes	Miércoles	Jueves	Viernes
7:50 - 8:00	Acto de Bandera				
8:00 - 8:45	Francés	Matemáticas	English	Matemáticas	English
8:45 - 9:30	Francés	Matemáticas	English	Matemáticas	English
9:30 – 10:15	Lengua Española	Lengua Española	Sociales	Formación Moral y Religiosa	Educación Artística
10:15 - 11:00	Lengua Española	Educación Física	Informática	Sociales	Educación Artística
11:00 - 11:30	Recreo				
11:30 - 12:15	English	Educación Moral Y Cívica	Desarrollo Humano y Religioso	Lengua Española	Sociales
12:15- 1:00	Sociales	Física	Lengua Española	Física	Matemáticas
1:00 - 1:45	Sociales	Física	Física	Física	Matemáticas

Note: English classes are indicated in **bold**.

APPENDIX J

Further details on some of the textbooks used at the school in Case 1: Imersão

World History: Patterns of Interaction is used in the 10th-grade. This is also a first language text that teaches a combination of ancient and modern world history. The publisher includes a myriad of technology tools that teachers are able to use to complement the material from the textbooks. These include ties to the period in question through art, culture, literature, and geography. Some of the materials include a video series, an electronic library of primary sources CD-ROM, links to Internet resources. The publisher also boasts of including first-hand accounts of history and document-based questions in order to help students develop and improve their critical-thinking skills. Furthermore, it also includes a variety of primary sources, which are integrated into the narrative as well as featured on their electronic media.

In the 12th-grade, for example, the school uses English literature (2007) from Prentice Hall which contains an anthology of stories divided into the old English and Medieval periods, the Renaissance, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Romantic period, the Victorian period, and the modern and post modern periods. Some of the authors included in this anthology include Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, John Milton, William Blake, Robert Browning, Charlotte Brontë, Lord Byron, and William Butler Yeats. These texts also include practice assessments to aid teachers in checking skills proficiency and to make sure students are on track. These texts are designed to correlate with United States standards and as such include tools to help teachers in their lesson planning that are correlated to those standards. This series also includes a technology component with practice tests and quizzes, interactive textbooks on CD-ROM, some of the classic works re-enacted in different formats, as well as options to listen to the works on audio recordings.

Additionally, with textbooks such as Physics principles and problems (2002) from Glencoe, McGraw Hill and Holt, Rinehart and Winston's Economics (1999) the school attempts to aid student learning by blending content and problem-solving strategies. Both of these texts offer integrated support, abundant opportunities for problem solving, and a variety of realistic applications. The programs attempt to balance the presentation of concepts with strong problem-solving strands. Furthermore, these companies also organize their program resources so as to save the teachers in their preparation time and allow them to meet the needs of students in diverse classrooms. These also include additional technological materials such as CDs, videos, and interactive websites.

In the case of Spanish language classes, throughout high school, Imersão uses the “Lengua y Literatura” books also published in Spain by Editorial Santillana. These Spanish-as-a-first-language books are made up of 12 modular units centered on developing oral and written communication abilities, as well as the study of language and literature. These books were specifically designed for the Dominican market and all lessons carefully integrate Dominican and Spanish historical literature from the thirteenth to the twentieth century.

Editorial Santillana also has a series of what they call artistic education that is widely used in the Dominican Republic. The Music no. 3 text used in 12th-grade at Imersão includes basic knowledge of the language of music; distinguishing by sight and sound the different instruments in the orchestra and different voices; the analysis of musical compositions; to enrich the possibilities of expression by using the voice or an instrument to elaborate musical ideas; to better appreciate music by understanding texts, written scores, melody, harmony, rhythm, and timbre; and to help students acquire the vocabulary that allows them to explain musical processes and better form their own opinion of musical pieces.

APPENDIX K

Further details on the textbooks used at Cervantina

Pearson, Longman's *Shining Star* is a program specifically designed for English language learners in grades 6-12. It seeks to support students as they master reading, writing, literature and content, within a systematic language development framework. The series consists of content-based narrative and expository texts in language arts, science and social studies in order to aid students in the acquisition of academic vocabulary. The series comes in three levels (A, B and C) and includes student books and workbooks, teacher's editions, and extra resources for teachers like assessment guides, transparencies, audio CDs, and CD-ROM.

They also use Holt Rinehart and Winston's series *Elements of Literature* with certain groups. This series, which is designed for first language students, encourages learners to enter into a meaningful dialogue with the ideas and themes of literature. The introductory 6th-grade course is taught in 10th grade advanced and 11th intermediate. The 7th-grade book in 11th advanced and 12th intermediate and the 8th-grade book is taught in 12th advanced. This program combines a student-centered approach to the study of literature with a sharp focus on the development of practical reading and writing skills. The series includes collections of poems, short stories, and non-fiction. It combines works from authors such as Twain, Christian Anderson, Poe, Cosby, Angelou, Kipling, and Hemingway with other less known writers.