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## **Nuestra Escuela: A Quasi-Experimental Study of the Impact of Spanish Language Skills Training on the Attitudes and Practices of Non-Hispanic Teachers of Hispanic Students**

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*Nuestra Escuela:*

A Quasi-Experimental Study of the Impact of Spanish Language Skills Training on the Attitudes and  
Practices of Non-Hispanic Teachers of Hispanic Students

Patricia Sutherland Rock

Concordia University – Portland

College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Teacher Leadership

Chad Becker, Ph.D., Faculty Chair, Dissertation Committee

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## **Abstract**

The reality of the changing face of America's public schools is that many teachers are in districts with high numbers of native Spanish speakers in their classrooms, yet very few of those teachers speak or understand Spanish. In lieu of the challenge to attract, hire, or retain a suitable number of Spanish-speaking teachers, professional development training of existing faculty in basic Spanish speaking skills could be considered a viable option when schools desire to create a culturally sensitive community; however, Spanish language skills training for teachers and administrators in districts with high numbers of Latinx students is not as prevalent as it seemingly should be. The research author was motivated by the conceptual framework of Latino critical race theory (LatCrit) in that English language supremacy and marginalization of Spanish speakers are conscious and unconscious practices inherent in American classrooms. This quasi-experimental research study looked at the attitudes, classroom practices, and feelings of preparedness of teachers towards English language learners (ELLs) in a public high school where 44% of the students named Spanish as their first language, with 77% of the ELL students speaking Spanish. A pre-service questionnaire gauging the existing attitudes and practices of 34 non-Hispanic, non-Spanish-speaking teachers unveiled negative feelings towards ELLs and teachers' responsibilities in the mainstream classroom with English language learners. The first survey was followed by two professional development (PD) sessions over a two-month period in beginning Spanish language skills for 13 non-Hispanic, mainstream classroom teachers who volunteered for the PD. A post-service questionnaire quantified measurable change, even though statistical significance was not evident, in those teachers' attitudes, classroom practices, and feelings of preparedness after the completion of the training.

*Keywords:* teacher preparation, professional development, ESL, ELL, Hispanic, Latino, Spanish, English learners, teacher attitudes, critical race theory, LatCrit

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head, but if you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.

– Nelson Mandela

### **Introduction to the Problem**

Hispanic students currently make up nearly 25% of the elementary school-age population and are projected to comprise nearly 30% of the total school-age population in the United States by the year 2025 (NCES.ed.gov, 2013). The descriptor “Hispanic” focuses on people of Spanish-speaking origin, and includes people from Spain, whereas the descriptor “Latino” refers to people of Latin American origin, and includes Portuguese-speaking Brazilians, but excludes those Spanish speakers from the country of Spain (Pittman, 2015). Within the context of this quasi-experimental research and reporting, the terms Hispanic and Latino/a (“Latinx”) will be used interchangeably to identify first language (L1) Spanish, non-English-speaking or English language learners in American public schools, as well as English-fluent, L1 Spanish speakers, including Latin Americans from México, Central America, South America, and Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries who are immigrants to the United States and are enrolled in American public schools. More specifically, when percentages of Hispanics are annotated within this text, these are overwhelmingly from Latin American origins such as México, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic or other Caribbean countries where Spanish is the official language. Where the race of students in American public schools is noted historically, presently, and projected for the future growth of Hispanics, this refers to Latin Americans including Mexicans, Central Americans, Caribbean Islanders, and South Americans, and generally

excludes Spanish peoples from Spain. To further clarify, the only people who are literally called “Spanish” are those people whose origins are from the country of Spain (Pittman, 2015).

Among the entire group of students in American public schools identified as Hispanic, L1 Spanish speakers constitute an average of 77% of all students enrolled in programs for the limited English proficient (LEP) English language learners (ELLs), including bilingual education and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs (MPI, 2015; NCES, 2013; see Figure 1).

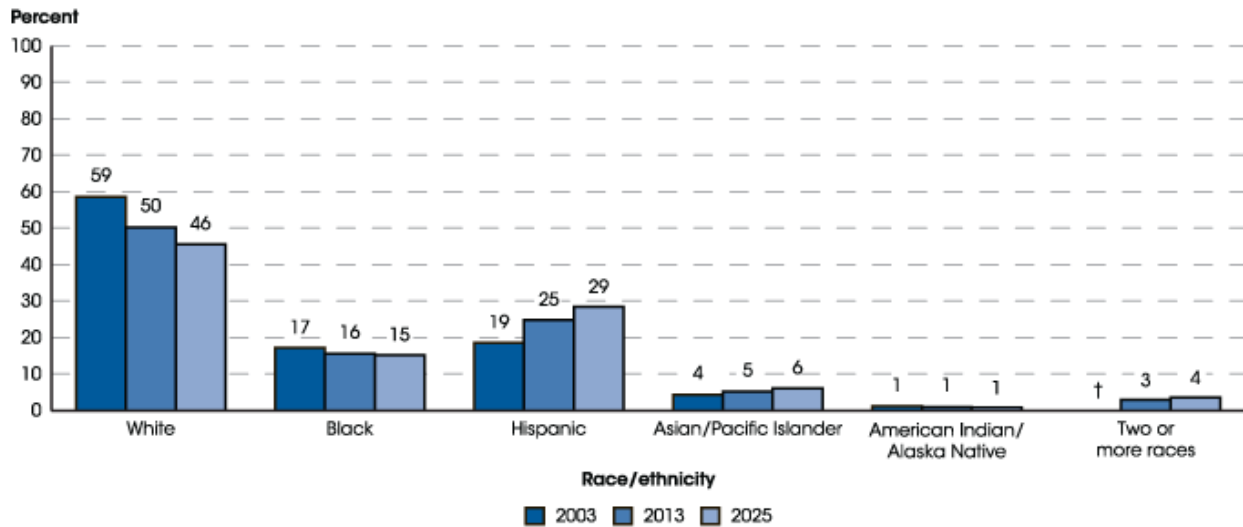


Figure 1. Race of Students in American Public Schools, Past, Present, and Projected.

NCES.ed.gov (2013).

The top five states with ELLs that are primarily L1 Spanish are Texas (90%), California (84%), Illinois (80%), Florida (72%), and New York (61%) (US DOE, 2013; see Appendix A).

Conversely, White, non-Hispanic teachers make up the largest part of the U.S. teaching force (NCES.ed.gov, 2013), meaning that the mother language of the largest minority of students in public schools is not the language known or spoken by most teachers (see Figure 2). The maintenance of this linguistic divide between teachers and students can be examined through the lens of critical race theory (Bell, 1992), in that the traditional Anglo-Saxon/White teaching force insists that English is the language of instruction, and that assimilation, not accommodation, is

the preferred direction for ELL and ESL students (Crookes, Davis, & Clair, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). The challenges brought on by this linguistic divide are explored thoroughly and in detail in Chapter 2: Literature Review.

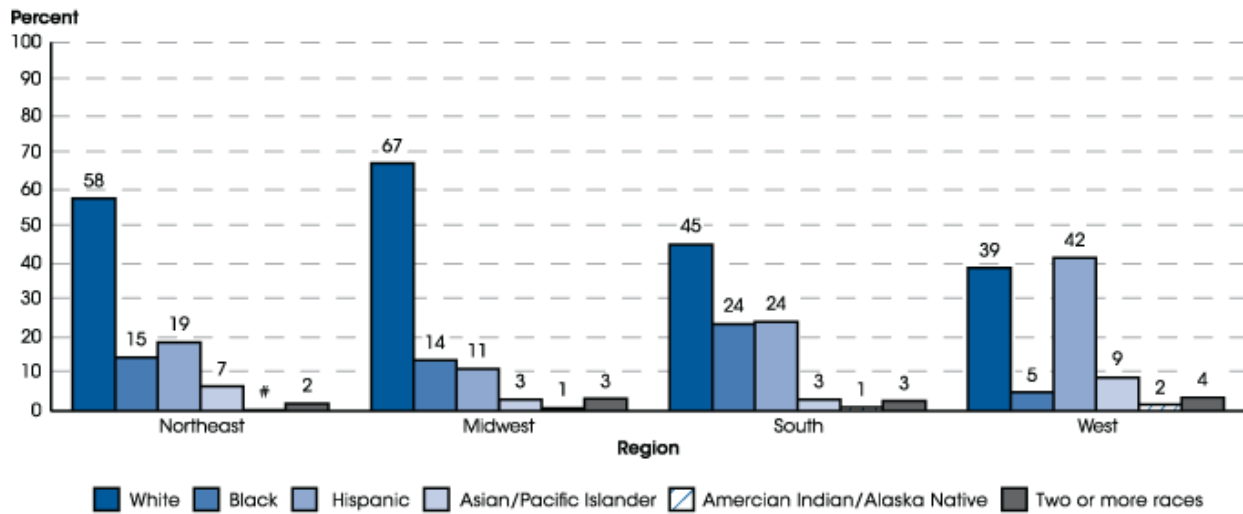


Figure 2. Race of Teachers in American Public Schools, 2012-2013, by Region.

NCES.ed.gov (2013).

There is well-established and well-vetted research regarding the relationships found between race and ethnicity of teachers and student outcomes (e.g., Colombo, 2005; Cortina & Gendreau, 2003; García, 2001; NEA, 2010; Padrón, Waxman, & Rivera, 2002). Students with English as their second (or additional) language have always had a disadvantage in academic performance in English-only schools (Broomes, 2010). Variables that are recognized as measurements of student outcomes, and the related achievement gaps, include graduation rates, dropout rates, and standardized test scores, among other things (Crosby, 1999). From the existing body of research, we are provided data (Gonzalez, Pagán, Wendell, & Love, 2011; Jesse, Davis, & Pokorny, 2004; Youngs & Youngs, 2001) that identify a positive association between teachers' beliefs about social disadvantage – including the groups comprised of English language learners, immigrants, and people of color – and student achievement (Rochmes, 2015). Teachers' attitudes toward

Latinx students can be evidenced in interaction, or resistance to interaction, with those students. The mainstream classroom teacher who displays discriminatory behavior in the classroom is negatively influencing students' learning (Long, 2015). Derogatory learning experiences may result in underachievement, feelings of helplessness, lack of confidence and self-esteem, and lead to negative outcomes (Broomes, 2010; Crosby, 1999; Gershenson, 2015). Herein lies the main thrust of this quasi-experimental approach to positive changes in attitudes and improved practices of non-Hispanic, non-Spanish-speaking teachers in American public schools that can be affected by professional development in beginning Spanish language skills training for teachers, where Latinx students comprise part of the student body and are included in mainstream classrooms.

The challenge in this study was to measure not only teachers' attitudes about the growing number of English language learners in the mainstream classroom, but also to identify and measure any modifications of practices and feelings of preparedness in that arena. I determined that knowing more about non-Hispanic teachers' knowledge of, and personal experiences with, English language learners and how that impacted those teachers' attitudes and practices within a school with a population that included a large percentage of Spanish-speaking students, would be useful as a pre-service marker. An appropriate questionnaire was selected (Reeves, 2006) to gauge those teachers' attitudes, find out about their practices, and measure their feelings of preparedness to teach ESL students (see Appendix B). As demand for Spanish-speaking teachers is increasing (Restuccia, 2013), initiating an in-service training series of modules of beginning Spanish language skills for non-Hispanic teachers (Appendix D), and then quantifying any change in attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach English language learners in the mainstream classroom with a post-service survey (see Appendix B) would provide invaluable

data for teacher educators. I was inspired by the success in the medical community in teaching Spanish to health care professionals (Bender, 2004), and I felt concern about the serious lack of similar teacher preparation.

### **Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework for the Problem**

**Background.** I chose to research this subject because of an interesting observation I made at the urban high school where I taught for over 15 years. Although perhaps upwards of 44% of our students spoke Spanish, only 10% of our teaching staff and administration spoke Spanish. Instead of teachers waiting for students to “hurry up and learn English,” I thought it could be, at a minimum, a gesture of good will and a strategy for the improvement of school culture for the regular classroom teacher to try to learn about his or her students’ first language. Teachers being able to pronounce students’ names correctly, and being able to say, “Good morning,” or ask, “Do you need a pencil?” in Spanish could go a long way in establishing both feelings of belonging for the students and feelings of competence for the teachers (Mitchell, 2016). In the medical community, there are very successful, standardized professional development training seminars for health care professionals who serve Hispanic clientele (Bender, 2004), but there is no such standardized training for teachers. I wanted to survey teachers for attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach ELLs, then offer two professional development seminars in *Beginning Spanish for Teachers*, followed by a post-service survey of teachers’ attitudes, self-reported classroom practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach ELLs in the mainstream classroom. I hoped to find a positive correlation and a statistically significant relationship between the training and the improvement of attitudes, practices, and teachers’ feelings of preparedness.



**Context.** This quasi-experimental research study was longitudinal and quantitative in design, measuring change in teachers' attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach English language learners in the mainstream classroom via pre-intervention and post-intervention online questionnaires. The intervention was the professional development training in basic, beginning Spanish language skills for teachers. The four-part pre-intervention questionnaire (see Appendix B) consisted of 19 questions about teachers' attitudes regarding English language learners in the mainstream classroom in Section A, 11 questions regarding teachers' practices and support in teaching English language learners in Section B, two questions in Section C regarding the benefits and challenges of teaching ELLs, and six demographic questions in Section D. All teachers at the research site (68) were invited via email in mid-April 2017 to participate; a link was provided to the questionnaire within the email. The questionnaire was administered online via Qualtrics Survey Software. It was my hope that potentially 90% of the teachers at the school would have completed the pre-intervention questionnaire ( $n = 60$ ) and half of those teachers at the site would have participated in the intervention ( $n = 30$ ) within the last two weeks of April 2017. After two sessions of professional development training in beginning Spanish language skills for classroom teachers, administered to potentially half the total population of non-Hispanic teachers ( $n = 30$ ), a post-service questionnaire was to be administered to both groups – the teachers who participated in the PD and the teachers who chose not to participate in the PD. This theoretical involvement of so many teachers was ambitious, however, and in the end only 44 teachers participated in the pre-intervention questionnaire administered in April 2017, 34 teachers qualified for the PD because they did not know any Spanish, and of those only 15 chose to participate in the two PD sessions presented in May 2017. Of the 15 PD participants, two admitted that they did not take the pre-intervention

online survey and were subsequently disqualified from inclusion in the aggregate research data. The same four-part survey was administered online via Qualtrics Survey Software in both the pre- and post- intervention questionnaires and included one additional question to validate PD participation in the post-intervention questionnaire. The post-intervention questionnaire was administered only to the 13 PD participants (the intervention group), and not to the non-participants of the PD that originally completed the pre-intervention questionnaire. The reasons for this slight change in methodology are discussed in detail in the Limitations section here and in Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results. The nature of the study is described in greater detail in Chapter 3: Methodology.

**History.** The United States' school system is traditionally characterized by texts, cultural examples, and learning materials that portray the American or Eurocentric perspectives while creating a gap for other cultures' perspectives (Padrón et al., 2002; Picower, 2009). This may be an educational disadvantage for the new immigrant whose culture and language has been ignored in the system (Abbott, 2014). Suitable strategies for ensuring student engagement should be the focus in both elementary and secondary schools, and recognizing – if not celebrating – diversity should be the foundation of teaching strategies across all curricula. This would help in making the school's administrators and faculty accountable for the students' ongoing success, which involves acquiring a high school diploma, getting accepted to institutions of higher learning, and preparing for future careers (Schlechty, 2004). Because teaching beginning Spanish language skills for teachers is not a common part of teacher preparation programs or professional development – even in areas where significant numbers of Hispanics and Spanish speakers are living and going to school – the absence of such training and programs needed to be critically examined through the lenses of teachers' inherent discrimination, teachers' attitudes towards

English learners, the inclusion of culturally relevant pedagogy, and teacher training/educator preparation. These are explored in greater detail in Chapter 2: Literature Review.

**Conceptual framework.** The U.S. Hispanic population is very diverse; there is great variability among Hispanic students in terms of their countries of birth, primary language skills, prior educational experiences, and socioeconomic status (García, 2001; Peregoy & Boyle, 2000). However, as noted earlier, except for Brazilian Portuguese, Spanish is the mother language of all Hispanics. Conversely, the public school teacher population is not as diverse (see Figure 2). Part of the resistance to all things Latino (including speaking Spanish) includes the overarching beliefs held by teachers that all immigrants should learn to speak English quickly, that ESL teachers should serve as translators, that regular classroom teachers should not have to change or differentiate pedagogies, and that assimilation – not accommodation – is part of the immigrant process of becoming “Americanized” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). The implicit belief that being American means speaking English and rendering one’s self to Anglo-Saxon ways is an indicator of critical race theory, that inherent in all educational settings where the faculty is primarily White and non-Hispanic, there will exist inherent racism (CRSEA, 2015; Picower, 2009; Taylor & Ladson-Billings, 2009).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Contrary to what many believe, English is not the official language of the United States. With a growing Latino population in the country’s public schools, more accommodations and exceptions for English language learners are required (Gonzalez et al., 2011). Each one of those requirements serves to accelerate the Spanish-speaking student to learn English, and in effect, marginalizes him or her (Taylor & Ladson-Billings, 2009). The faces of public school teachers, which are primarily non-Hispanic (see Figure 2) do not match the faces of a growing number of

the students they teach, including Hispanic students (see Figure 1). This is especially true in urban districts and in border states/immigration points such as Florida, New Mexico, Arizona, California, New York, and even Connecticut (the research site state), among others (Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015). States with over 75% of their ESL students naming Spanish as their first language include the obvious such as Texas (90.5%) and California (83.9%), which border México, but also include the non-obvious at the top of the list, such as Arkansas (86.3%), Oklahoma (84.8%), and Colorado (84.1%) (DOE, 2012-2013, see Appendix A). While many U.S. Government agencies and academics posit that recruitment and retention of Latinx teachers must be increased, that is not happening as rapidly as necessary (Restuccia, 2013; US DOE, 2016). The question becomes clear, then, about how to better serve the Hispanic community and find ways to improve Latinx student outcomes that are specifically tied to classroom participation, teacher-student relationships, and culturally welcoming schools (Waxman, 1992; Wenglinsky, 2001).

Teachers' attitudes regarding immigrants and English language learners have been studied in past research that correlates negative attitudes towards Hispanics to deficient outcomes for those students (Gershenson, 2015; Schneider, Martinez, & Ownes, 2006). The relationship between language and academic achievement has been the subject of much study as well (e.g., Gonzalez et al., 2011; Halcon, 2001; Lippe-Green, 1997). Spanish language skills training for non-Hispanic, non-Spanish-speaking teachers of Hispanic students is one suggested way to create stronger and more meaningful teacher-student relationships (for example, learning to pronounce a student's name correctly), to motivate students to participate in classroom activities, and to maintain a culturally sensitive school that erases the divide between "us" and "them." Hypothetically, if teachers are educated in basic Spanish language skills and cultural norms for

Latinos, then that knowledge can potentially improve teachers' attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness in the mainstream classroom in schools where Latinos are enrolled, which can then in turn potentially improve Latinx student outcomes (Colombo, 2005; Cooper, 2012; Duran, Dugan, & Weffer, 1997).

### **Purpose of the Study**

This dissertation evolved from my belief that teachers and administrators who deny L1 Spanish-speaking students and their parents the respect of, at a minimum, learning to pronounce their names correctly, was an indicator of linguistic imperialism. With a growing number of L1 Spanish speakers in the United States (see Figure 1; Appendix A), training public school teachers to be linguistically responsive to Latinx students is perceivably a necessary instructional reform, whether the student is an English language learner or is proficient in English. Particularly now in American history, it is my opinion that beginning Spanish language skills training should be provided in both teacher preparation programs and professional development seminars at schools that serve a Hispanic population where Spanish is prevalent in the community. To continue to ignore the specific needs of students who speak Spanish is to perpetuate English-language supremacy, in that English is the normal language of instruction, and other languages are not (Taylor & Ladson-Billings, 2009). Furthermore, it is my personal belief that when non-Hispanic, non-Spanish-speaking teachers comprise most of the teaching faculty at a school in a community that serves Latinos who comprise nearly half of the student body (CTDOE, 2015), it is an atrocity for the teaching staff and administrators to be in denial of the importance of knowing or using any of the language of the students they serve. The purpose of this research study was to determine if there were any measurable influences on non-Hispanic, non-Spanish-speaking teachers' attitudes, self-reported practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach

English language learners, after a series of in-service training sessions in beginning Spanish language skills.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of professional development training for non-Hispanic high school teachers in basic Spanish language skills for classroom teachers, and the specific impact on teachers' personal and professional attitudes towards English language learners, adaptations of practices in classrooms, and preparedness to teach ELLs where there are ELLs in the mainstream. The overarching research question was whether professional development training in beginning Spanish for teachers of the existing non-Hispanic, non-Spanish-speaking teaching force of an urban high school, where almost half of the student body named Spanish as the main language spoken at home, could help to improve the attitudes and practices of those teachers, as well as feelings of preparedness in teaching English language learners in the mainstream classroom. The research questions were:

- Can basic Spanish language training for teachers change teachers' attitudes towards ELLs (where more than 50% of the ELLs are L1 Spanish)?
- Can basic Spanish language training for teachers change classroom practices in the inclusive classroom where Latinx students are present?
- Can basic Spanish language training for teachers change teachers' feelings about preparedness to teach ELLs (where more than 50% of the ELLs are L1 Spanish)?

The hypotheses were:

1. Null hypothesis: There is no statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish and a change in attitudes about ELLs in the general classroom.

Alternative hypothesis: There is a statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish for teachers of Hispanic students and a change in attitudes about ELLs in the general classroom, after the training.

2. Null hypothesis: There is no statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish and teachers' classroom practices in the inclusive classroom where any Hispanic students are present.

Alternative hypothesis: There is a statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish for teachers of Hispanic students and those teachers' self-reported classroom practices in the inclusive classroom where any Hispanic students are present.

3. Null hypothesis: There is no statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish and teachers' feeling about preparedness to teach ELLs in the general classroom.

Alternative hypothesis: There is a statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish for teachers of Hispanic students and those teachers' feelings about preparedness to teach ELLs, after the training.

### **Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study**

The implications of the findings for this quasi-experimental research study could be far-reaching. Should the alternative hypotheses be supported by the data, then school districts' principals and administrators who desire a culturally sensitive and linguistically competent school staff where Hispanic students are welcomed and celebrated instead of being consciously or unconsciously marginalized and labeled deficient (or treated as deficient) may employ the training in basic Spanish language skills as a standard part of teacher preparation and faculty

professional development. Should the data support the null hypotheses, then perhaps the theory of critical race is supported as inherent in education (Ladson-Billings, 1998) and would propel much more investigation and research in this sensitive, compartmentalized area of inherent linguistic racism.

Theoretically, the more knowledge one has with a culture and language different than one's own, the more comfortable are the exchanges and communicative efforts within the shared environment (Duran, Dugan, & Weffer, 1997; Garza, 2009). The conceptual framework driving the research was that implicit bias and inherent linguistic discrimination in normal pedagogical settings (Taylor & Ladson-Billings, 2009) cannot be eliminated or lessened unless cultural sensitivity and language competency training is promoted to aid all teachers to better meet the needs of diverse students (Benavides & Midabuche, 2004; Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Cantu, 2008; NEA, 2010). It was hoped that the research would identify the concept of professional development in Spanish language skills for non-Hispanic/non-Spanish-speaking teachers as a viable opportunity for improvement of the public-school workforce and in turn, of the outcomes for Latinx students.

### **Definition of Terms**

In the body of the relevant research related to this dissertation topic, the phrase English Language Learner (ELL) will be used interchangeably with English Learner (EL) regarding Latino/Latina L1 Spanish learners. Literature and methodologies concerning the terms ELL, EL, or ESL (English as a Second Language) will be considered interchangeable with Latinx, L1 Spanish English-learners. Additionally, the terms Hispanic and Latino/a or Latinx are considered identical in identifying the population among whom Spanish is the first language (L1), whether they are English-proficient or English language learners. When the term White is



used to identify race, this means non-Hispanic Caucasian. The terms practice and pedagogy will be assumed interchangeable as applies to teachers' behavior in the classroom.

### **Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations**

**Assumptions.** For the purposes of this study, the target population (68 faculty members at the research site school) was assumed to be able to participate in the research project. The previously published (Reeves, 2006) and peer-reviewed questionnaire instrument (see Appendix B) was determined to be 100% valid and reliable. Reliability and validity of the instrument was retested, as written in the Instrumentation section of Chapter 3: Methodology. The Qualtrics Online Survey Software, used to facilitate the questionnaire and tabulate the results, was assumed to be flawless. Teacher-led professional development in various programs is regularly provided at the research site as a faculty requirement, and is always expected to be useful and informative.

**Delimitations.** For the purposes of this research, only teachers who were not Hispanic and/or who did not speak Spanish were studied for the effectiveness of professional development (PD) training in beginning Spanish language skills and the impact on those teachers' attitudes and practices. Among the target sample of 68 teachers, approximately 10% were Hispanic or spoke Spanish as a first or second language. All 68 teachers were teaching in a school with upwards of 44% Hispanic, L1 Spanish speakers. Therefore, the potential to have a healthy number of participants interested in PD to learn Spanish was statistically viable, making participation in the PD by perhaps 25 teachers a decent intervention group. Another delimitation was that I received a grant in 2016 to travel to South America and take Spanish lessons, with the intention to return to school in Connecticut and share what I learned with my colleagues. My intention was to use those skills to impart the teacher-led PD that was part of this quasi-

experimental study, as I am well qualified: I am a White, non-Hispanic teacher who has happily developed bonding relationships with Latinx students and their families over the years simply by my practicing/speaking Spanish in the classroom and during phone calls to students' homes.

**Limitations.** Because this research project was taking place entirely within one grades 9–12 urban high school, the limitations were sample size, the scope of the project having to be within the academic school year, and the participation rate. There were only 68 teachers at the research site (beside myself), and only once monthly teacher-led professional development seminars. Participation in PD was compulsory for all teachers; however, teachers could choose among several different PD offerings and may have chosen not to undertake the teacher-led PD, *Beginning Spanish for Teachers*. Each limitation as named did impact the study, as participation in the pre-intervention study was 44 of 68 teachers; qualifying participants of the quasi-experimental study were 34 of 44, with only 15 participating in the PD and 13 qualifying for the post-intervention survey. Even with the lower than expected numbers of participants, I believe the structure of the study and the experiment itself was solid. As noted in the hypotheses above, there is still much to be gained by the studying the participation rates and the data results of this quasi-experimental study.

### **Summary of Chapter 1**

The faces of the teaching force in America's public schools (see Figure 2) no longer match the faces of the student population (Figure 1). Instead of embracing the language and culture of America's largest minority, Hispanics, the proliferous English-only, marginalization of English-learners and L1 Spanish speakers tends to maintain Anglo-imperialism and the inherent biases of a primarily White, non-Hispanic administration and faculty (Taylor & Ladson-Billings, 2009). There are many arguments in the literature for assimilation concurrent with

accommodation, but simply having one or two ESL teachers in a school of 900 students where 44% of those students name Spanish as their first language, and 77% of all the English language learner students in the district speak Spanish seems incomprehensible; nevertheless, such was the case at the research-site school. This quasi-experimental study was designed to prove that a better choice for schools in communities and districts where significant percentages of Hispanics are enrolled would be to prepare teachers with some linguistic ability that matches the language of their students and those students' parents. The idea of beginning Spanish language skills training for teachers is presented as a viable opportunity to increase empathy and improve school culture, which in turn may lend itself to improved outcomes for Latinx students. In the following chapters, the scope and history of the linguistic-gap situation is reviewed in the literature, and the quantitative research methodology of this quasi-experimental study to determine if linguistic training could improve the linguistic-gap situation with reference to teachers' attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness is explained and validated.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction to the Literature Review**

Teachers should be ready to work with learners from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Brisk, 2007; Gonzalez et al., 2011). In their teacher preparation programs, all teachers take one or more classes designed to prepare for the multicultural classroom, which invariably includes English language learners. The changing demographical statistics among America's students have significantly affected classrooms in America (Wilson, 2016). Today, those changing demographics reflect a student body which includes at least a quarter or more who are of Latino heritage (Figure 1). Not every teacher feels adequately prepared to work with students who are linguistically different (Solomon, Lalas, & Franklin, 2006), or to satisfactorily work with students whose cultures do not match their own (Taylor & Ladson-Billings, 2009). In the United States, there is a large disparity between the home languages and races of teachers and their students (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

While cultural and linguistic differences are important; even more significant is the dominance of White, English-speaking America (Ogbu, 1992) and the implications in public education where there is a growing majority of Latinx students. In this chapter, the challenge of the nation's teaching force accepting the new structure of the American classroom is explored through the conceptual theory of critical race (Bell, 1992), or the racial and lingual maintenance of an overarching Anglo society. The perceptions of teacher preparedness to teach culturally diverse and English learning students is explored within the research literature, with an emphasis on the significance of inclusion and its impact on the mainstream classroom teacher (Liggett, 2013). The historical methodologies that have been used to measure teachers' attitudes and biases towards ELLs were examined to determine the feasibility of a research study in which the

ability or inability to affect a shift in teachers' attitudes, classroom practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach ELLs via professional development training was viable (e.g., Benavides & Midabuche, 2004; García-Nevarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005; Gordon, 2003; Lyon, Vaasen, & Toomey, 1989).

**Study topic.** There are approximately 14 million language-minority students in K–12 schools; according to the U.S. Department of Education (2016), the number of children classified as English language learners in the United States is above five million, with 8 out of 10 speaking Spanish. Until the number of Hispanic teachers that are recruited and retained in U.S. public schools increases dramatically, there needs to be a viable solution to educating the existing teaching profession about the ways and words of a Latino population. The structure of American educator education is not designed to address the need for culturally and linguistically competent teachers in schools where primarily Hispanic English language learners are enrolled. While some schools recognize the necessity to have Spanish interpreters on hand and to produce written communications in Spanish and English, there continues to be a resistance to non-Hispanic faculty learning any Spanish. In identifying the problem to be addressed in this study, I was inspired by the directive of Pope Francis in 2015 to all people to “go out and meet others where they really are, and not where we think they should be,” (Kandra, 2015, n.p.). The reluctance of American public school boards and administrators to address the very pressing needs of most of its Hispanic pupil population is, in effect, a maintenance of Anglo-Saxon imperialism. The overarching social norm that the current conditions and standards in public education presents is one of denial – and even turning a blind eye – to the needs of Latino students, while elevating a nationalistic school system that insists English is the language of instruction. The problem addressed in this study is the implicit bias that exists within the realm of public school education

– a traditionally White institution operating within the framework of Anglo-Saxonism and its implication of imperialism (Bell, 1992) – where teachers do not know or attempt to know the home language of their students. As servant-leaders in the classroom, teachers of Spanish-speaking students might choose to learn some Spanish, especially the pronunciation of their students’ names, in providing a welcoming, nurturing environment (Mitchell, 2016), and managing classrooms in which L1 Spanish students are not marginalized.

**Context.** According to Delgado and Stefancic (2012), racist behaviors could be intentional or unintentional, and could be motivated by American culture. The behavior has, nevertheless, been carried on, “and continue(s) to inform our public institutions, (including) schools,” (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012, p. 2). As difficult and as uncomfortable it may be, the time has come for educators to peel back the layers of normative prejudice and attenuate to the culture of modern-day American students – and that includes meeting the growing population of Latino boys and Latina girls and their parents where they are, not where non-Hispanic Americans think they should be. I believe that a large part of the resistance to accepting Latin American culture as a major part of United States’ culture is the negative beliefs and attitudes about English language learners that stem from non-Hispanic teachers not knowing the Spanish language or the Latin culture. The better-informed teacher can adjust the classroom instruction to better serve English language learners, including L1 Spanish speakers. Spanish has long been taught in American school systems as a “foreign” language. Spanish is no longer a foreign language, however; Spanish is an American language, and accordingly needs to be recognized, respected, and addressed as such.

**Significance.** Hispanic Americans are the largest minority group in the United States and have consistently lagged in terms of educational performance as compared to other groups in the

country (Padrón et al., 2002; Risk to Opportunity, 2003). A great influence on this achievement gap may be the inherent biases of an Anglicized public-school system, and the inability of the majority White teaching force to adjust to the changing faces and the mother tongue of Hispanic-America. This type of linguistic racism – the negative prejudicial assumptions about those who do not speak English very well – has always been an indefinite and rigid part of the American community (Bell, 1992). When White, non-Hispanic teachers have negative attitudes towards Latinos, or resentment about the responsibility of teaching English learners alongside L1, first language English speakers, teacher behavior is affected in both classroom management and pedagogy (Youngs & Youngs, 2001). An area of interest while structuring the literature review for this thesis was to investigate linguistic racism, or negative attitudes towards L1 Spanish speakers, as a product of ignorance, lack of experience, or quality of pre-service and in-service training for teachers. Perhaps implicit linguistic discrimination and negative attitudes towards ELLs and Hispanics by a majority White teaching force could be corrected or mended through teaching and learning the Spanish language. In this quasi-experimental study, I attempted to determine if professional development training in beginning Spanish for non-Hispanic teachers could induce a statistically significant change in teachers' attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness.

Globally, the country with the most Spanish speakers is México, followed closely by the United States, representing a demographic shift that is dramatically transforming America (Cortina, 2006; Gay, 2000; NEA, 2010), and of great significance. Schooling is compulsory in the U.S., and hence, school districts are left with the responsibility of ensuring that non-English-speaking students are educated (Cooper, 2012; Moses, 2001). Ironically, there has been a vibrant public debate on the use of other languages apart from English in public schools (Cortina, 2006),

another indicator of implicit Anglo-ism in America. Inadequate resources for educating immigrant students who do not speak English has been a huge challenge, given the increase in the number of immigrants who entered the country through traditional means of immigration since the 1990s (Broomes, 2010; Cortina, 2006). The wrong assumption that the official language in the United States is English adds fuel to the dual-linguistic society and bilingual education arguments. English is not the official language of the United States. English has never been selected nor congressionally designated as the official language. Even so, the requirement that all persons abiding in the States learn and speak English would make sense through a humanistic perspective, where constant and clear communication among “we the people” is desirable. The belief that everyone *should* speak English is not based on the premise that it is better for human communication, unfortunately, but primarily on the prejudicial platform that English is the preferred, and inferred superior, language. Except for some Western states, most of the faces and languages of the teachers in American schools do not match the faces or languages of many students (Figure 1 and Figure 2), and primarily so in urban areas (Abbott, 2014; Mercuri, 2012; Moses, 2001).

The issue of Latinx students underachieving in U.S. public schools is well vetted. There are three popular theories which give the reasons behind the underachievement, which include shortage of qualified teachers, poor teaching methods, and risky environments in schools (Padrón et al., 2002). The perceptions about perceived causes of weak interactions between Hispanic learners and their non-Hispanic educators has also been identified as detrimental to strong teacher-student relationships (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Latinos face the highest level of discrimination in terms of race and have the lowest economic status in comparison to other students (Orfield, 2001). Non-Hispanic teachers face personal challenges in their efforts to



overcome negative perceptions about Hispanic students if they are attempting at all to incorporate cultural sensitivity and strengthen relationships with the Latino community (Torres-Velasquez, 2000).

Initially, the challenges facing Hispanics in U.S. schools mainly resulted from the immigration and socio-economic status of the students' parents; the parents also had inadequate information regarding the system of education in their new country (Brewster & Railsback, 2003). Today, as Latinx students progress in the education system, they face other challenges, which include lack of school resources and poor ties between the students, their parents, and their teachers. This results in poor educational performance (Tienda & Mitchell, 2006). The increase in numbers of Hispanic students also poses a challenge to non-Hispanic teachers who feel inadequate and less prepared to handle the situation (Anhalt & Rodriguez Pérez, 2013; Colombo, 2005; Sas, 2009).

According to a study by Samson and Collins (2012), 65% of teachers in Title I schools (i.e. 90% or more enrolled are economically below the poverty level for that area) with large numbers of migrant students explained that they do not receive any professional growth in instructional methods, especially those geared towards educating migrant learners. The findings align with the landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling of *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), where Chinese students who studied at schools in San Francisco explained that they failed to be accorded special linguistic help in school as required, since they were unable to speak English. The students' argument was based on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which banned discrimination based on national origin in the field of education. The Supreme Court made a ruling in favor of the students, emphasizing that the Chinese students were denied equal learning opportunities with other learners due to their ethnicity. This resulted in an expansion on the

rights of students who were not proficient in English. The Court further explained that it is impossible to separate a person's national origin and language, underlining a relationship between language and social identity (Lippi-Green, 1997). The judge explained that the two are strongly correlated, and hence discrimination of individuals based on language is the same as discrimination based on national origin. Somehow, this understanding seems to have been "hidden under the welcome mat" in U.S. schools.

**Problem statement.** Teachers in public schools all over the United States are facing the challenges of teaching large numbers of ELLs who speak Spanish as their first language; in essence, all teachers in America teach English as a second language. The issue of teachers' abilities to communicate with their students is a point of concern in the adoption of curricula and lessons to accommodate the dynamic population (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008; Broomes, 2010; Restuccia, 2013). Many school districts have prioritized professional development due to the growth in the number of English learners and the inadequate training among teachers regarding working with ELLs (Reeves, 2006). Very little research about the perceptions of teachers towards this type of teacher training has been done, however. Cultural sensitivity is also a significant factor in the education of diverse student populations (Risk to Opportunity, 2003; Samson & Collins, 2012). Any culture gap can implicate a weak student-teacher relationship and can greatly inhibit the English learner's academic success (Tienda & Mitchell, 2006). Perhaps the culture gap could be reduced through teachers having the linguistic ability to communicate in simple, beginning Spanish phrases with Latinx students, and the students' parents as well.

The problem of implicit bias addressed in this research study is a problem symptomatic of America's teaching culture, one that is not linguistically accepting of, nor culturally respectful

of, America's growing majority of Hispanics (Long, 2015; McDermott and Rothenberg, 2000; Nieto, 2004). A teacher preparedness program that includes linguistic competency training and its peripheral cultural lessons can uncover and perhaps repair hidden biases and implicit, conscious, sub-conscious, or unconscious racism, and presents an ideal for narrowing the existing gap between non-Hispanic teachers and their students in largely Hispanic populated schools.

The language barrier between teachers and their students creates a literacy gap in the education sector (Halcon, 2001). The difficulty in communication between teachers, students and parents is propagated by the programs that use English only and the deficiency in training regarding lingual and cultural balance among teachers and other educational stakeholders (Cortina, 2006). Teachers are beginning to understand the importance of culture and language in their daily lives and the teaching profession (Arzubiaga, Nogueron, & Sullivan, 2009; Liggett, 2013). English learners can receive educational support from specialists who have expertise in supporting English learners; these specialists include English as a Second Language and Bilingual Education teachers. The reality is that most teachers do not have that expertise, yet have or can expect to have ESL students in their regular education classrooms (Samson & Collins, 2012). New teachers and experienced teachers may be lacking the skill-base to address cultural and linguistic differences inside the classroom and through the pedagogies, and however unapparent it may seem, inherent cultural and linguistic biases may unconsciously drive down the expectations for Hispanic students in general (FERENCE & Bell, 2004). Specifically, the future success of students depends on the expectations of their teachers (Youngs & Youngs, 2001; Cortina, 2006).

The need for this study became even more evident after a review of the literature, as the appropriateness of “the whole of the study as an argument” (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012, p. 26) became clear: a student’s education in a manner that addresses the cultural and lingual needs of the student promotes the involvement of all students in the learning process (Villegas & Lucas, 2007). The student-teacher relationship is strengthened when the teacher’s culture is like the student’s culture (McDermott and Rothenberg, 2000; Ogbu, 1992). There is a cultural and lingual gap between the teaching force and the student body that the public forces to be put in either one of two categories of reason: that Latinos and other immigrant groups are refusing to assimilate as they should (the lingual-imperialist perspective), or that teachers are neither respecting nor accommodating the culture and languages of the growing number of new immigrants and English learners as required by Federal law (i.e. *Lau v. Nichols*, 1974).

Considering a teaching force currently in place that does not reflect the faces or the culture of the growing Latin American population in U.S. public schools, the goal can be to train the existing, majority non-Hispanic, Caucasian teaching force to be culturally sensitive and linguistically prepared. Even a teacher mispronouncing a student’s name can have a lasting, negative impact (Mitchell, 2016); therefore, teacher training in pronunciation of Hispanic names should be offered as a minimum in professional development, either pre-service or in-service, for teachers who do not speak Spanish. As evidenced in the literature review, professional development and teacher training in Latin culture and language, especially in districts with a high population of Latinos/as, is virtually non-existent. Although undergraduate and graduate classes in multiculturalism are now appropriately required in almost all teacher preparation programs, those classes focus on world cultures and ethnic groups as pedantic knowledge. Alternatively, specific training in the Spanish language, including pronunciation of Hispanic

names, should be considered germane as part of a pre-service or in-service teacher training and/or preparation program everywhere in the United States today. This kind of knowledge could result in significant improvement of student-teacher communication and the curricular development process and decisions (Logan & Wimer, 2013).

**Organization.** The review of the literature regarding teachers' attitudes towards Hispanics and ELLs in general naturally involved the concept of inherent discrimination. In this chapter, this was examined through the lens of critical race theory (CRT), and specifically Latino critical race theory (LatCrit) as the conceptual framework. The category included research on teachers' perceptions and attitudes about English language learners and immigrants, teachers' attitudes about professional development and preparedness to teach ELLs, opinions about having the necessary training to accept ELLs into the inclusive classroom, and research that provided data that would conclude that training and experience in targeted cultural sensitivity and linguistic competence did or could improve quality of pedagogy and teachers' attitudes towards students from cultures different than their own. The review and synthesis of the existing research and methodologies provided enough evidence for me to determine that further research was necessary not only in the context of implicit biases of non-Hispanic teachers in today's educational systems, but that a quasi-experimental study in linguistic professional development was clearly warranted.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The literature review encompassed scholarly writings under the overarching concepts of English-speaking imperialism (LatCrit.org, n.d.), cultural ignorance despite the influx of L1 Spanish speakers/English language learners in the public school systems (Nieto, 2010), teachers' attitudes towards ELLs and immigrants in general (Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004), and

advocacy for the necessity of professional development in cultural and linguistic competency for all teachers, particularly the preparation programs for prospective teachers (Tharp, Estrada, & Yamauchi, 2000). The opinions, knowledge, and teaching methods of a teacher have a significant association (Pajares, 1992). This means that teachers who have negative beliefs are more likely to hinder effective incorporation of ELLs in their classrooms (Kochlar, West, & Taymans, 2000). If the majority English-speaking teaching force does not recognize inherent English bias but insists instead that the resources are not readily available to properly provide solutions to the learning challenges faced by L1 Spanish-speaking students, then provision of resources and training in Spanish language skills as a method of aiding cultural and lingual sensitivity could potentially serve to alleviate marginalization of specified students by teachers. The null hypothesis, viewed through the CRT lens, was that there would not be any effected change in teachers' attitudes or behaviors (practices) after a professional development series in Spanish language skills for linguistic competency, as cultural and linguistic biases are inherent, implicit, and unconscious in non-Hispanic teachers' pedagogies.

**Critical race theory.** Critical race theory (CRT) is a perspective introduced over 40 years ago by African-American Derrick Bell (1973), who posited that societal norms are implicitly White structures of bias, and inherent in the American legal system. The critical race theory spawned a new field of research which created a basis for critique and evaluation relating to K–12 education (Taylor & Ladson-Billings, 2009). This theory also provided a framework for exploring issues related to the increased racial discrimination in the field of education, qualitative methods of research, teaching methods and practices, encounters of students from minority groups of color in school, and the effectiveness of policies related to racial equality (Lynn & Parker, 2006).

The critical race theory (CRT) movement is a collaboration of activists and educationists whose main aim is “studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power,” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 3). The motivation of CRT in the field of education has grown in the past two decades due to the evidence that the theory is applicable in public schools in America. This was confirmed by the 1954 Supreme Court ruling of *Brown v. The Board of Education*, which elaborated the existence of racism as real, no matter how unintentional or subconscious (Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2009). Furthermore, “separate but equal” is not fair (*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 1896) but continues to be proliferated racially, linguistically, and in educational tenets in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. More specifically, Latino-critical (LatCrit) theorists posit that language rights and discrimination potentially impact education more than the White hierarchical establishment cares to admit (Alemán, Jr., 2009). Bennett (1986), in his Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), recognized this as *minimization of difference*. Individuals in this position probably overrated their tolerance, and on the other hand underrated the impact of the majority group while assuming that they are not ethnocentric. L1 English-speaking teachers may feel they are tolerant and accepting of Latinx students and Hispanic culture as part of everyday life, without recognizing they are examining their values from the vantage point of a privileged White life (Bennett, 1986). One example is the English-only policies that are in effect in many schools serving English language learners. While non-Hispanic teachers and administrators may feel that they are “helping” Latino children to quickly assimilate (for the child’s own good), Cummins (2001) noted the ramifications of not being able to use one’s own language – suggesting that teachers and schools exclude children and deny them their identity – when they ask them either implicitly or explicitly not to bring their language or culture to school. The student’s performance in school is negatively affected by a student’s

loss of his or her cultural language, and sets up a framework for marginalization, including implicit subordination (Beynon, Larocque, Ilieva & Dagenais, 2005).

LatCrit scholars and activists are working diligently to elaborate more on the principles and the social relevance of critical race theorizing, explaining more about critical and comparative approaches, and upholding the theory as a facilitator for social change (LatCrit.org, n.d.). Nieto (2010) argued, “Bilingualism is only viewed as a problem and a deficit in a context where speakers of a particular language are held in low esteem or seen as a threat to national unity. This is the case of bilingual education in the United States, and especially for children who speak Spanish,” (p. 14). It is important for immigrants to have some level of assimilation in their new country; it is equally important however, for student-immigrants to retain their original language while still learning English (Moses, 2001). Language is so strongly related to identity that the use of English as the dominant language restricts the acceptance of English learners (Mercuri, 2012), and imposing the language of the dominant group both socially and politically in the school setting threatens the ELL’s identity (Pierce, 1995).

According to the critical race theory, racism is a key aspect of American society (Bell, 1992), and hence a significant part of the education system framework. The increased racial inequality among teachers, with most being non-Hispanic White, plays a significant role in the development of racial achievement patterns and opportunities (Taylor & Ladson-Billings, 2009). In 1848, Horace Mann, a pioneering American educator, explained that education is a major equalizer of the human condition. Americans have since understood that education ensures that all children, regardless of their race or origin, have an equal chance of success. Perhaps the perspective was cemented in place by an all-White Freedman’s Bureau at the end of the Civil War that provided educational services to newly freed slaves and other people of color. Perhaps



the satisfaction of delivering a “service” that is provided to bring more opportunity and extended choices to non-Whites has continued in education as a “favor” to “the subordinates.” Critical race theory in education criticizes a variety of assumptions and opinions, including the basic belief that assimilation, and not accommodation, is the favored approach (Lynn & Parker, 2006).

Recognizing that many levels and layers of implicit racism exist in educational settings, CRT/LatCrit became the natural framework for research regarding the effectiveness of Spanish-language skills training for non-Hispanic teachers of Hispanic students in alleviating or moderating unconscious or conscious English language, White cultural supremacy. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) posit that critical race theory “... tries not only to understand the social situation but to change it; it sets out not only to ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines but tries to transform it for the better” (p. 7). Beyond the interests of writing this dissertation, the research results will be of importance to any future attempts to explore ways, by measuring the worthiness of pre-service and/or in-service training in linguistic competency, to transform the non-Hispanic teachers’ approach to Latinx students in the classroom and to the families in their schools’ communities. My vision moving forward is put forth in Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion.

**Teachers’ attitudes towards English learners.** The attitudes of teachers are very important in a class setting, since they influence teacher-student communication and the decisions made in the classroom (Logan & Wimer, 2013). Socially or locally constructed assumptions and beliefs can influence the way teachers relate to their students (Lee & Anderson, 2009). The media and literature constantly perpetuate deficit associations; in 32 peer-reviewed articles, Arzubiaga, Nogueron, and Sullivan found that 25% of those articles specifically referred to children’s language differences as deficits (2009). Deficit labeling of Hispanics who have not

learned English yet by teachers, and deficit identity of Hispanics by entire school systems that prohibit Spanish in their schools, along with the negative connotations of “English Language Learner” or “ESL student,” have been associated with low academic achievement by those students affected (Arzubiaga et al., 2009; Cummins, 2001). Teachers who promote English as the “correct language” are devaluating Spanish, and in turn indicating that Latino and Latina young men and ladies are disadvantaged, inferior, and lacking academic potential (Broomes, 2010).

Because the research points to teachers’ attitudes being inherently biased with respect to English language learners, and because teachers’ attitudes do impact student learning, the research question was developed: Can professional development in Spanish language skills for teachers help improve teachers’ attitudes towards Hispanic students? Teachers’ attitudes towards ELLs and fear of speaking to L1 Spanish parents and families lends itself to a certain sense of “being different,” where Latinx students perceive they are not valued as much as their English-speaking classmates (Broomes, 2010). Students may have various perspectives regarding the classroom setting, with some of them experiencing favoritism, bias, or prejudice from some teachers either consciously or unconsciously. For the students who speak Spanish as their first language, classroom instruction wholly in English, as well as assessments in English, are indicators that their own language has been relegated to an inferior position (Broomes, 2010). The implications are even more serious when one finds that radio and television advertising, packaging of all products, and numerous other situations/services are provided in Spanish. In the city and nearby towns where this research study took place, the local retail chains, pharmacies, hospitals, and public services like the Department of Motor Vehicles post all their signs in Spanish and English. There is a bodega on every corner, and in the Latinx child’s neighborhood,

everyone knows Spanish. Then the child goes to school and finds that Spanish is not spoken there. One can imagine the impact this has on the Latinx child's feelings of self-worth. Something as simple as a teacher greeting a child at the classroom door with "*Hola*" and pronouncing a Latino/a child's name correctly (Mitchell, 2016) can measurably improve the Latinx child's self-esteem. This practical change in a teachers' attempt to bond with the Latinx student could result in an improved relationship between the teacher and the student. A desirable result of improved student/teacher relationships is to motivate the student to put more effort in their assignments and adhere to the rules and regulations in the classroom (Pigford, 2001). An unexpected result of my quasi-experimental research project was the reported improvement in Hispanic student behavior in the classroom whence the teacher incorporated Spanish-language speaking strategies post-professional development training. This, and other interesting and notable results, are revealed and discussed in Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results.

**Culturally relevant pedagogy.** Often, the tolerance of an individual teacher towards English learners in his or her classroom is based primarily on social construction (Gerber, 2005). This eventually results in varying degrees of tolerance by teachers when instructing various classes of learners. However, the nature of America as a meritocracy, where all individuals who work hard enough can achieve success and prosperity, raises a topic of debate (Young, 1958, as referenced in Abbott, 2014). Understandably, many teachers feel that way about their own students' potential. According to Abbot (2014), individuals who support and uphold meritocracy may believe allocations, accommodations, and compensations regarding education are unfair, as some learners are unfairly favored and hence reduce the opportunities for others who are more diverse. Culturally relevant pedagogies may seem moot to the teacher who assumes a stance of meritocracy, presuming that equal opportunities to reach academic goals are available for all

students, regardless of race, pursuant to their ability and hard work (Apple, 2001). The problem of inadequate resources has made it almost impossible for teachers to teach all students to the best of their ability despite their desire to ensure success and equity in the classroom (Cook, Cameron, & Tankersley, 2007). This means that teachers who have a positive attitude have a positive impact on students and are in a better position to affect positive outcomes for students, especially English language learners. The positive attitude of a teacher is an important facet in developing the classroom culture of mutual respect and has a significant effect on the students' learning processes. The teachers' negative attitudes deter the success of students (Garza, 2009), and may affect the students both emotionally and psychologically (Garcia-Nevarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005). Teachers, on the other hand, feel frustrated, inadequate, and dissatisfied due to lack of training about the inclusion of ELLs in the classroom and little or no time for planning differentiated lessons for ELLs (McKinney, 2008). Even if a teacher wanted to attain both excellence and equity in his or her classroom, it would be nearly impossible to teach each student to the fullest potential due to a scarcity of resources such as time, personal expertise, and support (Cook et al., 2007). This leads to continued inequality and blaming those who fail for failing (Broomes, 2010).

When permitted to use their home language to complete classroom assignments, students who are learning English can successfully transfer reading comprehension ability to the new language (Cummins, 2009). Because English language learners' life experiences can vary greatly, the need for teachers to recognize the relationship among such varied experiences and the complex factors that inform student learning is "fundamental to scaffolding academic achievement," (Liggett, 2013, p. 5). Classroom teachers whose pedagogies involve the maintenance of high levels of student engagement affirm the students' identities and cognitively

challenge their ability to succeed (Cummins, 2009). It is important for teachers to develop mechanisms in which they can modify and utilize a school curriculum that addresses their students' needs, and to be able to do that due to an increased understanding of the cultural behaviors and educational customs of their students (Liggett, 2013).

**Teacher training and educator preparation.** All teachers should be ready to meet the various needs of all their students, including Hispanics, in order to uphold the quality of the teaching profession (Risk to Opportunity, 2003). Teachers should thus put aside any presumptions and generalizations based on heritage and race in an effort to solve the issue of teacher-student communication and improve the effectiveness of the learning process (Catt, Miller, & Schallenkamp, 2007). Cummins (2009) suggested that successful master teachers make use of inspirational pedagogy by providing adequate supports. The reality, however, is that ELL students may be relegated to classes taught by less skilled teachers in which significantly less content is taught in a comparatively uninteresting or ineffective manner (Abbott, 2014). Because language seems to be a criterion in many cases for placement in lower-track programs, lower-track classrooms contain many more non-standard English and non-English-speaking students (Nieto, 2000).

Communication between teachers and other school staff and students and their families has become more difficult as a result of the utilization of programs that use English only and the inadequate sensitivity training regarding culture and language for teachers (Cortina, 2006). Teachers' concerns about teaching Latinx students are well-warranted when there is an obvious communication gap, both linguistically and culturally. During the past three decades, bilingual education and English-language education have been points of consideration due to communication issues. However, for financial and political reasons, the programs have been

regarded as inappropriate for teaching English to immigrants (Liggett, 2013). Most if not all teacher preparation programs include compulsory courses in diversity, multiculturalism, and urban education, but those courses only touch upon the acknowledgment of the diverse make-up of the student bodies in urban centers and sensitivity to world religions and other cultures, and do not delve into the specifics of teaching the majority-minority of Spanish speakers seen today.

It is important for teachers to sharpen their communication skills for them to cope with culturally diverse students and to involve them in classroom activities. According to *The Final Report of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans* (Risk to Opportunity, 2003), teachers require thorough preparation on the methods and strategies for ensuring optimum teaching effectiveness. Teachers who are well aware of the cultures of their students are more effective. Cultural sensitivity among teachers means that the teachers understand and are able to address the cultural, ethical, social, emotional and cognitive needs of their students with the aim of collaborating with the students in the learning process (Cantu, 2008). Cultural sensitivity in classroom management is geared towards a variety of teaching components which include the incorporation of research-based teaching methods and the ability to effectively meet the cultural needs of the students (Cantu, 2008; Samson & Collins, 2012). Teachers and students may feel uncomfortable in cases where their cultures differ in the classroom setting (Colombo, 2005). According to Crosby (1999), most of the teachers in urban schools, particularly those in schools located in the inner cities, are newly employed or even uncertified teachers. Teachers from middle-class families who have received training in teaching students from middle-class families are left to teach large numbers of students from minority groups, immigrants, and from families with low incomes who differ in terms of values and experiences. However, several studies have shown that teachers from cultures different from

those of their students are likely to provide more effective instruction to their students as long as they understand the students' cultural contribution to knowledge (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Halcon, 2001; Moll, 2001; Ogbu, 1992), which enhances communication and actions that occur in diverse environments (Moll, 1994, 2001). The understanding of and appreciation of the strengths and new knowledge brought about by cultural differences have a higher probability to create better learning environments that celebrate and uphold cultural diversity (Colombo, 2005). The education system in the United States is being guided in the correct direction, via research that confirms negative presumptions and assumptions about cultures different from the Anglican persist, but the resolution to those inherent biases has not been discovered. Cultural and linguistic sensitivity training is a current trend in the field, but not enough emphasis has been placed on testing the theories of critical race and professional development's impact on teachers' coffers of knowledge.

It is important for all educational stakeholders to understand clearly the association of language and culture (Elmes, 2013; Reeves, 2006). According to research by Jesse, Davis, and Pokorny (2004), schools that perceive linguistic and cultural diversity as a resource, not an inadequacy, usually realize continuous academic growth. Language and culture are significant in determining people's opinions about life, and the way that individuals utilize their cultural and linguistic knowledge can create or hinder opportunities (Elmes, 2013). Fortunately, we know a great deal about how effective teachers assist English learners to achieve academically, helping students achieve mastery of the material, and making meaningful connections between what students know and understand and the standards being taught (Colombo, 2005; Cooper, 2012; Scarcella, n.d.). It is important for non-Hispanic teachers to learn about the communities their students come from, and to enhance their relationships with their Hispanic students and their

families by understanding their ethnicities and developing culturally sensitive methods for communicating and enhancing good relationships between them (Cooper, 2012; McDermott & Rothenberg, 2000). Teachers who care about their students and are passionate about the subjects they teach gain the most popularity among their students (Goldstein & Lake, 2000). Teachers who try to expand their knowledge regarding the cultural and linguistic background of their students imply that they care about their students. Caring promotes sensitivity, which is often discussed in many historical literatures regarding multiculturalism as a concept that plays a great role in the success of students in schools (Gay, 2000; Nieto, 2004; Zimmerman, 2000). Teachers learning a little Spanish, some key phrases, or at a minimum pronouncing students' names correctly would indicate that the teachers care about their Spanish-speaking students, and is a strategy worth addressing and employing.

How districts support and promote teacher learning “depends greatly on how learning is conceptualized.” (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012, p. 40). Examining the effectiveness of teacher training and professional development in Latin American culture and the Spanish language for non-Hispanic teachers of Hispanic students must be looked at in two ways: attitudes about mandated professional training in Spanish language, and measured change in attitudes about Latinx students and Spanish language speakers in the classroom after professional development. Barriers to the latter can be measured by the attitudes expressed in the former.

### **Review of the Research and Methodological Literature**

There are three major areas of inquiry within the dissertation topic regarding the impact of professional development in Spanish language for non-Hispanic teachers of Latino/a students on the attitudes and practices of teachers. The three topical areas in focus for the research review were:



- Teachers' attitudes towards English Language Learners
- Teachers' classroom practices focusing on ELLs
- Teachers' perceptions regarding preparedness to teach ELLs

The survey approach via questionnaire was determined to be the appropriate instrument to measure teachers' attitudinal changes over the process of a series of professional development seminars via a pre-service survey and post-service survey. It was therefore necessary to explore the evidence from research about the changes that occur in teaching practices when an attitudinal shift takes place, and/or, what research says about how attitudes change when new teaching practices and skills are taught to teachers. Although theories, hypotheses, and remedial recommendations about teaching and English language learners were prevalent in the literature, modern research about the specific attitudes and perceptions of teachers' preparation and willingness to train for competency in teaching children from cultures other than their own is limited. Accordingly, recent research studies that illuminate the viability and usefulness of linguistic training for non-Hispanic teachers of Hispanic students are rare. The question arises then, if the resistance to offering teacher training in Spanish language skills is indeed evidence of the existence of implicit and inherent White, English-speaking dominance.

There are many examples of articles and peer-reviewed texts in the literature that cite teacher preparedness as lacking with regards to diverse student populations (i.e., Ogbu, 1992; Olneck, 1995; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995; Colombo, 2005; Anhalt & Rodriguez Pérez, 2013). The decades of literature pointing to the challenge of teacher preparedness for the diverse classroom underlines the lack of resolution of that challenge in American schools. Teacher training in cultural sensitivity to improve student outcomes is a major recommendation to overcoming the challenges of teaching students from diverse backgrounds (McDermott &

Rothenberg, 2000; Nieto, 2004). There is also sufficient data collected regarding teachers' attitudes and concerns towards the inclusive classroom (Anhalt & Rodriguez Pérez, 2013; Reeves, 2006; Sas, 2009), discussed further in Chapter 3: Methodology. However, there are no recent studies of the *effectiveness* of professional development or teacher training in cultural and linguistic competency with specific regard to the attitudes and practices of non-Hispanic teachers of Hispanic students. Due to the consistent growth in the population of Latinos in the United States, a notable gap in this type of specific research makes the necessity of this project topical, timely, and of significant importance.

Effective instructional practices in educating Hispanic students must be addressed, in depth, at the pre-service level in college preparation programs of study, and in-service level with professional development seminars to increase the productivity of teachers when dealing with language minority groups of students. This was a pressing priority 20 years ago (Duran, Dugan, & Weffer, 1997), but needs to be addressed in a comprehensive and holistic manner with immediate urgency today (Keengwe, 2016). One would assume that increasing the academic performance of language minority students would be at the top of teachers' pedagogical lists, but that requires collaboration in both teaching *and* learning (Rivera & Zehler, 1991). There are many commercial products available that address the need for teachers to learn Spanish; however, those products have not been tested school-wide, for example, to measure their efficacy in impacting teachers' attitudes and practices.

There has been much success in the health care industry with the suggested cultural and linguistic training for health care professionals (Bender & Castro, 2000). Spanish classes and cultural awareness sketches have proved to be realistic and viable improvements to the everyday interactions between doctors, nurses, orderlies, and other health care facility workers with the

Hispanic population that they serve (Bender & Castro, 2000). The healthcare providers' initiative for intensive language training via workshops was "intended to improve access and promote quality care for Latino immigrants," (Bender, 2004, p. 199). Seriously lacking in the literature review was anything in the same vein relating to K–12 school teachers.

Survey questionnaires regarding teachers' attitudes towards training and preparation for the teaching field, teaching with inclusion, and differentiating teaching pedagogies abound (Gallagher, Malone, Cleghorne, & Helmes, 1997; Kochlar et al., 2000; Lyon et al., 1989; Pajares, 1992; Rojewski & Pollard, 1990; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). More limited are the data regarding teachers' attitudes towards ELLs in the classroom, and more specifically, Hispanic students; however, both qualitative and quantitative research does exist. In the most comprehensive study of Professional Learning Communities, Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas, & Wallace (2005) examined data from a survey that had been conducted in 393 early childhood, elementary and secondary schools along with data obtained from interviews-based case studies in 16 schools. The researchers found that the involvement of students in collaborative activities affected teaching practice and motivation positively (Vescio, Ross, & Adams 2008). Youngs and Youngs (2001) conducted a study on 143 middle school teachers with the aim of exploring the attitudes of teachers towards English language learners. The results of the study showed that there was a correlation between teachers' positive attitudes towards ELLs and teachers undergoing training about foreign language and multiculturalism, English as a second language training, individual experiences with people from foreign cultures, interactions with various ESL students, as well as being female. Ference and Bell (2004) carried out a qualitative research study which involved a cross-cultural immersion experience that lasted for two weeks. The immersion was done for pre-service teachers who had joined a small liberal arts college in the

Southeast United States. The aim of the immersion was to improve the attitudes of the teachers towards Latino students who were poor English speakers. The researchers found that the immersion improved the teachers' knowledge, skills and opinions concerning immigration and that they could incorporate them into their previous knowledge, culture, beliefs, and emotions with ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teaching strategies and curriculum. The results of the study indicated that the immersion, in collaboration with a multicultural program for helping teachers to interact with ELLs, played a significant role in helping teachers to cope with issues of diversity and fairness in the classrooms. There is a need to critically examine researcher bias in the study as, like other qualitative studies, subjectivity could have influenced the research narrative.

Waxman, Huang, and Padrón (1995) conducted a large scale study where they involved 90 teachers who worked in 16 inner-city middle schools where most of their students were Hispanic. The aim of the research was to examine the classroom instruction of the teachers. The outcomes of the research indicated that students spent most of their time in whole class instruction and only had little time to interact with the teachers at a personal level and other students. Additionally, the researchers realized that the students did not interact with the teachers and students verbally for about two-thirds of their time. The small group activities were also limited. The students lacked an opportunity to choose the kind of instructional activities they preferred, and ended up being passive listeners who just watched the teacher. Student resistance to learning may be provoked by teachers' ignorance of students' culture, beliefs, and communication; on the other hand, responsive teaching encourages student involvement (Olneck, 1995; Colombo, 2005; Logan & Wimer, 2013). The intense and continuous involvement of

diverse students in the classroom needs a wholesome approach that involves a combination of the how, what, and why of teaching (Ogbu, 1992; Fishman & McCarthy, 2005; Cummins, 2009). According to Padrón, Waxman, and Rivera (2002), the teaching and learning conditions for Hispanic students can be enhanced through giving more consideration to specific areas. Teachers can ensure effectiveness in class by bringing out the association between the content they teach and the cultural backgrounds of the students. Research concerning instructional practices that should specifically address the concerns of students who come from different cultures and speak other languages has generated evidence that there is a need for educators to provide meaning for the relationship of culture and language within their lessons (Tharp, 1997; Tharp et al., 2000).

Cortina and Gendreau (2003) studied Mexican immigrant students who were attending school in New York City. The researchers found that the probability of coping in the new society, as well as completing school, was significantly influenced by the students' and their families' education backgrounds. Small, positive changes that Hispanic students may experience in their learning environment may have a positive impact on the student's education and possibilities of success within their new society (Waxman, 1992). This precept drove the meaningfulness of the research, and highlighted the significance of the positive affect and improvement of the human condition of a marginalized population that could be a potential result of the experiment.

A study by Oh, Kim, and Leyva (2003) was aimed at examining the efficiency of 87 inner-city teachers in Los Angeles, and their opinions and attitudes towards Latino students and other ethnic and economic minority groups. The researchers also closely examined factors that teachers reported having increased or decreased their confidence level in teaching those minority

student groups. The questionnaire utilized had 25 items, with five measures of teacher efficiency including confidence levels, teacher expectations, and instructional practices. A significant finding was that Latino teachers had better expectations of Latino students, and White teachers had lower expectations of the mostly Latino student population (Oh et al., 2003).

Reeves (2006) constructed a survey instrument in 2003 to gauge teachers' attitudes, practices, perceptions, and feelings of preparedness to teach ELL students. The questionnaire consisted of four sections that measured agreement or disagreement with how much English students should know before joining a mainstream classroom, the degree of modifications that teachers should be expected to make in the classroom to accommodate ELLs, and teachers feeling adequately supported with respect to the inclusive classroom. Even though teachers reported that they were welcoming ELLs, there was strong agreement that ELLs should not be in the mainstream classroom until they had attained a certain level of English language proficiency. Most respondents reported that they did not have enough training – or any training at all – to work with ELLs, yet were ambivalent about receiving training in the future. Although this research is over 10 years old, I selected Reeves' questionnaire (2003) as my research instrument (see Appendix B). I expected to find similar results with respect to teachers' attitudes, but not as certain about practices and feelings of preparedness. I write more about the expected findings as a result of the quantitative survey instrument utilized in this research study in Chapter 3: Methodology.

Anhalt & Rodriguez Pérez' (2013) research instrument was a 20-item survey designed by MJ Young & Associates. Items, in a Likert-scale format, addressed teacher concerns regarding teaching Latinx students. Survey items were categorized in three broad types: self-concerns (teacher prejudices and school climate); task concerns (teaching linguistically and culturally

diverse students); and impact concerns (appropriate role models, parents). The study used survey questions that were made up of items from three areas. The first area was related to the social issues that were connected to instructing Latinx students. These issues included discrimination, multiculturalism, and stereotyping. The second area was concerned with the methods, strategies, materials, and ideologies for teaching Latino/a students. The third area focused on the students' learning processes, which involved the factors that influenced the students' academic performance, including the environment at home, family culture, and expectations. The results of the study indicated that teachers had fewer concerns about the social issues in teaching Latino/a students than they had in the methodologies and practices that were expected in teaching those students and improving their learning. Some other findings were that the newer and inexperienced the teacher, the greater the level of concern. Accordingly, the more years in the teaching career that a respondent had, the fewer concerns there were across the board. This research duplicates a peripheral finding of research conducted almost 20 years earlier when Crookes, Davis, and Clair (1995) provided ethnographic research regarding three veteran teachers' views, all of whom declined to participate in professional development in methods of working with ELLs.

### **Review of Methodological Issues**

Optimal professional development offers teachers specific training, but also opportunities for continuous improvement and support (Gordon, 2003; Vescio et al., 2008; Wenglinsky, 2001). Likewise, effective research should not only measure point-in-time perceptions and attitudes, but follow-up with additional studies to gauge a change in the pulse of the sample population. While there are many studies that theorize about teachers' attitudes about ELLs, immigrants, teacher training and professional development, longitudinal studies about the effectiveness of linguistic

competency training do not currently exist in the literature review. The same problems and challenges that were noted in scholars' writings from 20 years ago are noted in today's topical texts. While much of the existing quantitative research points to teacher dissatisfaction with preparedness programs in how to teach the students they are supposed to teach, including English language learners, there are just as many case studies and qualitative interviews with teachers whose reported findings support critical race theory in that the struggle over English imperialism continues to exist. The determination of the maintenance of ethical standards in the research literature is critical anytime the findings strongly support a researcher's hypothesis or statement of advocacy, however, especially when the methodology is qualitative and/or includes respondents' self-reported reflections based on leading/misleading probes (Harris & Brown, 2010).

Walker, Shafer, & Iiams (2004) examined the essence and extent of the attitudes of mainstream teachers towards ELLs and explored the factors that contributed to those attitudes. Presumptions may have been made at the outset, exhibited in the article's title in the NABE collection, "Not In My Classroom," meant to infer that "we love immigrants and want to provide a chance for the American dream to every student – just don't put them in my classroom." A second piece of research focused on teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching English Language Learners also quantified those attitudes via survey questionnaire on a 4-point Likert scale. Sas (2009) developed and conducted an attitudinal survey that separated categories of attitudes. Part 1: *Attitudes toward Immigration* included statements such as "There is too much immigration in the U.S." and "Overall, immigration has a positive influence on American life" (Sas, 2009, p. 159). Other statements in the same section probed for signs of negative teacher attitudes, such as "Policy should grant immigrants access only to jobs Americans do not need"



(Sas, 2009, p. 158, emphasis in original). Part II of Sas' (2009) study concerned "Teacher Preparedness to Work with L2 Learners" (p. 161) and specifically asked about professional development opportunities and responsibilities, but also included an attitudinal statement that "It is important for L2 learners to use only English in the classroom" (p. 162, emphasis in original). That probe could have been included in Part I as part of the attitudinal survey section, and perhaps replaced with a statement that would measure attitude about having to learn words in another language in order to maintain and manage a successful classroom.

A contradiction in the research summaries included some that identified older teachers as less forgiving of English language learners in the school system, and some that identified older teachers who self-reported that they thought they could handle any type of student in their classrooms, even those who did not speak English or were from a different cultural background. This conflict strengthened the chosen methodology for this research project proposal as a quantitative survey approach, maximizing the benefit of the significance of the results as more objective and lessening the negative impact of an arguable, subjective analysis from a qualitative research perspective. Also, the potential of having statistically significant results from a quantitative research study that can be extended to the larger teaching population across the United States can also have a lasting impact on the methods of teacher education.

### **Synthesis of Research Findings**

The points of commonality in the literature were: racism, biases, marginalization, prejudice, and discrimination in various forms that exist inherently in the structure of the American education system; teachers perpetuating marginalization of non-English speakers; English language learners in mainstream classrooms being seen as detrimental to the education

process; and finally, professional development and/or teacher readiness training being inadequate to meet the pedagogical needs of today's schools.

There has been a notable growth in the diversity of U.S. school students in the last 30 years in both ethnicity and first languages (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015; Figure 1; Appendix A). The Latino population comprises the largest minority population in the American schools. Current reports indicate that White, non-Hispanic students score higher than their Latinx peers on standardized tests at a national level, and that there is a significant achievement gap between Hispanic and White students (Padrón et al., 2002). These findings bring about the need to explore the educational vulnerability of diverse students in terms of culture and language (Anhalt & Rodríguez Pérez, 2013).

Students of Latino heritage are marginalized in the education system for several reasons: they are considered “not really American” because they are not White or because they are English language learners – because their heritage culture and language is not mainstream (Coreas, 2016). Critical race theory posits that explicitly and implicitly, not being White, English-speaking, and of Western European descent is less than worthy of being mainstreamed American (Moses, 2001). The adoption of laws in California and Arizona that specifically honor discriminatory practices, such as banning spoken Spanish in the classroom, are fostering regression (Halcon, 2001). Instead, scholars posit, children's Hispanic heritage should be respected and recognized through such vehicles as linguistic and cultural competency training for teachers (Garza, 2009).

To objectively address the topic of training and professional development for existing teachers and the impact that may have on the attitudes of teachers with regard to the Hispanic population, the existing literature was examined. The literature review revealed three distinct

areas of concern: the attitudes of teachers regarding immigrants and English language learners, the perceived preparedness of regular education teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms with English language learners, and the deemed effectiveness of teacher training and professional development in areas of cultural and linguistic competence/sensitivity to improve teachers' practices. I could not identify a specific research study regarding improved or changed attitudes of non-Hispanic teachers of Hispanic students after undergoing professional development in beginning Spanish language skills, resulting in my belief that such a tracking survey (pre-service and post-service) would yield socially significant findings. A review of the existing literature and research findings in the relevant areas of linguistic imperialism, teacher biases, and attitudes towards Hispanics and English language learners in general provided background for the dissertation development and research proposal.

While common business vernacular includes the panicked cry of "Those who don't speak Spanish may be left behind" (Sharp, 2001), those who *do* speak Spanish are the students who are graduating from school and entering the workforce. The education those students are receiving is less than stellar, however, and the proficiency testing and real-world performance measurements currently reflect that underachievement (CREDE, n.d.). The need for certified ESL or TESOL teachers has dramatically increased and has not kept pace with the need (Restuccia, 2013). Non-Hispanic teachers usually feel inadequate to deal with the increasing population of Hispanic students (Anhalt & Rodríguez Pérez, 2013). To become certified as an ESL teacher, one does not need to speak another language; however, ESL teachers who speak Spanish have reported being overburdened with requests from regular classroom teachers to act as translators – not a part of the ESL teacher's job description. Issues such as micro-aggression

toward culturally and linguistically diverse students and families are unresolvable unless addressed directly in self-reflection and critique of longstanding assumptions (Keengwe, 2016).

### **Critique of Previous Research**

There can be no question as to *why* demand for Spanish-speaking teachers is increasing (Restuccia, 2013), but there is a critical lack of understanding of *how* to best prepare the existing teaching workforce to address the needs of their students of Hispanic origin and their families. The preferred method of determining what is best for teachers should be extracted from the teachers who are in the focus situation – non-Hispanic teachers of Hispanic students. Both qualitative and quantitative research can be useful in determining the scope of the problem (Creswell, 2005) and the challenges that must be addressed in an attempt to impact the educational community and to improve the attitudes and practices of the White-dominant, non-Spanish-speaking teaching force with regards to the Hispanic students they teach. There is need for further research regarding the attitudes of teachers towards Latinos and English language learners in a classroom setting, and the effect of these attitudes on the student learning. Measures of cultural and linguistic competency among the majority White, non-Hispanic, English-speaking teaching force need to be overlaid on a template for recognizing implicit racial and lingual supremacy in the American public school system.

In the concluding remarks of one of the most current and comprehensive collections of research efforts in the area of teachers' attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach English Language Learners, produced by the National Association of Bilingual Educators (NABE, 2004), it was suggested that “future research should include process and outcome measures with more precise indicators” of performance and impact in the education of Latino children (p. 291). While confirming my research area of interest with specificity in the

measurement of any statistically significant change in teachers' attitudes in relation to the process and outcome via professional development, the NABE (2004) collective data regarding teachers' attitudes towards Hispanics serves as identification of the problem in a particularly self-fulfilling way for NABE, and must be considered a limitation of the research. For this reason, the collection of research included in the one document: the National Association for Bilingual Education, Journal of Research and Practice, which was conducted by various parties and peer reviewed in multiple professional capacities, was a good starting point for reviewing the normative standard in teachers' attitudes towards Hispanics found in research, and the platform from which to view later research and results that could be indicative of any trends. This type of data is not sufficient, however, in determining what teacher preparation or development programs are consistent with the professed necessity for training in cultural and linguistic sensitivity for teachers. In conclusion, the synthesis of the literature failed to identify a viable solution to measuring change in teachers' attitudes that are purportedly possible via professional development and teacher preparation programs. The literature also failed to provide conclusive evidence that recognizing and adapting to students' cultural strengths definitively improves student outcomes (Rothstein-Fish & Trumbull, 2008). The quasi-experimental research study was designed to specifically measure the effectiveness of Spanish language skills training in improving non-Hispanic teachers' attitudes towards English language learners in the mainstream classroom, along with effecting positive changes in practices and feelings of preparedness. In theory, those changes would result in improved student outcomes; that would remain to be seen, however, and must be considered for important future, longitudinal research designs.

## Summary of Chapter 2

*“We should not limit what children learn based on outdated principles masked in patriotism.”*

(Education Weekly Blog, 2014)

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 57.5 million Hispanics were living in America in 2016 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017), making people of Hispanic origin the nation's largest ethnic or racial minority, representing 17 percent of the total population in the United States. The Hispanic share of the student population rose from 14.1% to 25% for grades 1 – 8 and 13.2% to 23.7% in high schools in the 20 years between 1996 and 2016 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). To meet the demands of an increasingly diverse student population, it will be necessary to have a teaching force that can supply a culturally and linguistically sensitive curriculum, or else be considered negligent in not addressing the changing needs of the education system and its stakeholders. In contrast to student demographics, Hispanic teachers represent only 7.8 percent of the teaching force in all schools K–12 (The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, 2015). The literature revealed that educating Hispanic students can only be realized by all teachers using effective instructional practices that enhance the education experience for all students, but particularly Latinos (Padrón et al., 2002).

To effectively respond to Latinx students and their families means acquiring an understanding that involves interpersonal, cultural, and academic awareness of the student's lives. Bender and Castro (2000) reported that healthcare professionals tensed up when they interacted with Latinx patients; they projected frustrations onto the patients, and thus their patients felt uncomfortable and experienced a sense of rejection. One does not have to stretch the imagination to apply that same stimuli-response to the educational setting. Urban classrooms can present many challenges for teachers due to many factors. Crosby (1999) reported “The new

wave of immigrants of the past 25 years from Hispanic countries, from the Middle East, and from Asian countries has washed over the urban schools like a tidal wave bringing with it additional challenges, this time cultural and linguistic” (p.104). Gibbs and Huang (1998) stated that, “In adolescents, school phobia or truancy may actually represent fear of a violent or chaotic school environment or fear of social rejection due to some cultural, racial, or economic difference from the majority of the student body” (p.17). America has always been a nation of immigrants; if scholars were identifying the cultural and linguistic challenges that lay ahead almost two decades ago, and the current field of education is still struggling with the challenges of linguistic and cultural disparity between the teaching force and the students they serve, then there is a problem that has not been adequately addressed. One challenge lies in the fact that most urban teachers are White, middle class, and not familiar with issues of diversity and multiculturalism. The second challenge lies in truly welcoming, accommodating, and offering equal education opportunities for non-White, non-English-speaking, non-middle class or economically deprived students in those schools with a majority White, English-speaking teaching staff. Another challenge lies in the identification of methods that can be successfully utilized to promote the closing of the gap in the second challenge named above.

The teaching profession has historically been dominated by White women (see Figure 2), first by single spinsters and later by moms who wished to match their children’s school schedules. While the face of the teaching force has changed somewhat, the language of the teachers has not. As the Hispanic population – and Spanish-speaking students – grows in leaps and bounds, the ability to keep up with the demand for Spanish-speaking teachers has fallen short. In a perfect world, a genuine and sincere interest in the education of children – not regardless of but with respect for their linguistic and cultural backgrounds – would embody the

successful classroom teacher (Saville-Troike, 1978). The literature illuminates the majority English-speaking teaching force as hesitant to embrace linguistic or cultural differences, leaving critical race theorists to point to the research as evidence of discrimination and linguistic imperialism.

In lieu of hiring tens of thousands of Spanish proficient teachers in a very short time, the potential may exist to train the existing teaching force to acknowledge and appreciate the Latin culture and language (Alemán, Jr. 2009) so that teachers feel more comfortable speaking to students and the students' parents. This type of training could serve a dual purpose: teachers would be gaining knowledge that was more than pedantic in the jargon of pedagogical adjustments for Latino cultural preferences, and to help adjust the attitudes and assumptions about Latino people from a negative one to a positive one (Reeves, 2006; Alemán, Jr. 2009; Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2009). Based on this review of the literature, there was sufficient reason for thinking that an investigation examining the impact of linguistic training in beginning Spanish on attitudes, classroom practices, and feelings of preparedness for non-Hispanic teachers in a largely Hispanic populated school district (upwards of 44%) was warranted.



## Chapter 3: Methodology

### Introduction to Chapter 3

Teachers' attitudes influence teaching practices (Pajares, 1992; Reeves, 2006; Walker et al., 2004), and teaching practices influence student outcomes (Wenglinsky, 2001). Because the classroom is the primary venue in which students and teachers interact, "decisions by teachers as to what to do in this venue will most strongly affect student outcomes," (Wenglinsky, 2001, p. 8). The demographic variable of a predominantly White, non-Hispanic teaching force in American schools (see Figure 2) has been identified as having an influence on teachers' attitudes and practices, especially when it comes to educating Hispanic students (Garcia, 2001; Mitchell, 2016). Critical race theorists posit that a subliminal form of White supremacy is inherent in the educational system in America, albeit unconsciously or subconsciously (Bell, 1973; Picower, 2009), and that the position of the "White way" being the "right way" is implicitly upheld (Alemán, Jr., 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). The educational system in the United States has failed to successfully address the educational needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Zimmerman, 2000), while the U.S. Census Bureau (2000, 2010) projects migration and immigration of Hispanic adults – whose children will attend the United States' schools – to double by the year 2100. If negative attitudes about the growing Hispanic population in the U.S. continue to fester, or within the American political landscape continue to scaffold, while increasingly more Hispanic students are entering the primarily White leadership school systems, an unfortunate disconnect may be unpreventable. Steps may be taken to improve attitudes and strengthen relationships between non-Hispanic teachers and their Hispanic pupils, however. Professional development training in Spanish speaking skills for the classroom teacher who continues to mispronounce Latinx students' names, and language sensitivity training for the teacher who refuses to differentiate lessons for the English language learner in his or her

classroom may be viable solutions, and steps forward in the resolution of Latinx students' education disparities.

This chapter includes a description of the quasi-experimental research study, including the purpose, driving research questions, and the expected results. This chapter also includes a description of the research instrument (see Appendix B), the research methodology, the targeted research population and research location description, the limitations/delimitations, and validation of the research. There is a detailed explanation of how the data was collected, processed, and analyzed. In addition, limitations and challenges that presented within the quasi-experimental research project will be explained.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of professional development training for non-Hispanic, non-Spanish-speaking high school teachers in basic Spanish language skills for classroom teachers. The preliminary study specifically measured teachers' personal attitudes toward English language learners in their classrooms and classroom practices adapted for ELLs. The impact to be measured was the effectiveness of the PD in beginning Spanish for teachers in improving the attitudes and perceptions and self-reported practices of the participating classroom teacher who is not Hispanic, but has Hispanic students – including English language learners – in the mainstream classroom. This research project was designed as an attempt to ascertain whether culturally sensitive training, and more specifically, beginning Spanish language instruction for non-Hispanic teachers of Hispanic students, could indeed have a positive impact on those teachers' presuppositions and attitudes about Latinos/as and English language learners in the mainstream classroom. There were two administrations of the

questionnaire measuring teachers' attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach ELLs:

- The pre-intervention questionnaire measured teachers' attitudes regarding English language learners, adaptation of practices for ELLs in the mainstream classroom, and preparedness to teach ELLs, administered online in April 2017.
- The post-intervention questionnaire measured teachers' attitudes regarding English language learners, adaptation of practices for ELLs in the mainstream classroom, and feelings of preparedness to teach ELLs, after two professional development training sessions in *Beginning Spanish for Teachers*, administered online in June 2017.

The pre- and post-service questionnaires were utilized as the instruments to quantify the findings of the quasi-experimental study to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between professional development training in Spanish language skills for non-Hispanic teachers and the improvement of attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness for those teachers in the inclusive classroom. The independent variable was the professional development training, and the dependent variable was the discernable change in attitudes, self-reported practices, and feelings of preparedness of the teachers regarding English language learners.

The research proposal was one of a longitudinal nature spanning more than one-half of a regular school year, January through June, 2017. However, due to unanticipated delays in permissions and other time constraints, the first step of the research study – the pre-service questionnaire (see Appendix B) – was not introduced to the research site teachers ( $n = 68$ ) until April 2017. The second step of the research experiment design consisted of two modules of professional development training in classroom-specific beginning Spanish for non-Spanish-speaking teachers, over a period of two months' time (May – June 2017), for potentially half of

the teaching force at the research site ( $n = 34$ ); however, 44 teachers participated in the pre-intervention online questionnaire survey and 10 had to be eliminated because they spoke Spanish. Of those 34 teachers, a convenience sample of 15 remained in the group. This group was comprised of those teachers who personally chose to undertake the professional development when offered. The third step in the experiment design was the post-service questionnaire, identical to the pre-service questionnaire except for the order of the items. The group receiving PD was to be the experimental group; the group not receiving any PD in the subject area was to be the control group; however, the post-intervention questionnaire was not administered to those teachers who qualified for but did not participate in the PD ( $n = 19$ ), and in the end the post-intervention questionnaire was administered to the PD participants who had confirmed he or she had completed the pre-intervention questionnaire ( $n = 13$ ). The third-step questionnaire was given to those teachers who underwent the PD to determine if there was any statistically significant difference in those teachers' attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach English language learners after the PD instruction.

### **Research Questions**

The combination of the growing need for teachers who speak Spanish and the improvements in the healthcare industry by teaching healthcare professionals basic Spanish (Bender, 2004) led to my investigation of teacher professional development in basic Spanish language skills for classroom use. Building teacher capacity to teach Hispanic students is one of the only alternatives to the lack of recruiting and retaining Hispanic teachers in the American public schools today (Padrón et al., 2003). My interest became focused on research that was narrowed to the quantifiable effectiveness of training in Spanish language skills for non-Spanish speaking teachers to affect a statistically significant difference in attitudes, self-reported

practices, and feelings of preparedness of non-Hispanic teachers of Latinx students before and after professional development training in beginning Spanish.

Significant improvement in the efficiency of the healthcare industry in treating Spanish-speaking patients because of training in Spanish language skills for healthcare workers (Bender, 2004) is a prime example of the benefits of Spanish language training for professionals. The increasing presence of immigrant Hispanics forced healthcare professionals to rethink linguistic requirements, resulting in the recognition of the immediate need for “healthcare Spanish” for health industry professionals (Bender, 2004). Like the healthcare industry, the problems and challenges of a teaching force that does not match the student population are varied and myriad. By specifically focusing only on professional development in Spanish language skills that might positively change the attitudes and practices of teachers led me to the research question: Is there a statistically significant difference in the attitudes, self-reported practices, and feelings of preparedness of those teachers who complete Professional Development in beginning Spanish language skills? In this study, I used a questionnaire based, quasi-experimental research design study to examine those questions.

The methods and procedures that were employed were designed to sufficiently address the research questions:

- Can basic Spanish language training for teachers change teachers’ attitudes towards ELLs (where more than 50% of the ELLs are L1 Spanish)?
- Can basic Spanish language training for teachers change classroom practices in the inclusive classroom where Latinx students are present?
- Can basic Spanish language training for teachers change teachers’ feelings about preparedness to teach ELLs (where more than 50% of the ELLs are L1 Spanish)?

The desired outcome of my research was to determine whether PD could result in the same success and benefits that the healthcare industry has enjoyed, including non-Hispanic professionals increased comfort in treating Spanish-speaking clients and patients, and Latinos/as' increased confidence in seeking health care when the practitioners acknowledge Spanish as the first language (Bender, 2004). The Spanish language training was designed by combining several resources, including 123TeachMe's Spanish for Teachers, and flashcards and handouts with partner and group activities from Barron's "Beginning Spanish for Teachers of Hispanic Students" (Sharpe, 1994). Lessons ranged from learning pronunciation of Hispanic names to asking a child if he or she is okay, and how to call parents to speak about a child's academic progress, for example. Activities included interactive, online practice, partner work, group work, short instructional videos, and practice scripts (see Appendix D). To measure any statistically significant difference before and after the Spanish language training, the pre-service and post-service questionnaires (identical except for the order of the questions and one additional question about participation in the PD in the post-service questionnaire to validate the experiment) were designed to collect data about teachers' attitudes towards English language learners in the mainstream classroom, teachers' practices in classrooms – such as curriculum differentiation or easier grading – and teachers' feelings of preparedness to teach ELLs as part of a mainstream classroom, where ELLs are integrated with English speakers (Reeves, 2006).

### **Hypotheses**

My observations and experiences throughout a 20-year teaching career in an impoverished urban district where most students are “minorities” had provided me with the basis of my theory about teachers' attitudes regarding the growing number of English language learners in the mainstream classroom. The positive impact of relevant and useful training on

teachers' attitudes has been examined in specific areas of education – such as special education and technology in the classroom – and has been shown to be of value in increasing teachers' confidence and self-efficacy (McKinney, 2008). Using the theoretical constructs of the reviewed literature, non-Hispanic teachers of Latinx students could improve their teaching pedagogies, improve their communications with students and parents, and help to improve all students' successes by having cultural sensitivity and linguistic competency that complements the students' (Cantu, 2008; Catt et al., 2007; Crookes et al., 1995; McKinney, 2008). The hypotheses' foci for the research was on linguistic competency, and that teacher training in basic Spanish language skills for the classroom would indeed have a positive impact on non-Hispanic teachers' attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness. These results could in turn improve all aspects of the educational culture at a school serving a high percentage of Hispanic students and other Hispanic stakeholders, such as the parents and the community.

The first null hypothesis was that there would be no statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish and a change in attitudes about ELLs in the general classroom. The first alternative hypothesis was that there would be a statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish for teachers of Hispanic students and a change in attitudes about ELLs in the general classroom, after the training. The second null hypothesis was that there would be no statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish and teachers' classroom practices in the inclusive classroom where any Hispanic students were present. The second alternative hypothesis was that there would be a statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish for teachers of Hispanic students and those teachers' classroom practices in the inclusive classroom where any Hispanic students were

present. The third null hypothesis was that there would be no statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish and teachers' feeling about preparedness and practices in teaching ELLs in the general classroom. The third alternative hypothesis was that there would be a statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish for teachers of Hispanic students and those teachers' feelings about preparedness and improved practices for ELLs, after the training.

### **Research Design**

The research designs that were prominent in the literature review included survey-design questionnaires that calculated teachers' attitudes and perceptions based on a 4- or 5-point Likert-type scale (Reeves, 2006; Sas, 2009; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). Because my research was to be conducted solely at one school (at which I was teaching), the sample was of convenience, and because the pre-service/post-service questionnaire had been selected from previously published and well-vetted research (see Appendix B), there was no pilot study conducted.

Within the literature review, there were very few examples of pre-service and post-service questionnaires that linked a specific attitudinal change in relation to a specific, intentionally correlated training or intervention. Along with improved teacher attitudes comes improved classroom ambiance, with is in turn proven to aid the learning process (Walker et al., 2004). With the acceptance of the precept that correlation does not necessarily determine causation, I designed the study to administer a pre-service survey of teachers' attitudes, practices, and perceptions of preparedness to teach ELL students, followed by two specific, targeted professional development training sessions (each 60-90 minutes in length) in beginning Spanish language skills (such as pronouncing names correctly, greeting students at the classroom door, and calling home to speak with a parent, see Appendix D), followed by the administration of a



post-service questionnaire to measure any change in the PD participant teachers' attitudes and perceptions. The quasi-experimental research study was of a solid design and was conducted as originally proposed except for a lower participation rate than expected, and the use of a control group being eliminated. The alternate hypotheses were that the intervention group would show a shift in attitudes, feelings of preparedness, and changes in practices in the classrooms where ELLs attend that was statistically significant and could be interpreted as correlational to the in-service training. In the null hypotheses, there would be no significant changes or shift in attitudes, feelings, or practices among the intervention group regarding ELLs. The pre-service and post-service questionnaires refer to English language learners and English as a Second Language students, without reference to the specific Latino target group. Because the largest percentage of ELLs at the research site is Hispanic (77%), Spanish was the preferred language for introduction via the professional development process for teachers.

The selected instrument for this experiment was a questionnaire that was administered via Qualtrics Online Survey Software to all teachers, grades 9–12, in one urban high school where the Hispanic student population numbered almost half of the 900-member, regularly attending student body. There were 68 teachers, of which approximately 60 were expected to participate in the electronic administration of the questionnaire via Qualtrics Survey Solutions online. The pre-service/pre-training, post-service/post-training attitudinal questionnaire was designed, piloted and validated in the research study entitled, “English-as-a-second-language (ESL) Students in Mainstream Classrooms: A Survey of Teachers” (Reeves, 2006; Appendix B). The entire 4-section questionnaire was input and uploaded via Qualtrics Online Survey Software with proper citation and permissions, including a “Consent to Act as a Human Participant” agreement that

preceded the questionnaire administration (see Appendix C). The questionnaire's four sections (Appendix B) were as follows:

- Section A consisted of 19 questions regarding secondary teachers' attitudes towards English language learners in the mainstream classroom, preparedness to teach ELLs, and concessions or modifications to practices regarding ELLs in the mainstream classroom;
- Section B asked about classroom practices, impact of inclusion of ELLs, and teacher support for teaching ELLs (11 questions);
- Section C contained two open-ended questions about teachers' opinions about benefits and challenges in teaching ELLs;
- Section D was comprised of seven questions and one comment section regarding demographics and utilized for categorization purposes.

Teachers in all core subject and specialized subject areas, the guidance counselors, school psychologist, and school nurse are required to attend professional development as an on-going process to fulfill the annual evaluation requirement for professional development. With that yearly requirement comes the challenge to find suitable, enjoyable, and fulfilling professional development training seminars that teachers will look forward to with the excited anticipation of learning something novel and useful, that can preferably carryover from professional life to personal life. For that reason, I anticipated that there would be a good number of teachers who would request to be involved in the *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* professional development seminars offered in May 2017. The desired participation in the PD was 50% of the teaching force, or approximately 30-34 teachers, which would have provided an equalized control group and experimental group; however, this was not the case, and is explained further in my

discussion of the target population and sampling method in this chapter. To enhance recruitment of the intervention group, incentives were offered: at each PD session, four (4) \$25 gift cards were raffled (a total of \$200 in gift cards for both sessions). Despite incentives, out of the 44 initial respondents to the pre-intervention questionnaire, 15 qualified recipients (those who spoke no Spanish) chose to participate in the professional development. Critical to understanding the effectiveness of linguistic competency training in Spanish language skills towards changing the attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness of teachers was to gauge any measurable differences between the pre- and post-intervention questionnaire data regarding English language learners, a group which included a majority of first language (L1) Spanish speakers in the mainstream classroom. Once the intervention group completed both PD sessions, they were asked to complete the post-service survey questionnaire, online via Qualtrics Survey Software as before. There was a different order of the questions in each of the sections of the questionnaire (not in the order of sections); however, one additional question pertaining to the teacher's participation in the *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* PDs was also included.

### **Target Population, Sampling Method (power), and Related Procedures**

The target population for the research study was the non-Hispanic teaching force comprised of 68 certified teachers and academic professionals at a grades 9–12 public school in an urban city in Connecticut. The sample was a convenience sample because teachers had to choose and volunteer to participate. Potentially, the teachers that would represent the convenience sample from the school would comprise 90% of the total population, or 50–60 teacher respondents on the pre-service questionnaire. In the end, 44 teachers participated in the pre-intervention online survey, with 34 of those qualifying for the next step of professional development. An issue with methodology can always be sample size. Sample size requirements

can constrain research with regards to coordination, funding, finding the right population, and even making enough copies or having easy access to the survey site (Oppenheim, 1992). In this case, that meant limiting my research to the school at which I taught, getting permission and support from the site supervisor (i.e. the school Principal) and the Superintendent of Schools, uploading the questionnaire via Qualtrics Survey Solutions, and securing the dates for teacher-led PD.

The initial expectation for the study was that potentially 90% of the teachers and professional staff would complete the online questionnaire, and that half of that number would elect to participate in the professional development seminars offering beginning Spanish language skills training. With this participation, the study would have had an adequate control group (those who did not elect the PD training) and experimental group (those who elected the PD training), so that the research experiment would be within the footprint of the original quasi-experimental design. However, as previously noted, participation was lower than expected for both the pre-intervention questionnaire completion ( $n = 44$ , with  $n = 34$  qualified) and participation of qualified candidates in the professional development sessions ( $n = 15$ , with  $n = 13$  qualified). Accordingly, the control group was eliminated from participating in the post-intervention survey.

The teacher-led professional development sessions were led by me, in my classroom which sits 30-35 students (29 individual desks and 6 chairs at a long table), utilizing a projector, audio speakers, and free, online Spanish modules via 123teachme.com, while adhering to a guidebook from Barron's Educational Series boxed set of "*Buenos Dias: Beginning Spanish for Teachers of Hispanic Students*" (Sharpe, 1994) which I have personally owned since 2002. Support in the form of materials for professional development is germane if teachers are to

implement any instructional reforms (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988), and the flashcards and partner conversation prompts provided in the boxed set from Barron's was ideal for this experiment. There is presently a growing commercial business directed at teachers' need to communicate with their Spanish-speaking students, parents, and communities, so it is not difficult to locate good materials.

The first module was comprised of pronunciation in Spanish, with a focus on pronouncing students' names correctly, then followed with instruction in basic greetings, questions, and requests useful to teachers (see Appendix D). The second module was comprised of additional relevant vocabulary in academic subject areas, how to successfully make a phone call to a student's home, and resources for individual continued study in beginning Spanish (Appendix D). A minimum of two hours of training during each of two sessions in May and June 2017 was executed.

Lastly, the post-service questionnaire was to be administered via Qualtrics Survey Solutions once again to all 68 teachers at the site (PD participants and non-participants), however that was not the final protocol. In the original design of the experiment, data was to be analyzed for the control group and the experimental group, or those who did not participate and those who did participate in the PD, respectively. However, the post-service questionnaire was only administered to the PD participants (the intervention group) with one additional question to the original pre-service questionnaire validating whether a teacher participated in the *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* professional development session. This slight modification to the proposed research design (eliminating a control group) was a result of the lower numbers of participants in each step of the process and the anticipated lack of participation in the identical post-intervention

survey questionnaire by those who had already completed the pre-intervention questionnaire and chose not to participate in the PD ( $n = 19$ ).

### **Instrumentation**

This quasi-experimental research study did not include first-hand observations of changes in pedagogy, but instead allowed teachers to self-report changes in practices, attitudes, and feelings of preparedness for teaching English language learners resulting from the professional development training in Spanish language skills for non-Hispanic teachers. The questionnaire instrument selected for this study was “English-as-a-second-language (ESL) Students in Mainstream Classrooms: A Survey of Teachers” published by Reeves in 2006 (see Appendix B). The instrument was previously piloted and tested for validity; according to Reeves (2006), the data from the pilot study indicated strong content validity for all items on the questionnaire. Establishing reliability of the questionnaire entailed determining whether participants’ scores were internally consistent across items on the instrument (Creswell, 2005; Reeves, 2006). Before using the aggregate score on these items for respective constructs for further analysis, reliability of the scales was assessed. Reliability is a measure of consistency and high correlation of the scores or responses with repeated administration of the scale to the same set of respondents (Trochim, 2008). Reliability of total trust and compliance scales of Attitudes, Practices, and Feelings of Preparedness was measured using Cronbach’s alpha measure, which is a measure of the internal consistency of the scale. Generally, Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.70 or higher is considered as satisfactory evidence for high reliability of the scale (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2010; Laerd, 2013). Reliability analysis indicated that all three study constructs presented reasonable evidence for reliability. The Attitudes scale had a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.58; the Practices scale had a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.63; and the Feelings of

Preparedness scale had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.75. Both Practices and Preparedness scales had satisfactory measures of reliability while the Attitudes scale had an alpha value very close to the acceptable cut-off value. Since the sample size was small ( $n = 13$ ), an alpha value of 0.58 was considered as a sufficient indication of reliability (Laerd, 2013). The items were piloted to assure they would measure what they were intended to measure, regardless of the administered order of questionnaire parts. Questions were presented in a different order in the pre-service and the post-service questionnaires. When electronically recording the data, responses for Section A of the questionnaire were entered using the codes 4 for "Strongly Agree," 3 for "Agree," 2 for "Disagree," and 1 for "Strongly Disagree." Items were coded according to their correlation to positivity or reverse-coded according to their correlation to negativity as described by the questionnaire's author (Reeves, 2006). No number code was entered when the participant expressed no opinion (did not mark any answer); therefore, some answers had fewer respondents than others. I could find no evidence of the repeat usage of this instrument over the last ten years, making my use of it especially significant within the context of its utility. The first section of the questionnaire (see Appendix B, Section A) uses a Likert scale that determines "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," "Agree," and "Strongly Agree," with references to teachers' attitudes about ELLs, beliefs regarding preparedness to teach ELLs, and practices in the classroom regarding ELLs. The second section of the questionnaire (see Appendix B, Section B) uses the 4-point scale of "Never," "Some of the Time," "Most of the Time," and "Always" with statements regarding classroom practices, impact of inclusion, and teacher support.

The preferred instrument in each of the relevant research studies noted herein (Chapter 2: Literature Review) was the questionnaire. The survey method was employed to gather

information from targeted groups of people using structured questionnaires with correlating line items, as well as open-ended response questions (Reeves, 2006; Sas, 2009; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). In the research methods literature, Likert-scale questionnaires and open-ended questions are seen as having differed and possibly complementary strengths and weaknesses (Harris & Brown, 2010). I chose to pursue the survey method of research by issuing a questionnaire to a targeted population – high school teachers – as a more objective research tool that produces results that can generally cross over to other schools of similar demographic construct. The research study design was constructed of three parts: (1) the pre-service questionnaire; (2) the teacher training (the independent variable); and (3) the post-service questionnaire. Both questionnaires are self-reported attitudinal, beliefs about preparedness, and practices related items designed with a 4-point Likert scale that is intentionally designed to avoid teachers choosing middle-of-the-road answers. The three specific parts of the quasi-experimental research design are as follows:

**Part I–Pre-intervention.** The pre-service questionnaire, which had been previously utilized in a published and peer-reviewed research project (Reeves, 2006; see Appendix B), was administered in April 2017 electronically via Qualtrics. That time of the school year marks two-thirds completed of the 184-day school year, and the conclusion of the first two and the beginning of the last two marking periods in the academic year. This timing lent to the prior establishment of attitudes and practices of the teachers with the ELL students present in the individual teachers’ classrooms. The questionnaire was offered to all teachers by emailed invitation to participate by completing online and included 38 items in four sections: attitudes about English language learners in the classroom, practices employed in the mainstream classroom where ELL students attend, the regular education teacher’s preparation and ability to



teach those students, and teacher demographics. The demographic questions enumerated gender, years in teaching profession, and other demographic factors (see Appendix B). In the post-service questionnaire, one additional question was added in the demographics section to determine whether a teacher participated in the Spanish language training sessions. Demographic information was used to identify non-Hispanics and non-Spanish speakers as the respondents who would be the target population for professional development.

**Part II–Training intervention.** The professional development training sessions are operationally defined as the independent variable, and the strategies utilized had been vetted based on previously or currently published training devices for instruction in Spanish language skills for professionals not only in education, but healthcare, where much success has been noted (Bender, 2004). Two resources were selected: the free teacher training website, 123teachme.com’s Spanish for Teachers, and a boxed set of training materials and guidebook to teaching beginning Spanish to teachers, “*Buenos Dias: Beginning Spanish for Teachers of Hispanic Students*” (Sharpe, 1994). The training modules were presented in classroom style, with instructional strategies that included lecturing, watching short videos, role playing, modeling, small groups, and other techniques as deemed appropriate, pleasurable, and meaningful to the task’s purposefulness, that is, preparing teachers in linguistic competency that would improve non-Hispanic teachers’ sensitivity, awareness, communications with Hispanic students and parents, and pedagogies – including classroom instruction and strategies (Appendix D). I was the sole facilitator and administrator of the training and did not influence the teachers in any way during the training; examples of unethical influence would include emphasizing the importance of the training or delineating how the training could help improve the teachers’ attitudes or change their classroom practices. I discuss this issue further later in this chapter.

Some of the materials from the lessons for the two-session PD are delineated in Appendix D; also, all resources and materials utilized in the PD were fully accessible for teachers to review upon completion of the sessions.

**Part III–Post-intervention.** The post-service questionnaire was conducted online via Qualtrics Survey Solutions to all faculty who participated in the PD. The questions were exactly stated and formatted as in the pre-service questionnaire, but in a different order within each section; the section order remained the same (see Appendix B). There was one additional question for control purposes, ascertaining the participant’s involvement in the PD, to validate the participant’s inclusion in the intervention group. The data results of the post-intervention survey are operationally defined as the dependent variable.

### **Data Collection**

Early in the school year, I met with the building Principal of the study site (the school at which I taught) and discussed the parameters of the research. I also met with the Superintendent of Schools, who was very enthusiastic about my research project. I then scheduled the professional development seminars with the PD coordinator; the two sessions were ultimately set on the calendar for spring 2017. After submitting a copy of the proposed research instrument to the Principal for final approval, I was directed to submit all my materials for the study to the district’s Superintendent of Schools. I received her positive response, permission, and full support for the research project.

The Research Project Part I and Research Project Part III are the questionnaires and data collection from those questionnaires, and were conducted via Qualtrics Online Survey Software in an electronic format. The questionnaire (see Appendix B) was available for the academic faculty and professional staff to complete over a two-week period after the availability of the

online survey and invitation via school email addresses in April 2017. The Research Project Part I questionnaire was administered over a two-week period in late spring 2017 with two reminder emails going out during that time. The PD sessions were held in mid-May and the last week of May 2017, and the Research Project Part III questionnaire was administered in June 2017, two weeks after the conclusion of the last PD session. The electronic questionnaires each had a consent to participation form built-in as a prerequisite to each teacher's completion of the questionnaire. The questionnaire cover sheet included the statements of confidentiality and risk (see Appendix C) and agreement to participate and is part of the Qualtrics Survey Solutions protocol. Because the first questionnaire was offered to all the faculty, the data, including a generalized summary of the results, was produced electronically by the software provided by Qualtrics Online Survey Software as part of the online survey protocol, and was automatically provided to me.

### **Operationalization of Variables**

The three main study constructs based on attitudes, feelings and practices were operationalized using respective scales with battery of items based on previously tested scales (Reeves, 2006). The batteries of items for each construct are delineated below, preceding the pre- and post-service questionnaire data results discussion for each construct and for some line items, i.e. certain items in the pre- and post-intervention data collection stood out and were points of focus.

Teachers' attitudes towards English language learners, and teachers' perceived preparedness and responsibilities to modify teaching strategies for ELL students in the mainstream classroom are variables that refer to the teacher's perceptions, belief systems, and contextual understandings of the preparedness to serve the L1 Spanish population in schools

(McKinney, 2008). Questionnaire items were formatted as statements, not questions (see Appendix B), and were aimed to evoke an effective response by eliminating a neutral response (Reeves, 2006). Positive reported variables about attitudes referred to the teacher's positivity about the inclusion of ELLs in the mainstream classroom, a welcoming attitude about ELLs, and open-mindedness about modifying assignments or coursework for ELLs. Other positive reported variables referred to the teacher's confidence regarding preparedness to teach children from cultures other than his or her own, the teacher's acceptance of the growing number of English language learners in the regular education classroom as part of that teacher's responsibility to teach with as much efficiency as with other students, and the teacher's positivity in adapting lessons or curriculum or modifying strategies for ELLs. The negative reported variables of attitude would be the teacher's reporting of ELLs as inferior, deficient, or unable to learn; the negative variables of preparedness would be an unwillingness to modify or differentiate assignments or coursework and a negative feeling about the inclusion of ELLs. Negative variables in practices of teachers would be a reported unwillingness to assimilate ELLs in the classroom, neglect in differentiating instruction in equitable ways, and a generally exclusionary stance toward the ELL student population.

The confounding variables of the targeted population would include teachers with a background in Spanish, Latino, or Hispanic culture – perhaps a teacher whose spouse is Latino/a – or who has had any negative experiences with regards to immigrants or language confusion. “Language confusion” can occur in the school's neighborhood and surrounding businesses, where most signs are in Spanish and English. For example, the local grocery store has the aisle signs in both languages, and self-checkout automated speakers broadcast items and prices in one's choice of Spanish or English. The cashiers often speak across the counter to each other in

Spanish. English-speaking (teacher) customers may have feelings of enforced inferiority in the setting and a need to “set things straight” in the classroom. Confounding variables cannot always be specifically identified, but knowing they are always a possibility within the context of this study will be an important part of the data analysis. The demographic variables that were solicited are ones that have been identified in the literature as having an influence on teachers’ attitudes (Sas, 2009). They include years in teaching, gender, native language skills or practice, foreign language ability, and whether the respondent has had any training experiences in teaching language minority students (Reeves, 2006). There is complementary research with regard to years in service and self-reported confidence in teaching ELLs; one body of research reported that the longer a teacher has been teaching, the less training that teacher believed they needed for ELLs in the mainstream classroom (Anhalt & Rodriguez Pérez, 2013), as their years of experience provided a sense of confidence in teaching the subject matter to any student. Another body of research resulted in the findings that the longer a teacher had been teaching, the more resistant they were to being told to modify instruction for English language learners in the mainstream classroom (Crookes et al., 1995). This result speaks to the teachers’ self-esteem and negative attitudes about any modifications to their teaching styles.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Data analysis was essentially based on descriptive statistical analysis followed by inferential statistical methods used to assess the difference in the pre-and post-test period for the study response variables. Univariate analyses of the survey data and analysis of only one variable at a time identified participants’ attitudes, practices, and feeling of preparedness to teach ELLs according to the strength of their agreement or disagreement with each survey item. When interpreting the scores, the higher the score, the more positive the attitude, where being positive

reflected being open, inclusive, or willing to grant access to equal privilege. The lower the scores, the less positive the attitude about preparedness or willingness to adapt curriculum or lesson plans for ELLs. The analyses included percentages, measures of central tendency, and standard deviations. The independent variable was the training via a two-part series of professional development seminars in beginning Spanish language skills for teachers. The dependent variable was the measurable change in attitudes about language learners, perceptions about preparedness to teach ELLs, and change in classroom practices by the PD participating teachers. The control method for determining the change in paired respondents' pre- and post-intervention data was the one additional item added to the post-service questionnaire, which asked if the respondent participated in the professional development, *Beginning Spanish for Teachers*. The online research survey service, Qualtrics, automated the computation of the results. Testing the differences in scores between the quasi-experimental group's (PD participants) changes in attitudes, practices, and perceptions of preparedness, was based on one independent variable – teacher training in beginning Spanish skills – with this statistical analysis. The raw data from the filtered respondents of the post-intervention survey was matched with the participants' pre-intervention data and downloaded to IBM® SPSS, and were statistically analyzed utilizing the dependent *t*-test, or the paired measurement of change over two points in time. To account for the possible effect of demographics as control variables so that the difference between pre-PD and post-PD periods could be adjusted as necessitated, repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. The two time periods were taken as repeated measures of dependent variables while the demographic variables were included in the model as control variables. This analysis was performed using repeated measures version of General Linear Model (GLM), which is a statistical model where both regression and ANOVA can be

performed in a single model with the flexibility of including interaction and other associated terms (Laerd, 2013). Tests of underlying assumptions for paired samples *t*-test and repeated measures ANOVA were verified before conducting the main inferential analysis. All statistical tests were performed specifying the level of significance at  $\alpha = .05$ . The selected methodology and analysis procedures were selected as the most appropriate for this quasi-experimental study and are further supported as discussed in Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results.

### **Limitations and Delimitations of the Research Design**

There are many methodological issues in gathering information and data of any sort and accurately and objectively synthesizing, analyzing, and reporting that information and data in a conclusive format, either affirming or rejecting the thesis regarding the topic of study. There are many variables that can impact the validity of a research study every step of the way. Potential issues to which special attention must be paid include, but are not limited to, faulty questionnaire design or wording, unspecified research questions that make analysis unreliable, poor or inaccurate sampling, misunderstanding, reticence, or bias on part of the participants, and finally, errors in coding, processing, and analysis of the research, resulting in faulty interpretation of results (Oppenheim, 1992).

Limitations of this study included convenience sampling because all teachers would have to choose to participate in the study (and were all my co-workers), sample size (68 teachers at the site), and response rate (historically dismal for similar activities at the research site school). Of the three limitations noted, the response rate, i.e. non-participation, was expected to be the biggest variable.

Another foreseeable issue in the construct of the research was the voluntary nature of the teacher-led professional development, and whether the spring 2017 PD should be announced before or after the research questionnaire was administered. The prediction maintained was that teachers' attitudes would change for the better upon completion of the PD, however, if the announcement was made that a PD entitled *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* was being held in the upcoming sessions of teacher-led faculty development meetings, the survey respondents might be influenced in their ratings with suspicion of the true intent of the PD. Additionally, instinct told me that the teachers who would be quick to sign up for beginning Spanish classes would be already predisposed to being more welcoming to English language learners in the first place, as willingness to learn Spanish might indicate an interest and open-mindedness that those who refuse to learn Spanish do not have. My instinct was correct, as will be seen in later discussion of the data. Another confounding variable was that some non-participants might have had bad experiences in Spanish class while they themselves were in school and are already averse to learning new languages. Invariably, there could be problems in any research with self-reported attitudes that potentially reflect perceptions in the category of discrimination, where teachers may under-report negative feelings and over-report positive attitudes about English language learners.

As I was developing my research study parameters, another challenge regarding a methodological issue arose: two teachers, at two separate times during one school day at the end of the school year 2015-2016, approached me with excitement in saying, "I heard you are going to be teaching us Spanish next year! Sign me up! I need it!" This constitutes that which I was trying to avoid by not announcing the PD prior to the pre-service questionnaire, as there would be an influence with that knowledge of "what is to come." That influence could be positive or



negative; nonetheless, it could have affected the research and could potentially provide room for an argument of reliability. For that reason, I attempted to reign in the publicity surrounding the PD as much as possible within the faculty body, while endeavoring to emphasize the importance of the research and training with the administration and leadership stakeholders. As reported later in this chapter, there were frequent reminders of the implicit bias that existed in the primarily non-Hispanic teaching staff at the research site. I had personally observed teachers refusing to deal with Spanish speakers (both students and parents) or to modify lessons for ELLs. The teachers whose exhibitions of resistance to ELLs in the mainstream classroom, as exhibited in real time and as demonstrated in the survey responses, are the teachers who would have been better candidates to have participated in the professional development training; however, this was generally not the case. Delimitations included the population of the sample, who are all certified teachers in any subject area who did not teach or speak Spanish in the high school at the research site where upwards of 44% of the students are Latino; the variables, which were the teacher training sessions, experience with English language learners, and preparation for teaching in inclusive classrooms with L1 Spanish speakers; and, the statistical analysis conducted, utilizing the online facilitation of the instrument via Qualtrics Survey Software and the *t*-test via IBM® SPSS.

### **Internal and External Validity**

To ensure internal validity, survey questions were designed carefully to measure attitudes as they are defined in this study (Reeves, 2006). Comments from the pilot study's participants included requests for a neutral option on the Likert scale, and although a neutral option may have granted participants more flexibility in responding to survey items, the neutral response was purposefully withheld from the Likert scale so that participants would make a positive or

negative response to each item (Reeves, 2006). Internal validity was also confirmed through counterbalancing, used to avoid carryover effect on responses, ensuring that the items measured what they intended to measure, and data from the pilot study indicated strong content validity for all items (Reeves, 2006). I used the final, validated version of the questionnaire in my quasi-experimental study and had requested permission from its author.

External validity of the findings from this study could be proved by its extension to all districts and teachers within those districts who serve a high population of English language learners where in the group of all ELLs there is one majority L1 language. For example, beginning Haitian Creole, beginning Portuguese, or beginning Modern Standard Arabic in districts that serve those populations. The sample of teachers for this study was completely representative of the average make-up of public school teachers throughout the United States (see Figure 2).

### **Expected Findings**

If knowledge is power, and being informed means making more sensitive choices, then it was expected that professional development training would broaden the sensitivities of participating teachers and perhaps soften their (anticipated) negative attitudes towards Hispanics. This completed study could potentially serve as a guiding light in discovering the efficacy of educating non-Hispanic educators in linguistic and cultural constructs of Hispanic heritage – namely the Spanish language – and if such education could serve to improve the attitudes, preparation, and practices of non-Hispanic teachers in schools with high populations of Latinx students. I expected to identify a statistically significant relationship between teacher education in Spanish language skills via on-site professional development training and the positive development of non-Hispanic teachers' attitudes about Latinos as English language learners, and

preparedness and practices with regard to English language learners in the mainstream classroom. As discussed in Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results, although not statistically significant, there were notable, positive reported shifts in attitudes and pro-active changes in classroom practices for some line items, and the professional development training was favorably received (Table 1).

Table 1

*Pre- and Post-Intervention Mean Scores by Construct*

Construct	Period	Mean, $n = 34$	Mean, $n = 13$
Attitudes	Pre-Intervention	2.65	2.82
Attitudes	Post-Intervention	N/A	2.69
Practices	Pre-Intervention	2.39	2.347
Practices	Post-Intervention	N/A	2.348
Preparedness	Pre-Intervention	2.32	2.22
Preparedness	Post-Intervention	N/A	2.56

Six of the items in the Attitudes construct were reverse-coded, and therefore a movement down the scale between pre- and post-intervention data ( $n = 13$ ) shows improved teachers' attitudes regarding ESL students in the classroom, while the Practices and Preparedness constructs show a slight movement upward on the scale between the pre- and post-intervention data ( $n = 13$ ), indicating an improvement in self-reported practices and accommodations for ELLs and better feelings about preparedness to teach ELLs.

As previously noted, the preferred result of the research was to provide adequate evidence of a positive influence on the attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness of non-Hispanic classroom teachers of Hispanic students because those teachers participated in Spanish

language skills training and its inherent acculturation. Walker et al., (2004) reported that teacher attitudes towards English language learners in the mainstream classroom can worsen as the teacher gains more experience. The demographic data was expected to provide support or contradiction for this finding within the targeted teaching force to be studied, as there are many new, young teachers and just as many mature, long-tenured teachers on the faculty. The data results would depend on the participation rate for the PD. In summary, as in the alternative hypotheses stated, I expected to find a statistically significant difference in the attitudes, classroom practices, and perceptions of preparedness to teach ELLs of the teachers who undertook the Spanish language training whether the participants were new to the teaching field or had been teaching for many years.

### **Ethical Issues in the Study**

The research was of a quantitative nature, therefore ethical issues that are commonly implicit in quantitative methodologies were automatically included. Confidentiality of identifiable information is an ethical issue that had a strong importance in this study because of the sensitivity of the questions being asked. Every measure possible was taken to ensure that complete confidentiality was assured and maintained, as previously discussed in this chapter. Some considerations of researcher and respondent bias have been addressed earlier in this chapter, and every effort was made to eliminate any influence in the study that would invalidate the findings. There are admittedly sensitive questions in the survey instrument that would perhaps have caused discomfort to the participants in responding, not only in degrees of honesty but in potential self-reflective angst (for example, feeling that one does not actually do enough to welcome English language learners). Additionally, participants were free to discuss the questionnaire with colleagues after completion, and accordingly, there would be no way of

avoiding potential conflict, debate, or emotionality about the issues surveyed. Although there were no foreseeable ethical issues in the construct of this research study, there may have been indication of uneasiness and suspicion among the faculty as to the true purpose of the study. This was a strong consideration because of the appointment of a new school Principal at the research site in 2016 who is Hispanic. There was already talk among teachers that non-Spanish speakers were annoyed when they heard “their Principal” speaking Spanish. One teacher shared with me that “the Principal should never speak Spanish to anyone” because “no one else knows what he is saying and that is rude.” At no time during the study would there be any intention to make anyone uncomfortable, or to solicit personal information that would or could be used to implicate any one person as racist or insensitive to immigrants or non-English speakers, however those are ethical issues that could have manifested because of the nature of the quasi-experimental study.

The benefits of this quasi-experimental study were clearly outlined for the participants and included, but were not limited to, helping to determine the effectiveness of a Spanish language skills professional development program for teachers in schools where there is a population of Latinx students. Also, participants could benefit from the professional development by learning basic Spanish words and phrases that are very useful in the classroom and in communication with parents, as well as everywhere in the community and surrounding communities where Spanish is commonly heard and spoken.

Finally, participants were advised that they had the right to withdraw at any time and for any reason, i.e. Qualtrics Consent to Act as a Human Participant, Qualtrics Survey Solutions. The quasi-experimental study was completely voluntary, inclusive of all three phases; any discomfort due to the sensitivity of the questions, difficulty with learning beginning Spanish, or

any other situation that caused the participant to feel discomfort and thus wish to withdraw was accepted and respected (see Appendix 3). Incentives were offered (\$5 fast food gift cards) to motivate teachers to complete the pre-intervention and post-intervention questionnaires online; the dispensing of the gift cards to participants was based solely on the honesty system, i.e., if a teacher approached me and said that he or she completed the online questionnaire, I handed him or her a gift card with thanks.

### **Summary of Chapter 3**

The focus of this quasi-experimental research study was to determine whether a statistically significant difference in teachers' attitudes, self-reported practices, and feelings about preparedness could be measured after professional development training in beginning Spanish language skills for non-Hispanic teachers. The usefulness of this information in planning teacher preparation and professional development for teachers in school districts where Hispanics make up any part of the student body can be invaluable. As all the research that I have reviewed and the respective body of literature supports, there are no studies of this kind. Although many scholars and U.S. Department of Education experts suggest the usefulness of Spanish language training for new teachers or teacher preparation programs, such as *The Final Report of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans* (2003), there is no statistical or research evidence that proves that such teacher preparation and training works. To expand upon the usefulness of the projected findings even further, such a system of professional development in beginning language skills in *any* language can be implemented in schools where English language learners are prevalent, and share one particular home language.

As the title of this dissertation maintains, “*Nuestra Escuela*” means *our school*, not yours or mine or only English-speaking Whites and African-Americans or English-speaking Hispanics, but a combination and celebration of both (and all) languages and cultures as a source of pride and as an important part of living and learning in the public schools of the United States of America. The measurement of teachers’ attitudes towards English language learners and mainstream classroom practices via questionnaire (see Appendix B) in Part I of the quasi-experimental study was expected to support the theory of critical race (Bell, 1973), in that teachers’ responses would reflect an assumption that English is the language of classroom instruction and that teachers should take no special measures to accommodate English language learners. Evidence of implicit negative assumptions about ELLs as tabulated in the Part I questionnaire (see Appendix B) provided support for the practices of classroom teachers unconsciously marginalizing students who come from backgrounds other than Anglo-Saxon/European, and additionally, supportive evidence for critical race theory (Alemán, Jr., 2009).

This quasi-experimental study was expected to show movement in a positive direction of attitudes and self-reported practices of teachers once he or she had completed the PD training in beginning Spanish skills and had time to practice the new skills and implement new strategies in the classroom. Also expected was that teachers’ perceptions about readiness and preparedness to teach ELLs, especially L1 Spanish speakers, would improve with the confidence building provided in the professional development sessions. The desired outcome of the PD training was to influence the overall attitudes of teachers in a positive way that was statistically significant enough to provide correlational evidence of its impact. The impact of such a study could be far-reaching, as the model it represents may be duplicated at other schools and districts. Chapter 4:

Data Analysis and Results, provides the results of the pre-service questionnaire for  $n = 34/n = 13$ , an analysis and application to the conceptual framework of critical race, and then provides the results of the  $n = 13$  post-service questionnaire, an analysis of the comparative data, and a summary of the findings and what those findings represented in this quasi-experimental research study.



## Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to test the effectiveness of a beginning Spanish language skills training program, designed specifically for teachers, in changing the attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness of non-Hispanic teachers of Hispanic students to teach those students. The district in which the research site school is located has a total of 48% Hispanic students; in addition, 40.4% of this district's students come from homes where English is not the primary language (CT State DOE, 2015). The urban high school at which the pre-intervention (professional development) and post-intervention questionnaires were administered has 44% of the total population of Hispanic students who name Spanish as the language spoken at home. Among all ESL students at the research site school, 77% are Spanish speakers. The questionnaire/instrument selected and utilized, "English-as-a-second-language (ESL) Students in Mainstream Classrooms: A Survey of Teachers" (Reeves, 2006; Appendix B), was appropriate for the inquiry to determine whether training in beginning Spanish language skills for teachers was influential in the context of a school setting where most of the teachers did not speak Spanish and nearly half of the students did. The teacher-respondents were asked about their attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness with regards to ESL students in the school. The ESL students at the urban high school research site are primarily first language Spanish speakers. The instrument used was piloted and tested for validity in 2001 (Reeves, 2006); establishing validity of the questionnaire entailed determining whether participants' scores were internally consistent across items on the instrument (Reeves, 2006; Creswell, 2005). The same instrument questionnaire (Reeves, 2006; Appendix B) was administered via Qualtrics Online Survey Software for the pre-intervention and post-intervention (PD) surveys, but as set forth in the Chapter 3: Methodology protocol, write-in answers for narratives were eliminated, and one

question was added to verify attendance at the PD sessions in the post-intervention administration of the questionnaire. Forty-four of the 68 teachers at the urban high school research site chose to participate in the pre-intervention online questionnaire (Reeves, 2006; Appendix B). Ten teachers who completed the online questionnaire were disqualified from further study because they already spoke Spanish. Thirty-four teachers who completed the online questionnaire were qualified (i.e., those who did not speak any Spanish) for the quasi-experimental research study. Those 34 teachers were invited to attend two professional development sessions called *Beginning Spanish for Teachers*. Fifteen teachers elected to attend the PD. The professional development, *Beginning Spanish for Teachers*, was well received and was designed to be duplicated in any school within the district. The Spanish language skills training was designed by combining several resources, including 123 Teach Me online resources for Spanish for teachers ([www.123teachme.com](http://www.123teachme.com)), and flashcards and handouts with partner and group activities from Barron's "Beginning Spanish for Teachers of Hispanic Students" (Sharpe, 1994). Lessons ranged from learning pronunciation of Hispanic names to asking a child how he or she is doing, and a script for calling parents to speak about a child's academic progress (Appendix D). Activities included interactive video, partner work, and group work. The teachers who attended the PD sessions were then administered the questionnaire (Reeves, 2006; Appendix B) once again via Qualtrics Online Survey two weeks after the conclusion of both PD sessions. The teacher sample is discussed in detail in the Description of the Sample later in this chapter. Two of the 15 PD participants admitted to not having completed the initial, pre-intervention questionnaire, and were therefore disqualified from the final data reports. Identifying the difference between the quasi-experimental groups' data before and after introduction of the independent variable—professional development in *Beginning Spanish for*

*Teachers*—was conducted by measuring change over two points in time of the 13 qualified respondents post-PD. The data for each individual survey participant was matched pre- and post-intervention and analyzed in aggregate form. The data showed that those who participated in the PD did not significantly change their attitudes towards ESL students, did not significantly change their classroom practices, and did not significantly increase their feelings of preparedness to teach English language learners in the mainstream classroom in aggregate form (i.e., the data collected for all 13 participants). However, there were marked changes in certain line items in each of the individual constructs of Attitudes, Practices, and Feelings of Preparedness, which are outlined in the Detailed Analysis section, and improvements in attitudes and changes in practices were reported; however, the changes did not meet the threshold for statistical significance.

### **Description of the Sample**

The target population for the research study was the majority non-Hispanic teaching force comprised of 68 certified teachers and academic professionals at a grades 9–12 public school in an urban city in Connecticut, who did not identify as Hispanic and who did not speak Spanish. The setting at which the research took place is a Title 1 school serving 100% underprivileged students below the poverty level, whose racial makeup is nearly half Hispanic and half Black. All teachers at the research site high school ( $n = 68$ ) were invited to participate in the pre-intervention survey questionnaire. The participating group of teachers who completed the pre-intervention questionnaire ( $n = 44$ ) were all adults who had completed teacher preparation programs, were licensed and certified to teach in Connecticut, and who were currently teaching or providing professional services to students at the site. Of the 44 pre-intervention questionnaire teacher respondents ( $n = 44$ ), all non-Spanish-speaking teacher respondents ( $n = 34$ ) who were interested in learning beginning Spanish were given the option to participate in

two professional development seminars. All teachers who participated in the PD ( $n = 15$ ) were asked to participate in the post-service survey questionnaire. Demographics were nearly identical for both sides of the research, with an average of 13.5 years teaching for pre-service respondents ( $n = 34$ ) and 13.7 years for post-service respondents ( $n = 13$ ), and one-third male respondents, two-thirds female respondents for each questionnaire survey.

Potentially, the teachers that would represent the sample population from the school would represent 90% of the total population, or 50–60 teacher respondents on the pre-service questionnaire; however, participation was not as robust as expected, with 44 of the 68 teachers participating in the pre-service questionnaire survey (65%). Several potential reasons for the low participation rate in both the pre-service and in-service sections of the study are discussed further in the Limitations sub-section of this chapter within the Summary of Results, with a major limitation being that the study took place during the time of year (post-spring break) that for school teachers is exceptionally busy. Had the study taken place at the start of the calendar year, the participation rates might have been much higher. This is also discussed in detail in the Limitations section of this chapter.

Inclusion criteria for the quasi-experimental study included all teachers of any non-Hispanic race who did not speak any Spanish; exclusion criteria were teachers who named Spanish as a language he or she spoke and understood at any level from beginning to advanced. Of the 44 pre-service questionnaire respondents, 34 qualified for the study; 10 were eliminated because they stated they spoke Spanish ( $n = 5$  claimed beginning Spanish skills,  $n = 5$  claimed advanced Spanish skills). Of the 34 qualified candidates for the in-service *Beginning Spanish for Teachers*, 15 chose to participate in the teacher-led PD. In the end, two teachers were eliminated

from the post-service survey because they stated that they had not completed a pre-service survey.

### **Summary of the Results**

There were three main areas of inquiry in this research study that were divided into constructs that were required to be measured to determine statistical significance in the pre-intervention and post-intervention data. The three main study constructs were Attitudes, Practices, and Feelings of Preparedness. These three constructs were operationalized by dividing survey items into three batteries based on previously tested scales (Reeves, 2006). The batteries of items for each construct are delineated below, preceding the pre-intervention and post-intervention questionnaire data results discussion for each construct and for select line items. The aggregate score utilized was the average of all 13 respondents' responses across the entire battery of questions within each construct before and after the intervention (PD).

For the first part of preparation for data analysis, I reviewed, sorted, and filtered respondents and responses for the pre-service questionnaires completed online and collected via Qualtrics Online Survey Software. Once categorized, I printed the full reports of the separate components for review and comparison. The reports that I generated and printed are as follows:

- Full Default Report, 44 respondents, no filters.
- Full Default Report, 34 respondents, filter: Excludes speaks any Spanish:  $n = 5$  Advanced;  $n = 5$  Beginner. This represents my pre-service, baseline data.
- Full Default Report, 5 respondents, Speaks Spanish Advanced (for comparison purposes, Q31, Q32, and Q45).
- Q31: Please list what you consider to be the greatest benefits of including ESL student in subject-area classes. Showing all 44 responses.

- Q32: Please list what you consider to be the greatest challenges of including ESL students in subject-area classes. Showing all 44 responses.
- Q45: Please write any additional comments you may have concerning the inclusion of ESL students in subject-area classes. Showing all 20 responses.

For the second part of preparation for data analysis of solely the first part of data collection (pre-service questionnaire), I began identifying positive- and negative-response items on the questionnaire to gain a general sense of respondents' stances about ESL students in mainstream classrooms examined within the questionnaire, i.e., were teachers' attitudes generally favorable or unfavorable towards ESL students; were teachers' practices positively or negatively impacted by inclusion of ESL students in the classroom; and, did classroom teachers feel adequately prepared to act as ESL teachers in the classroom? This initial review of the data was conducted utilizing the report "Full Default Report, 34 respondents, filter: Excludes speaks any Spanish." Some interesting comparisons and contrasts of responses in this initial review of interval data would drive the analysis of the baseline sample (the applicable group before professional development sessions) in relation to the raw data analysis via SPSS™.

**Limitations.** I expected to track approximately 30 participants in the in-service training in *Beginning Spanish for Teachers*; however, only 15 teachers participated in the PD, with 13 qualifying for the study. Two participants in the PD training admitted to not having completed the pre-service questionnaire and were eliminated from the final data of the research study. Part of the reason for this low enrollment could be that teachers were under pressure to participate in an alternate PD that was first announced on the day of the *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* PD; teachers were told that the new administration in the district were strong proponents of a new

model school that would be utilized in the coming year, and the PD would introduce and explain the new model.

The *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* in-service training participants seemed to be a lively and upbeat group of teachers that had decided to attend the “fun” PD instead. The ratio of the sample, 13 of 34, reduced my desired participation for the post-service study by 12%, from 50% to 38%. Additionally, there was a slight change in the planned methodology, specifically in the administration of the questionnaires via Qualtrics. The original protocol for the research survey called for testing the pre-intervention questionnaire participants who had not participated in the PD, not just the intervention group, to isolate the scores of those who undertook the professional development as the experimental group versus those who did not take the PD as the control group. The post-service questionnaire was not administered, however, to the PD non-participants who completed the pre-service questionnaire, as the participation rates were lacking in both the pre-service survey and the professional development participation, and I anticipated that a percentage of teachers desired for a control group would not participate in the post-service survey. Additionally, the study was conducted very close to the end of the school year when teachers are obligated in many ways, such as final exams, senior portfolios, calculation of final for submission, preparations to transfer to other district schools or other classrooms, in addition to presenting and/or attending professional development sessions.

My quasi-experimental research study and teacher-led professional development sessions produced one, small, intervention group ( $n = 15$ ), and necessitated matching the post-service participants’ pre-service questionnaires with the same participants’ post-service questionnaires ( $n = 13$ ), and the complete elimination of a control group. The matching was completed with questionnaire items number 34: *How many years have you been working in public or private*

*schools (including this year)?* and number 35: *Please indicate your gender.* Another limitation of the study was the longevity of the program and the distance between the first questionnaire (pre-service, May 2017) and the last questionnaire (post-service, June 2017), which was not as extensive as I had hoped for. The implications of this limitation are discussed in detail in Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion.

**Hypotheses.** As I began to look at the initial data reports (pre- and post-service questionnaires) downloaded from Qualtrics Online Software Survey reporting, I was encouraged about the validity of my hypotheses, delineated below. Table 1 (p. 80) illustrates the questionnaire results from the collected, aggregate data for the PD participants, pre-intervention and post-intervention, as well as the aggregate data for the entire  $n = 34$  participants of the pre-service survey. This data was encouraging to my hypothesis that Spanish-language skills training for non-Hispanic teachers of Hispanic students could be a viable option for the improvement of attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach ELLs in the mainstream classroom. However, when the PD participants' data was grouped within constructs pre- and post-PD, the aggregate results were indicative of the null hypotheses, as they were not statistically significant.

When isolating individual questions, the results were exciting, as important indicators in each construct showed marked improvement, particularly in the Attitudes construct. Q4, for example, is in the Attitudes construct: *ESL students should avoid using their native language while at school* (Reeves, 2006). Answers in agreement or strong agreement indicated a negative attitude towards ESL students, whereas answers in disagreement or strong disagreement indicated a positive attitude towards the English language learner. In summary, more teachers found it agreeable for students to use their native language (in the research site school, Spanish is



predominant) in school after the professional development, and fewer teachers found it disagreeable to allow students to speak their home languages at school after the PD.

Table 2

*Responses to Q4: ESL students should avoid using their native language while at school.*

	Pre-Intervention <i>n</i> = 34 (Non-PD Participants)	Pre-Intervention <i>n</i> = 13 (PD Participants)	Post-Intervention <i>n</i> = 13 (PD Participants)
Strongly Disagree	23.53	18.75	15.39
Disagree	47.06	50.00	76.92
Total %	70.59	68.75	92.31
Agree	11.76	6.25	0.00
Strongly Agree	17.65	25.00	7.69
Total %	29.41	31.25	7.69

The hypotheses regarding the impact of Spanish language training on teachers' attitudes were:

- Null hypothesis: There is no statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish and a change in attitudes about ELLs in the general classroom.
- Alternative hypothesis: There is a statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish for teachers of Hispanic students and a change in attitudes about ELLs in the general classroom, after the training.

When asked about the inclusion of ESL students in subject-area classes benefitting all students (Q2), teachers answered in the negative pre-intervention (37.5%), but improved their attitudes about the benefits in the post-intervention questioning, with only 15.4% disagreeing with the

statement. Another significant change in the Attitudes construct from negative to positive response was Q5: “ESL students should be able to acquire English within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools,” with 87.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing pre-intervention, and only 53.9% agreeing or strongly agreeing with that statement post-intervention. Conclusions about these findings are explored in Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion, but one early inference of the data was that a more compassionate understanding of the struggles and challenges of being a language learner was provided by teachers’ endurance of the professional development sessions in a “foreign language.” Surprisingly, although only slightly over 56% of pre-intervention responders stated that they would support legislation making English the official language of the United States (Q16), over 92% agreed with that statement post-intervention, leading one to believe that English is in the comfort zone of the participating teachers and Spanish is not.

The hypotheses regarding the impact of Spanish language training on teachers’ classroom practices were:

- Null hypothesis: There is no statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish and teachers’ classroom practices in the inclusive classroom where ELLs are present.
- Alternative hypothesis: There is a statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish for teachers of Hispanic students and those teachers’ classroom practices in the inclusive classroom where ELLs are present.

Practices changed significantly in teacher accommodations of ESL students. For example, almost 19% of pre-intervention respondents stated that they never allowed ESL students more time to complete their coursework, while 0% of those same respondents stated as such post-

intervention. Importantly, 18.75% of pre-intervention teachers said they never allowed ESL students to use their native language in the classroom, and only 8% stated the same after *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* professional development. Interestingly, in answer to Q25, “The inclusion of ESL students in my classes increases my workload,” almost 44% answered *Most of the time* or *Always* pre-intervention, and just over 27% answered *Most of the time* or *Always* post-intervention, indicating that Spanish language training somehow reduced the feeling of workload increases simply by having ESL students in one’s classes.

The hypotheses regarding the impact of Spanish language training on teachers’ feelings of preparedness to teach ELL students in the mainstream classroom were:

- Null hypothesis: There is no statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish language skills and teachers’ feeling about preparedness in teaching ELLs in the general classroom.
- Alternative hypothesis: There is a statistically significant relationship between non-Hispanic teacher training in beginning Spanish language skills for teachers of Hispanic students and those teachers’ feelings about preparedness to teach ELLs in the general classroom, after the training.

Again, although the aggregate data did not point to statistical significance supporting the alternative hypothesis, there are notable changes in individual items within the Preparedness construct to indicate that the *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* training was a viable training program that provided teachers with feelings of preparedness to teach ELL students. Q13: “I have adequate training to work with ESL students,” was answered “Agree” by 25% and “Strongly Agree” by 0% pre-intervention, and “Agree” by 37.5% and “Strongly Agree” by 18.75% post-intervention, clearly indicating that teachers who had taken the professional

development training felt that it helped them prepare for ESL students in the school. Also, where pre-intervention respondents answered that they never conferenced with the ESL teacher (37.5%) or that they never received help from administrators with ESL students (50%), the post-intervention responses indicated a shift. After the PD, 0% stated not conferencing with the ESL teachers and only 33% said they were not getting help from administrators. This may indicate that teachers felt more comfortable (and prepared) in asking for help from others in preparing for their ESL students after the series of PD sessions. Even more convincing are the results of Q29: “I receive adequate support from the ESL staff when ESL students are enrolled in my classes,” where 50% of pre-intervention respondents answered *Never*, and only 8% responded likewise post-intervention.

I was very encouraged with this initial review of the data, but as explained in detail later in this chapter, the final data analysis proved the null hypotheses confirmed for each of the three constructs, as the aggregate data within each construct did not provide statistically significant changes in any of the three constructs. Data analysis was executed by downloading the raw data from Qualtrics Online Software to IBM® SPSS and by running the paired samples of pre- and post-intervention data collected from the same 13 individuals who completed the pre-service questionnaire, undertook the PD, and then completed the post-service questionnaire. IBM® SPSS is a tool that allows ordinary researchers to do their own statistical analysis, and is used in the social sciences, including education. The paired samples *t*-test was selected as the most appropriate means of analysis, as I was examining the existence of any significant differences from the same respondents between the time before they studied Spanish for teachers and afterwards. The selection of this parametric testing as a means of analysis is discussed further and in detail in the next section.

## Detailed Analysis

Data analysis was based on both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to explore possible differences in pre- and post-service questionnaires between paired responses (the 13 respondents who completed the pre-service questionnaire, undertook the PD, and completed the post-service questionnaire). To test the research hypotheses of the effectiveness of the *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* training program, the paired samples *t*-test was selected. The paired samples *t*-test compares two means that are from the same individual, object, or related units (Laerd, 2013). This test is appropriate as the main objective of the study is to assess the differences in attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness between pre-service and post-service periods for the same set of respondents. The purpose of this test is to determine whether there is statistical evidence that the mean difference between paired observations on any one outcome is significantly different from zero (Laerd, 2013). IBM® SPSS statistical software was used to perform the statistical analysis of the data. Data on aggregate scores of attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness were summarized using measures of central tendency and dispersion including, mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum. To test the research hypotheses of the effectiveness of the *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* professional development, a paired samples *t*-test was used. The two-time periods were taken as repeated measures of dependent variables while the demographic variables were included in the model as control variables. IBM® SPSS statistical software was used to perform all data preparation tasks and data analysis after downloading the raw data from the Qualtrics Online Survey Software. All statistical tests were performed specifying the level of significance at  $\alpha = .05$ . Filters were applied, one removing the pre-service survey respondents who named Spanish as a language he or she spoke (at any level, Beginner to Advanced) resulting in  $n = 34$ , and another filter

removing the post-service survey respondents who stated that he or she did not complete the pre-service survey online, resulting in  $n = 13$ . The post-intervention respondents' data was then paired with each participant's pre-intervention data by matching two demographics – age and years teaching – and the results compared. I verified the pre- and post-service questionnaires' qualification of respondents by studying the data *in toto* in Qualtrics, removing the disqualified respondents from the final reporting, and then downloading the clean, raw data to the SPSS™ statistical software.

In confidently approaching the data analysis, I utilized SPSS and ANOVA tasks. The ANOVA reduces chance of error on the paired *t*-tests (Laerd, 2013). Each of the three constructs is delineated below, and each line item from the questionnaire relevant to its construct (Reeves, 2006) is delineated before the respective pre-service and post-service data is reviewed. Pre-service is defined as pre-intervention, or pre-administration of the *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* training program; the construct line items remain constant for the post-service, or post-intervention data. There is a total of 13 participants' data reported in the pre- and post-intervention data (Tables 3 to 8). In the Attitudes construct only, items indicated “R” were reverse-coded; on the scale of 1 to 4 with 1 stating “Strongly Disagree” and 4 stating “Strongly Agree,” some questions would indicate a positive attitude towards ESL students with a Strongly Disagree or Disagree answer, and other questions would indicate a negative attitude towards ESL students with a Strongly Disagree or Disagree answer. For example, Q1: “The inclusion of ESL students in subject-area classes creates a positive educational atmosphere,” if answered *Strongly Disagree* or *Disagree* would indicate a negative attitude towards ESL students. Conversely, Q3: “ESL students should not be included in general education classes until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency,” if answered *Strongly Disagree* or *Disagree*, would indicate a

positive attitude towards ESL students. To measure for teachers' attitudes as negative or positive towards ELLs, questions number 3, 4, 5, 11, 12 and 16 were reverse-coded in the Attitudes construct, so that a *Strongly Disagree* or *Disagree* answer provided evidence of a positive attitude towards English language learners. For item number 16, "I would support legislation making English the official language of the United States," the inference fit the conceptual framework of Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1973), in that agreeing with that statement indicates signs of lingual superiority; therefore, strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with the item would be indicative of a more open-minded approach and a positive attitude towards languages other than English. Q10: "Teachers should not give ESL students a failing grade if the students display effort," was not reverse-coded because in the research site school district, teachers are not allowed to give failing grades to ESL students, and are mandated to give the minimum passing grade of 65 (D) for any ESL or Special Education student enrolled in a mainstream, inclusive classroom in any core subject area. Therefore, item 10 was not considered indicative of a positive or negative attitude by a teacher towards ESL students, as district policy would interfere with such.

Minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation measures are reported for each of the items reflecting the scales in the denoted pre- and post-intervention data for Attitudes (Tables 3 and 4), Practices (Tables 5 and 6), and Feelings of Preparedness (Tables 7 and 8) constructs. Each construct's change in data from negative to positive or positive to negative responses is noted within the narrative, however the discussion and conclusions regarding these data are expanded on in Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion.

**Attitudes construct questionnaire items.** The Attitudes construct questionnaire items were:

- Q1. The inclusion of ESL students in subject-area classes creates a positive educational atmosphere.
- Q2. The inclusion of ESL students in subject-area classes benefits all students.
- Q3R. ESL students should not be included in general education classes until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency.
- Q4R. ESL students should avoid using their native language while at school.
- Q5R. ESL students should be able to acquire English within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools.
- Q6. Subject-area teachers do not have enough time to deal with the needs of ESL students.
- Q7. It is a good practice to simplify coursework for ESL students.
- Q8. It is a good practice to lessen the quantity of coursework for ESL students.
- Q9. It is a good practice to allow ESL students more time to complete coursework.
- Q10. Teachers should not give ESL students a failing grade if the students display effort.
- Q11R. Teachers should not modify assignments for the ESL students enrolled in subject-area classes.
- Q12R. The modification of coursework for ESL students would be difficult to justify to other students.
- Q16R. I would support legislation making English the official language of the United States.

**Attitudes construct pre- and post-intervention data results.** Of the three constructs, Attitudes revealed some of the greatest changes on certain line items after the intervention in



beginning Spanish language skills training (Table 3, Table 4). In the pre-service data, the consensus was generally positive regarding English language learners, with several significant exceptions. A prime example is Q4: “ESL students should avoid using their native language while at school,” where 25% of the pre-intervention participants strongly agreed and under 8% strongly agreed post-intervention.

Table 3

*Attitudes Construct Pre-Intervention Data*

(Scale: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Agree, 4-Strongly Agree)

Item	Minimum	Maximum	Mean, <i>n</i> = 34	Mean, <i>n</i> = 13
Q1	1	4	2.88	3.00
Q2	1	4	2.65	2.69
Q3R	1	4	2.35	2.46
Q4R	1	4	2.76	2.85
Q5R	1	3	2.15	1.92
Q6	1	4	2.56	2.38
Q7	2	4	2.70	3.62
Q8	1	4	2.50	3.38
Q9	2	4	3.15	4.00
Q10	1	4	2.82	3.08
Q11R	1	4	2.76	1.85
Q12R	1	4	2.85	3.00
Q16R	1	4	2.35	2.54

Table 4

*Attitudes Construct Post-Intervention Data*

(Scale: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Agree, 4-Strongly Agree)

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q1	13	1	4	3.00	.816
Q2	13	2	4	3.15	.689
Q3R	13	1	3	2.23	.832
Q4R	13	1	4	3.00	.707
Q5R	13	1	3	2.23	.832
Q6	13	1	4	2.54	.877
Q7	13	1	4	2.69	.751
Q8	12	1	4	2.50	.905
Q9	13	2	4	2.92	.641
Q10	12	1	4	2.67	.778
Q11R	13	2	4	3.23	.599
Q12R	13	2	4	3.08	.640
Q16R	13	1	3	1.69	.630

**Practices construct questionnaire items.** The Practices construct questionnaire items were:

- Q20. I allow ESL students more time to complete their coursework.
- Q21. I give ESL students less coursework than other students.
- Q22. I allow an ESL student to use her/his native language in my class.

- Q23. I provide materials for ESL students in their native languages.
- Q24. Effort is more important to me than achievement when I grade ESL students.
- Q25. The inclusion of ESL students in my classes increases my workload.
- Q26. ESL students require more of my time than other students require.
- Q27. The inclusion of ESL students in my class slows the progress of the entire class.

**Practices construct pre- and post-intervention data results.** The Practices construct provided data that showed significant changes in teachers’ willingness to allow ESL students more time to complete their coursework; only 6.25% answered *Some of the time* pre-intervention, while 41.67% answered *Some of the time* post-intervention. Q21: “I give ESL students less coursework than other students,” was answered *Never* by 25% of the group pre-intervention, and only 8.33% of the group post-intervention (Table 5, Table 6).

Table 5

*Practices Construct Pre-Intervention Data*

(Scale: 1-Never, 2-Some of the time, 3-Most of the time, 4-Always)

Item	Minimum	Maximum	Mean, <i>n</i> = 34	Mean, <i>n</i> = 13
Q20	1	4	3.00	3.08
Q21	1	4	2.03	1.92
Q22	1	4	2.74	2.77
Q23	1	4	1.79	1.69
Q24	1	4	2.65	2.77
Q25	1	4	2.50	2.31
Q26	1	4	2.44	2.39

Table 5

Continued

Item	Minimum	Maximum	Mean, <i>n</i> = 34	Mean, <i>n</i> = 13
Q27	1	4	2.00	1.85

Table 6

*Practices Construct Post-Intervention Data*

(Scale: 1-Never, 2-Some of the time, 3-Most of the time, 4-Always)

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q20	12	2	4	2.83	.835
Q21	12	1	4	2.25	.754
Q22	12	1	4	2.42	.900
Q23	12	1	4	2.08	.793
Q24	13	1	4	2.38	.870
Q25	11	2	4	2.45	.820
Q26	13	2	4	2.38	.768
Q27	12	1	4	2.00	.853

**Feelings of preparedness construct questionnaire items.** The Feelings of Preparedness construct questionnaire items were:

- Q13. I have adequate training to work with ESL students.
- Q14. I am interested in receiving more training in working with ESL students.
- Q15. I would welcome the inclusion of ESL students in my class.

- Q28. I receive adequate support from school administration when ESL students are enrolled in my classes.
- Q29. I receive adequate support from the ESL staff when ESL students are enrolled in my classes.
- Q30. I conference with the ESL teacher.
- Q43. Have you received training in teaching language-minority/ESL students?

**Feelings of preparedness construct pre- and post-intervention data results.** Teachers expressed feelings of preparedness in various ways and with varying degrees of frustration, many having to do with time and time constraints, in the pre-intervention questionnaire completed by 34 respondents. When asked to name the greatest challenges of including ESL students in subject-area classes (Q32), one teacher mentioned the challenge of “working with ESL and trying to get to the English-speaking students who ask for help.” Another teacher spoke of “Lack of time to differentiate my instruction to their level.” It is not certain what was meant by “their level” – academic or linguistic? – but lack of teacher training in this area would be indicated. Teachers’ feelings of preparedness are reflected clearly in their comments, including one which stated, “...they are just put into class and we don’t know anything about skill level, grades, etc.” In the pre-intervention questionnaire, the question “Have you received training in teaching language-minority/ESL students?” (Q43) was answered *No* by 75% of the respondents ( $n = 34$ ) and 77% of the participants ( $n = 13$ ). Of the 25% that answered *Yes* in the pre-survey, examples of the “training” included the answer, “1 in-service workshop over the years in public education” – and that respondent stated in the demographic section that he had served 16 years in the public-school system.

Table 7

*Feeling of Preparedness Construct Pre-Intervention Data*

(Scale: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Agree, 4-Strongly Agree)

Item	Minimum	Maximum	Mean, <i>n</i> = 34	Mean, <i>n</i> = 13
Q13	1	3	1.82	1.92
Q14	2	4	3.06	3.08
Q15	1	4	3.03	3.23
Q28	1	4	1.71	1.46
Q29	1	4	2.18	1.85
Q30	1	4	2.09	1.77

Two sessions of professional development in *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* did not result in any significant changes in responses about preparedness to teach ESL students in the mainstream classroom (Table 8); however, responses showed improvement across the construct in all items, particularly that teachers felt adequately trained to work with ESL learners (Q13).

Table 8

*Feelings of Preparedness Construct Post-Intervention Data*

(Scale: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Agree, 4-Strongly Agree)

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q13	13	1	3	2.31	.630
Q14	13	2	4	3.15	.555
Q15	13	1	4	3.08	.862
Q28	12	1	4	1.92	.900

Table 8

Continued

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q29	12	1	4	2.50	.905
Q30	13	2	4	2.38	.768

**Comparison of pre- and post-intervention data results.** The main objective of the study was to assess any significance in the difference in mean scores of study constructs between pre-and post-intervention periods. Table 1 (p. 80) presents descriptive statistics of aggregated scores based on items reflecting each scale. Attitudes, Practices, and Feelings of Preparedness constructs did not report large differences in the aggregate data between pre- and post-professional development periods for the intervention group, i.e., the 13 teachers who participated in the professional development seminars in *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* and who qualified for the study were generally positive in their outlooks about English language learners in the mainstream classroom, and maintained their positive outlooks post-intervention. However, there were some notable differences in selected line items within each construct as previously discussed. Table 9 displays the results of the paired *t*-test for significance of the difference in mean scores for each construct.

Table 9

*Results of Paired t-Test for Comparing Constructs Pre- and Post-Intervention*

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>t</i>	df	P (Sig.)
Attitudes	-.0520	.572	-.328	12	.749
Practices	.2115	.569	1.340	12	.205
Preparedness	.0064	.853	.027	12	.979

Results of the paired *t*-test indicated no significant differences in mean scores of Attitudes, Practices, or Feelings of Preparedness ( $P = >.05$ ). Precisely, post-service data do not report significantly higher mean scores compared to the pre-service data report in any one construct.

In summary of the data results, after the professional development training in *Beginning Spanish for Teachers*, no statistically significant changes in attitudes, classroom practices, or feelings of preparedness were reported by the intervention group compared to their pre-service attitudes, classroom practices, and feelings of preparedness to serve English language learners.

#### **Chapter 4 Summary**

In the initial data results from the pre-intervention questionnaire regarding attitudes, only 59% of all respondents ( $n = 20/34$ ) thought that the inclusion of ESL students in subject-area classes benefitted all students (Q2), but in the post-service data, over 84% of respondents ( $n = 11/13$ ) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Regarding time management, 47% of pre-service questionnaire respondents ( $n = 16/34$ ) agreed that they did not have enough time to deal with the needs of ESL students (Q6), yet over 46% ( $n = 6/13$ ) of post-PD respondents disagreed with the same statement. These initial results were encouraging as to the effectiveness of the PD regarding teacher preparedness, but data analysis in the end could not sustain the alternative hypothesis with the small intervention group. Nearly equal numbers of pre- and post-service



questionnaire respondents – 79% and 77% respectively – stated they were interested in receiving more training in working with ESL students (Q14) (pre-service  $n = 27/34$ ; post-service  $n = 10/13$ ). One teacher, who stated he or she had attended ESL training in the past, described the training as, “Just one session at a meeting that was held by the ESL department to hand out papers.” Similar answers about half-day workshops and in-service training once a year highlight the serious lack of training. Regarding support, 30 of 34 pre-service respondents stated that they either never or rarely ever received enough support from administration when ESL students are enrolled in class (Q28), and 10 of 12 post-service respondents said the same. One teacher remarked in the pre-service survey, “No support from ESL staff and administration. I have not been trained or given any direction on how to best differentiate and accommodate for my ESL students.”

The significance of having English language learners in the mainstream classroom cannot be overemphasized. As noted in the literature, caring and compassion are necessary character traits for teachers in general (Garza, 2009; Goldstein & Lake, 2000; Noddings, 2002; Zimmerman, 2000), and empathy for ESL students demonstrates caring. “I enjoy my students of other languages,” stated one teacher in the pre-service comments section of the questionnaire regarding inclusion of ESL students in subject-area classes (Q45). The teacher goes on to say, “I always put myself in their place. How difficult it must be!” Another teacher summarized, “I would love to receive more training in this area,” and more pointedly, a teacher wrote in, “I would love to learn Spanish, and be able to talk with my students who do not speak English.” Conversely, two teachers who completed the pre-intervention questionnaire but did not participate in the PD wrote in, “ESL students should be in a class of their own,” and, “Sometimes it is worse than having a handicapped student.” All teachers who participated in the *Beginning*

*Spanish for Teachers* professional development sessions had and maintained positive expectations of English language learners along with positive attitudes about practices to accommodate ELLs. In conclusion, a better measure of the effectiveness of beginning Spanish language skills training on the attitudes and practices of non-Hispanic teachers of Hispanic students would be to identify and train those teachers who displayed negative attitudes such as illustrated above.

Statistical analysis of the data clearly indicated that administration of Spanish language training in *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* had no statistically significant impact on the attitudes, classroom practices, or feelings of preparedness of the non-Hispanic teacher participants to teach English language learners, with a few minor exceptions as noted above. One overarching potential reason for this result is that the teachers who selected to undertake PD were already positive in their attitudes, positive in their practices (and although not significant, became slightly more positive in their practices), and already felt some confidence in their preparation for teaching ESL students. The average years teaching of both groups was approximately 13.6 years; the literature reviewed provided evidence of longevity in teaching as an indicator of more confidence in this area (i.e., McKinney, 2008; Oh et al., 2003; Sas, 2009). The implications of and the conclusions made from the aggregate data will be examined in Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion. In general, the aggregate data for the pre-service questionnaire group of teachers ( $n = 34$ ) showed negative feeling in all three constructs. When the PD participant data was extracted, it was evident that those teachers had positive attitudes to begin with ( $n = 13$ ). Implications for future research are suggested and are outlined in the next chapter. Most important to studies of this nature in the future would be to select pre-service survey respondents who answered in the negative realm pursuant to the attitudes, practices, and

feelings of preparedness and provide those teachers with language training (the PD could be presented for any target language prevalent in the school's ESL population), and then measuring for significant change in improving attitudes, changing practices, and feelings of preparedness to have ELLs in the teachers' classrooms after the in-service training.

Limitations to this study will be further clarified and discussed in detail in the concluding chapter, as I strongly believe that the participation rate, the small sample, the lack of longevity in this planned longitudinal study, and the pre-existing positive attitudes of the post-intervention participants all had negative impacts on data outcomes. Suggestions for future research will be offered and a comprehensive plan for future research in this area will be outlined in Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this quasi-experimental research study was to examine the effectiveness of a beginning Spanish language skills training program, designed specifically for teachers, in changing the attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness of non-Hispanic teachers of Hispanic students to teach those students in mainstream, inclusive classrooms. In this chapter I will summarize, discuss, and offer some conclusions with respect to the research design, the study, and what the data may offer in relation to the way they address each of the research questions. The summary of the results in Chapter 5 will be presented in relation to the literature discussed in detail in Chapter 2, and the limitations to this study, presented in Chapter 4, will be detailed along with suggestions for modifications of, and recommendations for, future research. The implications of this research study within the conceptual framework of critical race theory (CRT) in education (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lippi-Green, 1997; Lynn & Parker, 2006) will be measured and discussed regarding current public school policy for teacher preparation programs, professional development, and American public school teachers' practices within the mainstream, inclusive classroom. This chapter concludes with a description of my experience with this quantitative, quasi-experimental research project and my vision for moving forward from here.

### **Summary of the Results**

The data results of this quasi-experimental study did not support language training in *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* as a strong option for statistically significant improvement in teachers' attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach ELL students (Table 1, p. 80); however, the implications of the research findings can still be far-reaching, as the initial data

collected from 34 non-Spanish-speaking, non-Hispanic teachers revealed areas of discomfort with ELLs which underlined disgruntled opinions about modifying practices. Because there was no significant shift, or improvement, in attitudes or self-reported classroom practices noted in the data collected from the teachers who participated in the *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* professional development, one can deduce that language training made little difference; upon careful examination of the paired respondents' pre- and post-intervention data, it was determined that teachers participating in the PD had already expressed generally positive attitudes towards English language learners in the mainstream classroom in the pre-intervention data as opposed to the data compiled from the non-PD participants. Data analysis of the research revealed that although the alternative hypotheses were not supported by the data results in the quasi-experimental group, the initial data in the pre-intervention survey – which included 34 non-Spanish-speaking teachers – revealed generally negative attitudes towards non-English-speaking students in the mainstream classroom, negative and marginalizing practices towards ELLs in the classroom, and negative feelings about preparedness to teach ELLs. By specifically focusing only on professional development in Spanish language skills training that might positively change the attitudes and practices of teachers led me to the research question: Can there be a statistically significant difference in the attitudes, self-reported practices, and feelings of preparedness of teachers who complete professional development in beginning Spanish language skills? In this study, I used a questionnaire-based, quasi-experimental research-design study. The methods and procedures that were employed were designed to sufficiently address the research sub questions:

- Can basic Spanish language training for teachers change teachers' attitudes towards ELLs (in a school where more than 50% of the ELLs are L1 Spanish)?

- Can basic Spanish language training for teachers change classroom practices in the inclusive classroom (where Spanish-speaking students are present)?
- Can basic Spanish language training for teachers change teachers' feelings about preparedness to teach ELLs (where more than 50% of the ELLs are L1 Spanish)?

The desired outcome of my research was to determine whether PD could result in the same success and benefits that the healthcare industry has enjoyed, including non-Hispanic professionals' increased comfort in treating Spanish-speaking clients and patients, as well as Latinos/as' increased confidence in seeking health care when the practitioners acknowledge Spanish as the first language (Bender, 2004).

The Spanish language training was designed by combining several resources, and activities included interactive video, partner work, and group work (see Appendix D). To measure any statistically significant difference before and after the Spanish language skills training, the pre-service and post-service questionnaires were designed to collect data about teachers' attitudes towards English language learners in the mainstream classroom, teachers' practices in classrooms – such as curriculum differentiation or easier grading when ELLs are integrated with English speakers – and teachers' feelings of preparedness to teach ELLs as part of a mainstream classroom (Reeves, 2006; Appendix B).

Univariate analysis of the data indicated that administration of Spanish language training for the sample group of teachers in beginning Spanish did not produce statistically significant data on the impact on attitudes, classroom practices, or feelings of preparedness of those non-Hispanic teacher participants to teach English language learners, but there were mild shifts to a favorable change in attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness by the intervention group (teachers who completed the PD) as illustrated in Table 1 (p. 80). In summary of the data

results, after the professional development training in *Beginning Spanish for Teachers*, no statistically significant changes in attitudes, classroom practices, or feelings of preparedness were reported by the intervention group compared to their pre-intervention attitudes, classroom practices, and feelings of preparedness to serve English language learners. However, the group that chose to participate in the beginning Spanish language skills training had already reported generally positive attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach English language learners before the intervention and had a slight improvement in all three categories after the intervention. The group that did not participate in the PD reported generally negative attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach ELLs in the initial questionnaire survey (Table 3, Table 5, Table 7).

### **Discussion of the Results**

Schools have a definitive role in reducing racial inequality, and that is by closing the achievement gap (Noguera, 2003). There is still much evidence of an overarching atmosphere of non-White inferiority in education (Lippi-Green, 1997; Walker et al., 2004; Taylor & Ladson-Billings, 2009; Liggett, 2013). The structural properties of racism are in the institutionalized features of the social systems – including the American public school system – that moderate life chances in American society (Giddens, 1984). In this study, there was evidence throughout the aggregate pre-intervention data that supported marginalization of ELLs and language biased English superiority; while not statistically significant, there were indicators of improved attitudes and methods of classroom instruction among the post-intervention respondents (see Table 1, p.80).

**Attitudes.** This quasi-experimental study exposed negative attitudes towards ELLs in the pre-intervention data and improved attitudes towards those same learners post-intervention

(Table 3, Table 4). Although the data did not meet the threshold for statistical significance, there are notable improvements in the research respondents' pre- and post-professional development attitudes about ESL students, for example, regarding use of the English language learner's native language in school (Table 2).

**Practices.** The pre- and post-intervention data of this quasi-experimental research study provided data that showed some improvement in teachers' practices regarding classroom strategies and English language learners (Table 5, Table 6). Again, although not statistically significant, there were notable changes in teachers' willingness to allow ESL students more time to complete their coursework: 6.25% answered *Some of the time* pre-intervention, while 41.67% answered *Some of the time* post-intervention. Additional evidence in Q21: "I give ESL students less coursework than other students," was answered *Never* by 25% of the group pre-intervention, and only 8.33% of the group post-intervention.

**Feelings of preparedness.** Of the three constructs of Attitudes, Practices, and Feelings of Preparedness, the latter construct elicited the greatest improvement in percentage of PD participants feeling that they were better prepared to serve ESL students (Table 7; Table 8). This statistical improvement of feeling prepared to serve language minority students was noteworthy, although the percentages did not meet the standard for statistical significance.

**Ancillary findings.** According to the Economic Policy Institute (2012), over 43 percent of all Latinos in the U.S. workforce, including almost half of all employed Latina women, were employed in jobs where they earned poverty level wages or below in 2011. In contrast, approximately 23 percent of the White labor force were employed in similar jobs (EPI, 2012). Latin Americans have historically served in subservience to Whites (enslaved even by the Spanish), and the carryover into low-paying jobs (house cleaners, crop-pickers, dishwashers, day



laborers) has resulted. When asked in the pre-service questionnaire to name the greatest benefits of having English language learners in the classroom, one teacher responded, “There are no benefits.” The response seems to be an honest admission that there are more challenges than benefits to having ELLs in the mainstream classroom. One could point to that response and make some general conclusions about the teacher who wrote it. On the other hand, it could not be discerned if that response was any more racially motivated than the response from another teacher to the same question that spoke to the non-White inferiority underlying all practices in U.S. public schools (Ladson-Billings, 1998). When asked about the greatest benefits of having English language learners in the classroom, the teacher responded, “So they can see how English speaking/American classes function.” Ladson-Billings (1998) calls this the “nice” business of education, and attitudes such as reflected in the two illustrative answers serve to proliferate the very issues that critical race theory serves to expose. The triangulation of meritocracy, accommodation, and assimilation beliefs and conduct is not very complicated in the organizational structure of education: If “they” (the L1 Spanish-speaking students) work hard enough to please “us” (the non-Spanish-speaking teachers), and “we” the English-speaking teachers welcome “you” the English language learners into our schools and our classrooms, “we” the teachers expect “you” the learners to become “Americanized” enough to fit in, get ahead, and enjoy some success in “our school.” This perspective is strongly supported and summarized in another write-in comment from this study’s pre-service survey regarding the greatest benefits of having English language learners in the classroom: “The benefit is to the student to learn English faster, but there is no benefit to the teacher.”

In response to the pre-service survey question about the benefits of ELLs in the classroom, one teacher responded that “It benefits the students. I personally put the student on

Google Translate and we go.” Whether that would be a benefit to the student in English language learning methodologies, or if that would be a benefit to the teacher in ELL teaching strategies is arguable. Again, this approach speaks to meritocracy and individualism, and Horatio Alger’s profession that hard work, and using one’s own skills and abilities to the fullest potential, along with a little bit of luck, would make anyone successful (Rosen, 2011). Failure by the ELL to assimilate would be considered an individual choice, and in turn, “not the teacher’s fault” should students continue to fail, underachieve, and lag behind their peers.

Many of the Practices construct line items can be applied to teachers’ actions in the classroom as a reflection of personal attitudes about how to “deal with” ELLs in the classroom. For example, when asked what the greatest challenges of including ESL students in the regular classroom were, one teacher responded, “My ESL students do not speak a word of English. They do not talk/participate in class. They just copy things off the computer which are not even relevant to the questions or the assignments.” This type of response was expected within the context of CRT and serves to blame the English language learning student for not participating in his or her learning. This teacher’s response also marginalizes ELLs while deflecting blame completely from the teacher and the teacher’s responsibility. There is no mention of classroom practices modification in this teacher’s response; in other words, had the teacher noted “I try” or “I help” instead of “they do not” and “they just,” there would be some indication of directed learning and the necessary changes to classroom practices.

When asked about challenges in the classroom containing English language learners, one teacher answered by noting that “teachers not versed in their language or how best to assist at relaying directions,” which would indicate a desire to learn more about accommodating ELLs and improving practices. This response certainly indicates an area that is currently lacking in

teacher preparation. Of interest was the write-in response of “working with ESL (students) and trying to get to the English-speaking students who ask for help.” This answer infers frustration about taking time away from regular education students, which speaks to the implied inferiority of ESL students. This is also an indicator of lack of preparation or education in time management as a classroom practice for which a teacher must prepare.

At the end of the post-intervention survey, results confirmed the null hypotheses, that no statistically significant change or impact was made by the intervention of beginning Spanish language skills for teachers and the attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach ELLs. First, the confirmation of the null hypotheses was disturbing in that it may point to interventions not being adequate to change racially driven attitudes and practices (conscious or unconscious) in the classroom. Second, the confirmation of the null hypotheses in a longitudinal study that was impacted by the limitations of time eliminated proof of the effectiveness of short-term training that is prevalent in teacher education, preparation, and ongoing professional development.

The structural properties of racism are institutionalized features of our social systems, public education included (Giddens, 1984). “Adopting and adapting CRT as a framework for educational equity means that we will have to expose racism in education *and* propose radical solutions for addressing it,” (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 22, emphasis in original). The fact that those words were written nearly 20 years ago should bring pause to all educators and highlight the importance of this quasi-experimental research. The current research findings illuminate underlying racial and lingual marginalization of ESL students. The current research provides that professional development in Spanish language skills may not be a radical solution for addressing discrimination in education but should be considered a viable instrument for doing so.

The results of my quasi-experimental research study may not have provided statistically significant evidence of change in attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach English language learners after the intervention of beginning Spanish language skills training, but the research proved that there were positive changes in all three areas of attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness that were studied. The convenience sample of teachers who undertook the PD training had already expressed positive attitudes towards ELLs. The size of the study and the length of time between pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys were severe limitations. I would welcome the opportunity to repeat the study over the course of an entire school year in a school or district where the language training for teachers was mandated, thereby including the teachers with generally negative attitudes. I am confident the results could be different. However, the results of the pre-intervention research survey regarding the prevalent negative attitudes towards non-English speakers – and the reported unwelcome work involved in accommodating non-English speakers in a school where 44% of the students speak Spanish and come from homes where Spanish is the only language spoken – is alarming. Despite the lack of statistically significant findings in this small, quasi-experimental research study, offering training in beginning Spanish language skills for teachers as a standard part of teacher preparation and faculty professional development in districts where L1 Spanish speakers constitute a significant part of the student population seems only logical and respectful.

### **Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature**

There are two interpretations based on my hypotheses, and each points to the need for further research and discussion. Reflecting on CRT and its implications for the pre-service survey results of my study, it became evident that teachers felt that ELLs were a burden to the workload, provided no benefits to the general classroom, and that teachers were not prepared to

teach ELLs and therefore marginalized the ELL students. Although not every non-Spanish-speaking teacher would confront his or her subconscious English superiority, the evidence is provided in their self-reported practices, as discussed previously in Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results. Critical race theorists agree that racism is a permanent fixture in American life, where “Whiteness” is a normative (Giddens, 1984), and people are judged by degrees of separation from the normative. Ladson-Billings (1998) describes her experience:

...as an African-American female academic, I can be and am sometimes positioned as conceptually White in relation to, perhaps, a Latino, Spanish-speaking gardener. In that instance, my class and social position override my racial identification and for that moment I become ‘White.’ (p. 9)

Ladson-Billings’ words illiterate the rank-and-file of Whites-over-Blacks-over-Latinos in the racially structured American landscape. Finding and uncovering discrimination in any of its forms in the United States’ education system is not enough, however, to effect any change in the system.

More research regarding non-Hispanic teachers’ attitudes towards English language learners and Spanish-speaking students is recommended in the future, specifically with respect to the implication of the importance of the relationship between culture and education, in that teachers’ attitudes are proven to influence classroom practices and teacher-student relationships (as discussed in Chapter 2: Literature Review), thereby influencing student outcomes. A common theme throughout all the literature reviewed was the consensus that much more research needs to be conducted regarding teachers’ attitudes towards their students who are English language learners. Regardless of the limitations to my study discussed in detail previously in Chapter 4 and heretofore, the results align with all the scholars’ conclusions. The

overarching theme that teachers do not feel adequately prepared to teach students who are not proficient in English (Solomon et al., 2006; Wilson, 2016) is of importance, given the fact that more English language learners – and overwhelmingly Spanish speakers – are entering the classroom each day (see Figure 1; Appendix A). The fact remains that the racial structure of much of America’s teaching force does not match the racial structure of the students in a growing number of schools (Figure 1 and Figure 2), and teachers admit to not being prepared, nor to feeling satisfied with the preparation they have received or are receiving to work with culturally diverse children (Abbott, 2014; Moses, 2001; Taylor & Ladson-Billings, 2009). Two-thirds of the teachers questioned in this quasi-experimental study complained that they do not have adequate training to work with ESL students (Table 7). Given the notable dominance of Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking teachers in American schools, the perceptions of those teachers’ ability to teach English-learning students is significant (Liggett, 2013). This quasi-experimental research study illuminated the continuing challenge, regardless of decades of research, of preparing teachers to meet the needs of the Latinx students in their care.

The literature reviewed highlighted not only the insecurities in the preparation of teachers in the mainstream classroom where English language learners were present, but also the subtle and not-so-subtle marginalization of ELLs in both practices and social interaction (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012; Liggett, 2013). In this study, the practice of allowing ELLs to take more time than other students was considered acceptable, and teachers admitted to giving less coursework to ELLs than the other students. This practice has great implications for “dumbing down” the curriculum so much for ELLs that an academic gap is inevitable. Most alarming was the admission that ELL students were oftentimes put on a computer with an e-translator and “left to

do their own thing.” Ignoring ELLs by separating them from the general classroom population is contraindicative of what mainstreaming ESL students was supposed to accomplish.

Despite the real reasons that may motivate a teacher to marginalize a student (lack of time, resources, or knowledge, for example), the practice is taking place, as evidenced by this quasi-experimental research study, and must be recognized as inappropriate and biased. The problem of implicit bias that is underlying much of the resistance to supporting the needs of the Latino population was noted and discussed throughout the literature (Bell, 1992; Colombo, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Long, 2015). Some extremely negative attitudes towards ELLs were noted in the pre-intervention data, but the teachers with those responses were not questioned post-intervention in this study, as they did not participate in the PD. Given some of the negative written comments made in the pre-service survey that accompanied each respondents’ scaled responses to attitudinal statements, the critical race theory of implicit bias – and especially linguistic bias – is evident and supported. Accordingly, compulsory beginning language skills in an academic context for teachers in classrooms at schools where the students primarily speak another language at home is decidedly warranted.

### **Limitations**

When selecting the instrument used for this research study, I was limited to using an existing, validated questionnaire because of time constraints in piloting a newly designed questionnaire. I originally desired to replace “ESL students” with “Spanish-speaking students” but thought otherwise after consultation with my dissertation committee members. One of the questions the team raised was the applicability of such a study within the realm of other cultures in parts of the United States where there were significant numbers of students enrolled in schools who were from non-White, non-English-speaking cultures, such as in Alaska. I was excited to

think about the broad range of implications my research would have for the issues that English language learners and their teachers faced no matter what the first language of the ELL, therefore I kept the questionnaire in its original form. There was no need to bridge the meaning between “ESL student” and the research site’s English learning students when asking about attitudes and practices, as approximately 75% of the ESL students at the research site school were L1 Spanish speakers. However, when repeating this study in the future, I would be specific as to the English learners’ first language.

The most important limitation of this study was the time between the first survey and the final survey, and the amount of time that teachers had to implement their newly learned language skills. My original timeline allowed for the pre-intervention questionnaire to be implemented near the beginning of the calendar year (February 2017) when the new Professional Development sessions’ calendar was set for the remainder of the school year. However, due to program requirements, time restraints, permissions, and academic prerequisites, it was not possible to implement the pre-service survey until April 2017, followed by the PD sessions in *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* during the month of May 2017. What desirably would be a few months of teachers’ practice in order to accurately measure any changes in attitudes and practices specifically became only a few weeks’ time. The follow-up survey was completed in the rush to close the books on the school year, and was not the best condition for my research. Although participants uniformly stated to me and to the administration that the PD was useful and impressive, I felt that there was not enough time for teachers to implement or enjoy their newfound language skills. In future studies, I would collect written narratives from teachers who completed the training in order to obtain qualitative evidence of the actionability of the training materials. Several teachers verbally reported to me that they implemented change in their



classrooms, indicating that a softer, more compassionate attitude towards ELLs was being reflected in the accommodations for those students in the classroom after the training in beginning Spanish language skills. One teacher confided to me that she used a few key Spanish phrases learned in the training, and that immediate results in students' behavior became apparent. The use of the native language in the classroom to get students to behave, however, was not the sole intention of this study, but does provide consideration for further research.

Another limitation of the research was the small size of the convenience sample. I had hoped to get 90% participation of the existing faculty in the pre-intervention survey and then 50% participation from that number in the professional development sessions. Allowing for reduction in numbers because of disqualifying demographics, the measurement of 13 individuals' pre- and post-intervention survey responses may be considered inadequate no matter what the results may have been; however, it is important to note that although there was no statistical significance in any of the results, *there was positive improvement* in all areas of teachers' attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness (Table 1, p. 80).

Because there are no statistically significant differences in attitudes, practices, or feelings of preparedness in those 13 teachers' self-reported experiences in their post-intervention survey responses, the data does not support the alternative hypotheses. Even though the data does not meet the threshold for statistical significance in this quasi-experimental study, there is enough evidence in the pre- and post-intervention data results to warrant further study, especially noting the aggregate data results of the pre-intervention survey supporting critical race theory and deserves further exploration.

## **Implication of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory**

**Practice.** The conclusion that teachers should be ready to work with children from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Brisk, 2007; Gonzalez et al., 2011) must be answered to with a solution. Decades of research and scholarly writings have been dedicated to the cultural and linguistic division between teachers and students as an indicator of success or lack thereof. The results of this quasi-experimental research study point mainly to the need for more study in this direction, i.e. how policy and mandated preparation for teachers can improve practices and in turn, student outcomes. More attention needs to be paid to the millions of children in American schools who infer that they are linguistically and culturally less than desirable. The watering down of curriculum to accommodate English language learners, as reported in this study, cannot be ignored as an important factor to Hispanics not excelling as their peers do in American schools. The practice must be prohibited, monitored, and eliminated. One important way to alleviate intentional or unintentional negative practices is to provide better preparation for teachers.

**Policy.** With the changing demographics of the client (students and their families), the service providers (schools) must adjust the product (education). School and district policies, including mandates for teacher preparedness and development, and evaluation of teachers' practices in diverse classrooms, must be examined and adjusted. Stronger inclusive classroom policies and more frequent teacher classroom observations, along with remedial English Language Learner workshops and beginning "foreign" language classes for teachers would go a long way to improving student outcomes and the perception of cultural respect. Changing the name of the Columbus Day holiday to "Indigenous Peoples Day" is a start to the evolution of cultural sensitivity to Hispanic people (Little, 2017), but is merely a token gesture. This quasi-

experimental research study provided data evidence that improvements can be realized in school districts that include respect for all stakeholders in their mission statements and district policies. This research study and professional development series could be easily duplicated, and the results could provide impetus for implementing district-wide policy changes.

**Theory.** Critical race theory conveys that within the majority non-Hispanic teaching force in the United States lie many subliminal racist beliefs and practices, whether practiced consciously or unconsciously (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Taylor & Ladson-Billings, 2009). This quasi-experimental research study was designed to identify if educating teachers who did not speak Spanish in beginning Spanish language skills would improve attitudes – and in turn practices and feelings of preparedness – towards those teachers’ English language learning students from a different culture in a school where most of the English language learners named Spanish as the mother language. Pursuing the study of a second language brings insight into how challenging it is to immerse oneself in a foreign culture where one’s language is not the dominant one (Duran, Dugan, & Weffer, 1997; Cantu, 2008; Elmes, 2013). Theoretically, changing the thoughts, feelings, and actions of teachers to be more culturally sensitive and accepting to English language learners could improve student outcomes (Bennett, 1986; Colombo, 2005; Brisk, 2007; Cantu, 2008; Elmes, 2013). When teachers who do not speak Spanish try to learn the language, there could be at least two benefits: using a few words in a child’s language helps bond the relationship (Garza, 2009; Gay, 2000; Mitchell, 2016), while the teacher who is learning Spanish can then empathize with the English language learner (García-Nevarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005; Nieto, 2010).

## **Recommendations for Further Research**

The implications for further research are strong, given the data results and the protocol utilized. By eliminating each of the limitations of timing, longevity, specificity, and sample size, there is important continuing research that needs to be accomplished. The implications from the literature review (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Gershenson, 2015) and the data results of this study are indicative of the possibility of implicit bias.

Although teachers may report feeling inadequately prepared to teach L1 Spanish speakers, they are not willing to become more prepared by studying Spanish (García-Nevarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005). The implication that this is an indicator of linguistic bias is strong, but not all-encompassing. There are many individuals who were not “good at languages” and dreaded the mandatory Spanish, French, or German classes in high school that formulated adult resistance to more than a pedantic knowledge of those cultures and languages. Whether this attitude of resistance carries over to implicit bias would be very difficult to determine, and certainly the challenge of designing such a study is recognized, but such a study should be considered germane.

A very desirable research study design would be to monitor and track Hispanic students in mainstream classrooms where the teacher speaks Spanish (even beginning Spanish) and compare those students’ successes with Hispanic students in classrooms where the teacher spoke no Spanish at all. This type of research would help support my theory that speaking any Spanish at all in a classroom with English language learner Spanish-speaking students helps to bond the teacher/student relationship in a way that cannot be accomplished otherwise. There is no greater resource in the public school setting than the classroom teacher; utilizing that resource to make important connections with the students who represent the future of society seems obvious.

Teachers feel more self-worth and satisfaction when they practice compassion, and students who feel the teacher cares about them work harder and behave better in the classroom (Brisk, 2007). Speaking only a few words of Spanish in a classroom where first-language Spanish speakers are eager to learn acknowledges an entire culture, and would prove that a teacher cares and respects that culture.

## **Conclusion**

Human behavior is organic and dynamic: “Human cultures are constantly evolving through the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the people who live in them,” (Robinson, 2011, p. 211). The combination of the growing need for teachers who speak Spanish and the improvements in the healthcare industry by teaching healthcare professionals basic Spanish (Bender, 2004), led to my investigation of teacher professional development in basic Spanish language skills for classroom use. Building teacher capacity to teach L1 Spanish-speaking students is one of the only alternatives to the lack of recruiting and retaining Spanish-speaking teachers in the American public schools today (Padrón et al., 2002). My interest became focused on research that was narrowed to the quantifiable effectiveness of training in Spanish language skills for non-Spanish-speaking teachers to affect a statistically significant difference in attitudes, feelings of preparedness, and self-reported practices of non-Hispanic teachers of Latinx students before and after professional development training in beginning Spanish language skills.

I chose to research this subject because of an interesting observation at the urban high school where I taught for over 16 years. Although perhaps upwards of 44% of the students enrolled and attending that school spoke Spanish as their first language, only 10% of the teaching staff and administration spoke any Spanish. Instead of teachers waiting for students to “hurry up and learn English,” a goodwill strategy for the regular classroom teacher would be to try to learn,

and learn about, a student's first language. Being able to pronounce students' names correctly, and being able to say "Good morning," or ask "Do you need a pencil?" in Spanish could reasonably go a long way in establishing both feelings of belonging for the students and feelings of competence for the teachers (Mitchell, 2016). In the medical community, there are very successful, standardized professional development training seminars for healthcare professionals who serve Hispanic clientele (Bender, 2004), but as of the commencement of this study, there was no evidence of such standardized in-service training for teachers found in the literature. In designing my research study, I wanted to survey teachers via an established and validated questionnaire (Reeves, 2006) for attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach English language learners, then offer two professional development seminars in *Beginning Spanish for Teachers*, followed by a post-service survey of participating teachers' attitudes, self-reported classroom practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach ELLs in the mainstream classroom (Reeves, 2006). I had hoped to find a positive correlation and a statistically significant relationship between the training and the improvement of attitudes, practices, and teachers' feelings of preparedness; however, this was not the result. Instead, the null hypotheses that there would be no statistically significant change in attitudes, practices, and preparedness among the professional development participants were supported by the limited data. I had hoped for different results, but as outlined in the limitations sections of Chapters 4 and 5, there were barriers to data results that would support my alternative hypotheses. One major limitation of the research study – the length of time between the pre-service survey and the post-service survey – could have impacted the anticipated, desired results of the research. Another limitation was the extremely small sample size,  $n = 13$ , reducing the potential for statistical significance in any changes in the data pre- and post-intervention. A replication study would preferably begin at

the start of a school year or semester and conclude at the end of the school year, with a larger percentage of the faculty perhaps mandated to participate.

The resistance of teachers and administrators to address the issue of the divide between the growing Hispanic community and the existing teaching community, despite decades of literature and research providing evidence that this is an issue that desperately needs addressing, is concerning. Of the three constructs of attitudes, practices, and feelings of preparation studied in this research, attitudes are personal and as difficult to measure as they are to change. Practices can be implemented and mandated within schools and districts, and teacher preparation programs and professional development can be designed to address the changing population; however, attitudes cannot be easily or honestly assessed with 100% precision, nor can they be manipulated to a desired outcome. Attitudes about immigrants, “foreigners,” and those who do not learn English as rapidly as desired can be huge roadblocks to success in education (Reeves, 2006; Sas, 2009); teachers who hold negative attitudes may also feel that professional development training in culture and language may be a form of forced indoctrination. More research in this area is necessary and advisable.

Latinx children need to be acknowledged, respected, and celebrated during the entire school year (not just during “Hispanic Heritage Month”), and this needs to be accomplished through Boards of Education, mandates, and policy revisions that not only include Spanish translations, but include input from the Hispanic community. Policy and rules and regulations do not make a better teacher, however. The teacher who pronounces his or her Latinx student’s name correctly – the first time – proves that he or she took the time to acknowledge that this school is *nuestra escuela* (our school), not just English-speaking Americans’ school. *In loco parentis* (in place of the parent) is a teacher precept that needs to be taken literally. Policy and

practice should be indicated to support Latinx students in the schools, but true sensitivity and compassion for those students starts with the teacher in the classroom.

In conclusion, this quasi-experimental research study was designed to address a critical aspect of educational structuralism and implicit bias, and not only did the research methodology unearth teacher biases via a well-constructed questionnaire, the professional development training in *Beginning Spanish for Teachers* proved beneficial for all participants. Knowing the Spanish language can bring one closer to the Hispanic culture because of the strong relationship between language and culture (Brisk, 2007). I am hopeful for the continued positive impact of beginning Spanish language skills training as an in-service, on-site training for non-Hispanic teachers of Hispanic students in the mainstream classroom. There are several “Spanish for Teachers” programs offered online (some with fees) and a few “Spanish for Educators” programs that are offered in Central American countries and México, but those programs require the participating teacher to travel outside the United States during the summer months to attend. As noted previously, those teachers who choose to participate in such an online or overseas program already have the propensity to enjoy the culture and language. By providing mandated training over several professional development sessions in-service and on-site in districts where the language spoken by the teachers (English) does not match the prevalent language of the students (Spanish), there may be a positive impact on the attitudes, classroom practices, and feelings of preparedness to teach English language-learning, Spanish-speaking children in the American classroom. Bridging the gap between the culture of the majority non-Hispanic teaching force in the United States and the communities in which they teach should be a major goal in teacher education, preparation, and professional development in every district in every state that Latinos call home. I hope to be a part of the discussion, an advocate for action, and a



servant-leader for administration and facilitation of language skills training sessions for teachers and administrators in forward-thinking districts where diversity and improved communication are respected and embraced.

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**Appendix A: States With More Than Three-Quarters of ELLs Speaking Spanish**

**SY2012-13**

State	Share of English Language Learners Speaking Spanish (%)
Texas	90.5
Arkansas	86.3
Oklahoma	84.8
Colorado	84.1
California	83.9
North Carolina	83.6
Mississippi	82.0
South Carolina	81.2
Kansas	80.9
Illinois	80.1
Nevada	79.5
Utah	78.9
Georgia	78.2
Indiana	78.1
Alabama	77.2
District of Columbia	76.8
Oregon	76.6
Rhode Island	76.4
Tennessee	76.0
Delaware	75.4

Source: MPI Analysis Based on Department of Education SY2012-13 “Consolidated State Performance Reports”

## Appendix B: Questionnaire Instrument

English-as-a-second-language (ESL) Students in Mainstream Classrooms: A Survey of Teachers

### Section A

Please read each statement and place a check in the box that best describes your opinion.

1. The inclusion of ESL students in subject-area classes creates a positive educational atmosphere.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. The inclusion of ESL students in subject-area classes benefits all students.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. ESL students should not be included in general education classes until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. ESL students should avoid using their native language while at school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. ESL students should be able to acquire English within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Subject-area teachers do not have enough time to deal with the needs of ESL students.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. It is a good practice to simplify coursework for ESL students.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. It is a good practice to lessen the quantity of coursework for ESL students.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. It is a good practice to allow ESL students more time to complete coursework.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Teachers should not give ESL students a failing grade if the students display effort.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Teachers should not modify assignments for the ESL students enrolled in subject-area classes.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. The modification of coursework for ESL students would be difficult to justify to other students.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. I have adequate training to work with ESL students.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. I am interested in receiving more training in working with ESL students.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. I would welcome the inclusion of ESL students in my class.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. I would support legislation making English the official language of the United States.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Have you ever had an ESL student enrolled in your classes?

Yes  No (If no, please skip to Section C)

2. How many ESL students were enrolled in your classes during this (2016-2017) school year?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Approximately how many ESL students have enrolled in your classes throughout your teaching career?

\_\_\_\_\_

### **Section B**

Which, if any, of the following are descriptive of your classes when ESL students are enrolled? Please indicate the extent to which each of the following applies in your classes.

#### Classroom Practices

1. I allow ESL students more time to complete their coursework.

Never	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. I give ESL students less coursework than other students.

Never	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. I allow an ESL student to use her/his native language in my class.

Never	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. I provide materials for ESL students in their native languages.

Never	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Effort is more important to me than achievement when I grade ESL students.

Never	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Impact of Inclusion

6. The inclusion of ESL students in my classes increases my workload.

Never	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. ESL students require more of my time than other students require.

Never	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. The inclusion of ESL students in my class slows the progress of the entire class.

Never	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Teacher Support

9. I receive adequate support from school administration when ESL students are enrolled in my classes.

Never	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. I receive adequate support from the ESL staff when ESL students are enrolled in my classes.

Never	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. I conference with the ESL teacher.

Never	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Always
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Section C**

1. Please list what you consider to be the greatest benefits of including ESL students in subject-area classes:

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2. Please list what you consider to be the greatest challenges of including ESL students in subject-area classes:

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**Section D**

Please answer the following questions. Your answers will assist in the categorization of the responses.

1. What subject area(s) do you teach? (If more than one, please list your primary area first)

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2. How many years have you been a public or private school teacher (including this year)? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Please indicate your gender:  Male  Female

4. Is English your native language?  Yes  No

5. Do you speak a second language?  Yes: \_\_\_\_\_  No

If yes, please estimate your highest ability level attained:

Beginner  Intermediate  Advanced

6. Have you received training in teaching language-minority/ESL students?  Yes  No

If yes, please describe the type of training, (i.e., in-service workshop, college coursework)

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Comments: Please write any additional comments you may have concerning the inclusion of ESL students in subject-area classes:

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**NOTE: For the second administration of this instrument post-service, the COMMENTS section above will be PRECEDED by one additional question: “7. Did you participate in the “Beginning Spanish for Teachers” professional development?**

(Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_) (1 session \_\_\_ 2 sessions \_\_\_)

**Thank you for completing this survey.**

## **Appendix C: Consent Form**

**Research Study Title:** An Experimental Study of the Impact of Spanish Language-Skills Training on the Attitudes and Practices of Non-Hispanic Teachers of Hispanic Students

**Principal Investigator:** Patricia Sutherland Rock

**Research Institution:** Concordia University – Portland

**Faculty Advisor:** Chad Becker, PhD

### **Purpose and what you will be doing:**

This experimental study is meant to measure the effectiveness of teaching beginning Spanish language skills to the classroom teacher to improve practices and attitudes about English language learners (ELLs) in a school where 44% of the students are of Hispanic heritage and 90% of the teachers do not speak Spanish. The purpose of the pre-service questionnaire is to measure teachers' attitudes about English language learners, and to measure teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach English language learners in the mainstream classroom, as well as their willingness to adapt lessons for ELLs. There will be an opportunity to participate in professional development training in the following months, called "Beginning Spanish for Teachers," and then teachers' attitudes and perceptions will be measured again in a post-service questionnaire to determine any statistically significant change. Teachers are not required to participate in the professional development training. I would like to have 100% teacher participation in the pre-service and post-service questionnaires regardless of a teacher's decision to enroll in the professional development. I hope to attract 30 participants for the professional development, which will be offered in two 60-minute sessions in May 2017 and professionally presented via teacher-led PD.

No one will be paid to be in the study. I will begin enrollment in early May 2017 and end enrollment in June 2017. To be in the study, teachers will complete a 38-item pre-service survey; then, participants who choose the professional development "Beginning Spanish for Teachers" will attend two PD sessions of approximately 60 minutes each over two months' time. Then, all teachers – those who did participate in the PD and those who did not participate in the PD – will complete a 39-item post-service survey. Doing these things should take less than three hours (one-half hour in total if teacher did not to participate in the "Beginning Spanish for Teachers" PD).

### **Risks:**

There are no risks to participating in this study other than providing your information. However, I will protect your information. Any personal information you provide will be coded so it cannot be linked to you. Any demographic or identifying information you give will be kept confidential. When I look at the data, none of the data will have your name or identifying information. I will analyze the data and report it in aggregate form. I will not identify you individually in any publication or report. Reporting and analysis of the data will be utilized as research required in the dissertation named above to fulfill my obligations towards a doctorate degree in education. Your information will be kept private always and the confidentiality of your participation in the pre- and post-service surveys will be maintained always. All study documents will be destroyed by shredding three years after I conclude this study.

### **Benefits:**

Information you provide will help determine the effectiveness of a Spanish language skills professional development program for teachers in schools where there is a high population of Latino/a students. You could benefit from this by learning basic Spanish words and phrases that are very useful in the classroom and in communication with parents.



**Confidentiality:**

This information will not be distributed to any other agency and will be kept private and confidential. The only exception to this is if you tell me that there is abuse or neglect that makes me seriously concerned for your immediate health and safety.

**Right to Withdraw:**

Your participation is greatly appreciated, but I acknowledge that the questions I am asking are personal in nature. You are free at any point to choose not to engage with or stop the study. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. This study is not required and there is no penalty for not participating. If at any point you experience a negative emotion from answering the questions, you may stop answering the questions.

**Contact Information:**

You will receive a copy of this consent form. If you have questions you can talk to me, the principal investigator, Patricia Sutherland Rock, at email [researcher email redacted] or [alternate email redacted]. If you want to talk with a participant advocate other than the investigator, you can write or call the director of our institutional review board, Dr. OraLee Branch (email [obranch@cu-portland.edu](mailto:obranch@cu-portland.edu) or call 503-493-6390).

**Your Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information. I asked questions if I had them, and my questions were answered. I volunteer my consent for this study:

_____	_____
Participant Name	Date
_____	_____
Participant Signature	Date
<u>Patricia Sutherland Rock</u>	_____
Investigator Name	Date
_____	_____
Investigator Signature	Date

Investigator: Patricia Sutherland Rock      email: [redacted]  
c/o: Professor Chad Becker  
Concordia University – Portland  
2811 NE Holman Street  
Portland, OR 97221



## Appendix D: 2-Session Professional Development Lesson Plans

### *Beginning Spanish for Teachers*

#### Text:

“*Buenos Dias: Beginning Spanish for Teachers of Hispanic Students*” (Sharpe, 1994).

#### Online:

123TeachMe Spanish for Teachers

#### Materials:

Flash cards as prompts for partner and group practice (see below); Vocabulary lists

#### **Pre-lesson: How to pronounce Spanish names**

**Lesson 1:** Video interactive: learning to pronounce classroom vocabulary (:30)

- Welcome, hello
- Greet a child and introduce self (I am your teacher, ...)
- Ask a child for first and last names
- Tell a student to “take out” or “put away”
- School supplies
- Procedures

**Lesson 2:** Directing a student’s behavior: discipline (:45)

- Ask the student if he or she is ready: “Necesitas un lápiz?”
- Hall passes: bathroom, nurse, administrator, guidance counselor, etc.
- Coming in late: “Necesitas llegar a tiempo”
- Giving directions to a student for the lesson: “Sacar una hoja de papel”
- Instructions for common classroom activities
- Telling a student to stay in his or her seat, to be quiet, etc.
- Correcting a child’s behavior

**Lesson 3:** Showing you care (:30)

- Asking a student “What is the matter?”
- Asking a group of students how they feel (RULER mood indicators)
- Give compliments and accepting compliments: “Buen trabajo!”
- Give permission or deny permission to do or go somewhere
- Birthdays and holiday greetings

#### Lesson 4: Calling home (:45)

- Asking if the parent speaks English
- Planning for an interpreter
- Asking for a meeting
- How to say, “your daughter” or “your son” and “my student”
- Good news and bad news

Free online resource for demonstration lessons:

[https://www.123teachme.com/learn\\_spanish/spanish\\_for\\_teachers](https://www.123teachme.com/learn_spanish/spanish_for_teachers)

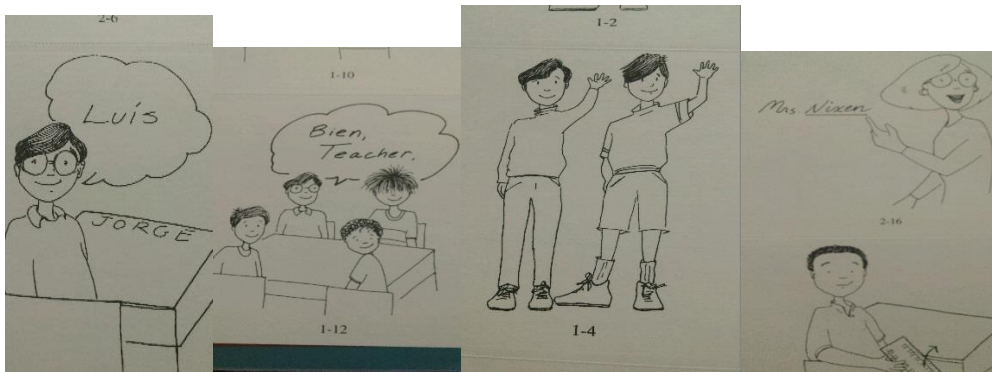
Includes: Audio/video of extensive vocabulary for teachers

Includes: Audio/video of prompts and courtesies

To be covered in the four lessons from 123TeachMe:

1. Overview
2. Learn Vocabulary (specific to teaching)
3. Use Vocabulary (specific to classroom practices)
4. Test your knowledge (fun quizzes)

Sample Copyrighted Materials (Flashcards):



Sample Activity (call-outs, round-robin):

#### To one student

**(M) Hola, mijo.**

**¿Cómo estás?**

**(F) Hola, hija.**

#### To two or more students

**Hola, muchachos.**

**¿Cómo están?**

**Hola muchachas.**

All lessons are offered in the standardized format: Introduction, Review of Prior Material, New Material, Modeling, Independent Practice, Check for Understanding, Review, Closure

*Beginning Spanish for Teachers Professional Development Handouts*

**Some useful Spanish phrases for teachers:**

Hola. Hola qué tal? Mija....Mijo Chicos...Chicas. Muchachos/as.

Buenos días. Buenas tardes. Buenas noches.

¿Cómo estás? (one person) \_\_\_\_\_ ¿Cómo están? (more than one person)

Me llamo Señora Smith // Señor Smith.

¿Qual es tu nombre? ¿Cómo te llamas?

Mucho gusto. Gracias. Muchísimas gracias. De nada.

Necesitas llegar a tiempo. Siempre. (Always) Nunca. (Never)

Siéntate, por favor.

Silencio, por favor. Escucha, por favor.

Levanta la mano, por favor.

Tú tienes que aprender las palabras.

¿Qué hizo? Bien hecho. Muy bien.

¿Qué estás haciendo? Buen trabajo.

¿Qué necesitas? ¿Algunas preguntas? Sí. No.

Pase del baño: Niñas—Niños.

Sí, claro. No, lo siento.

Un lápiz. Una pluma. Un cuaderno. Algún papel para escribir.

Ahora mismo. Caso cerrado.

Ayer. Hoy. Mañana.

¿Bueno? Bueno. Correcto. Malo. Excelente! Fantastico!

No hay problemas! \_\_\_\_\_ En serio? \_\_\_\_\_ Todo' bien? \_\_\_\_\_ Que paso?

**The following phrases are very useful for teachers ---**

Hallway duty (standing in front of your classroom door in the morning):

Hola, muchachos (boys, or boys and girls). Hola, muchachas. (girls only)

Buenos días, hija. (girl)      Buenos días, hijo.(boy)

Como estás, hija? (girl)      Como estas, hijo? (boy)

Como están ustedes? (How are all of you – girls and boys)

A student may answer: Muy bien. Or simply “Bien” to which you respond, “Que Bueno!” The student may then ask, “Y usted?” which means, “And you? How are you?” You will answer, “Bien, gracias.”

Moving into the classroom:

Siéntate, por favor. (Sit down, please – to one student)

Siéntase, por favor. (Sit down, please – to all the students)

Silencio, por favor. Escucha por tu nombre (listen for your name-attendance); Apellido (last name)

Presta atención, por favor. (Pay attention, please!)

Mira y escucha. (Look and listen) **Guarda tu celular** (or cell) (Put away your cell phone!)

Getting ready for a lesson: Saca – take out; Guarda – put away

Saca sus libros. (Take out your books – to whole class)

Saca tu cuaderno. (Get out your notebook – to one student).

Donde está tu lapiz/tu pluma? (Where is your pencil/your pen?)

Vamos a guardar todos los celulares. (We are going to put away all our cell phones).      No mires tu celular. (Don't look at your phone)

Lo guarda! (Put it away!)

Gracias, mi amor. (Thank you my love!) SMILE!!! (Sonría!)

Leaving the classroom, end of class, end of day:

La tarea (homework) Tienes algo de tarea (you have some homework – to one student). Tienen algo de tarea hacer (you have some homework to do, the whole class).

Hasta mañana! (See you tomorrow) Hasta luego! (See you later)

Que tenga un buen día! (Have a nice day!) Adios! (bye)

Discipline, phone calls home:

¿Qual es tu número de teléfono? (What's your number?) ¿Es de tu madre o de tu padre? (Is that your mother's or your father's?)

¿Quando es un buen tiempo para llamar? (What's a good time to call?)

¿Tus padres hablan inglés? (Do your parents speak English?)

... o solamente español? (or only Spanish?)

**SCRIPT FOR CALLING HOME:**

(INTRODUCTIONS)

Hola. (Hello) Estoy llamando al padre de \_\_\_\_\_. (I am calling for the parent of \_\_\_\_\_).

Esta es la Sra. Sutherland Rock / el señor Smith de la Escuela Secundaria Bassick. (This is \_\_\_\_\_ from Bassick High School).

No hablo mucho español, pero lo intentaré. (I don't speak much Spanish, but I will try). Lo siento (sorry about that).

Tu hijo / Tu hija (your son, your daughter) es mi estudiante en la clase de Historia. (is my student in history class).

(STATE THE PROBLEM)

No está haciendo su trabajo. (He/she doesn't do her work)

No está haciendo su tarea. (He/she doesn't do her homework)

Está engañando en clase (She/he fools around in class). Ella/El engaña...

Siempre está en su teléfono celular. (She//he is always on his or her cell phone).

Habla demasiado. (She/he talks too much).

A menudo llega tarde. (He/she is often late for class)

Tiene muchas ausencias. (He/she has many absences).

(IF THE PARENT RESPONDS BUT YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND)

Lo siento, pero no entiendo mucho español. (Sorry, but I don't understand much Spanish)

(CONCLUSION)

Gracias por tu tiempo. (Thank you for your time)

Que tenga un buen día / noche. Adiós.

NOTES: *Mi español se pone mejor cada dia!*

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“Beginning Spanish for Teachers” Professional Development for free online:

<http://study.com/academy/course/beginning-spanish-for-teachers-professional-development.html>

also.....

[www.123teachme.com/learn\\_spanish/spanish\\_for\\_teachers/#!/2](http://www.123teachme.com/learn_spanish/spanish_for_teachers/#!/2)

## Statement of Original Work

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University - Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.
2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*.

*Patricia Sutherland Rock*

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Digital Signature

Patricia Sutherland Rock

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Name (Typed)

May 25, 2018

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Date