



**The Views of Mexican Normalista and
U.S. Bilingual Education Teachers:
An Exploratory Study of Perceptions, Beliefs,
and Attitudes**

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By Ana G. Garcia and Josue' M. González

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Acknowledgments and Preface

CBER Explorations in Bi-National Education

Preface to the Series

As we welcome a new century and a new millennium, dire predictions are being heard in education circles concerning the teacher shortage that will face U.S. schools in the near future. In the next few years, baby boomer teachers will retire in record numbers. To complicate matters, not enough young people are entering the profession. The pipeline leading from high school to the profession is far from full. This is especially true of Hispanic youth, many of whom leave school before having the option of entering teaching as a career.

But crises sometimes lead to opportunities. Such is the case of those states with large Spanish-speaking populations. Mexico has long been the most important source of Spanish-speaking immigrants to the United States. Recently, immigration from Mexico has begun to change. Once a phenomenon limited to unskilled and semi-skilled workers, it now involves immigrants that are markedly diverse. Among recent newcomers there are growing numbers of people from the urban areas of Mexico where educational opportunities are better. This change in the demographics of Mexican immigration signals an increase in immigrants from the professional and technical classes. Well prepared professionals and technicians are coming to the United States to live and work. They have much to offer their new country.

Mexican teachers are part of this shift in immigration patterns. In difference to previous generations of teachers, the Mexican teacher of today has undergone the equivalent of a four-year college education. The obvious difference between Mexican and U.S. teachers is that the former may not have a full command of the English language. They cannot therefore, practice their chosen field in U.S. schools. In addition there appear to be critical gaps in the Spanish proficiency and literacy of U.S. teachers who are already credentialed as bilingual education teachers here (Guerrero, 1999). As they **acquire** English, the growing number of Mexican teachers in our midst—teachers who are fully proficient in **Spanish**—is welcome news for bilingual education. Here is a new and untapped pool of teaching talent waiting in the wings and eager to prepare for teaching duties in the United States.

Project AZianza, one of the initial sponsors of this monograph series, focuses energy, resources, and attention on this new resource: normalista teachers educated in Mexican teacher colleges (normal schools), who reside in the United States and who aspire to re-enter the profession in the United States. The alliance, consisting of several universities, a national **R&D** organization, and a bi-national foundation, has taken on the challenge of reducing the structural, cultural, and linguistic obstacles that have precluded the integration of this new pool of teachers into **U.S.** classrooms as full professionals. With financial support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the members of *Project* AZianza are working to overcome these obstacles. They expect to facilitate the certification and absorption of several hundred teachers who started their education in Mexico and hope to work here, after meeting all the requirements that are met by every other teacher in the states in which they expect to work. By pointing the way to a new form of international collaboration in education, *Project* AZianza will make an important contribution to diminishing the anticipated shortage of well prepared teachers in the United States.¹

When the opportunity was extended to the Center for Bilingual Education and Research to become one of the *Project* AZianza partners, we accepted eagerly. Bi-national collaboration at **all** levels of education between the United States and Mexico is one of our

strongest interests. We see no reason why the problem of educating immigrant youngsters should fall solely on U.S. schools and teachers. We were aware, even before the *Project Alianza* effort began, **that** important players in the Mexican educational system were willing and able to help reduce the cultural and linguistic barriers to the adequate education of these students. When we reviewed the history of previous bi-national collaborations, we were surprised to learn that only a few isolated efforts had been made to bring together educators **from** both sides of the **border**, to engage in dialogue and to develop spaces and opportunities in which to explore ideas for educating immigrant children more collaboratively and perhaps more successfully. To the extent that research, collaboration, and innovation have taken place, they have occurred almost exclusively within the United States. It was as if an implicit assumption existed that Mexicans had no cards in the matter and that our respective professional obligations ended on our respective sides of the border. Since we live and work along one of the most open borders in the world, it is difficult to explain why educators in the United States have shouldered the difficult task of educating these students without consulting or collaborating with colleagues who worked with them before they immigrated.

From these observations and concerns arose the idea of publishing a series of papers aimed at promoting a continuing bi-national conversation concerning this problem. We choose the term "Explorations **in** Bi-National Education" as the title of this collection. With three **monographs** currently in the series, the Center for Bilingual Education and Research (CBER) hopes to inform the dialogue over the nature of education in areas with substantial Hispanic concentrations and on the mutual obligations of sending and receiving countries to collaborate in meeting this challenge. By helping to arrange for the integration of Mexican *normalistas* into the U.S. teaching force, we hope that other issues will surface, and that researchers and scholars, in both countries, will rise to the challenge.

The role of CBER and Arizona State University in *Project Alianza* is the preparation of three policy related research reports, which will be part of our "bi-national explorations" series. It is our hope that they will be useful to policy makers and practitioners involved in these bi-national efforts.

The first of these monographs is a wide-angle view of the ways in which the United States and Mexico educate and credential teachers for the K-12 sequence. This report, *Mexican Normalista Teachers as a Resource for Bilingual Education in the U.S.: Connecting two Models of Teacher Preparation*, reviews the Mexican system of teacher education and sketches the similarities and differences between the Mexican and U.S. models. In the course of gathering and assembling this information we found, to no one's surprise, that the topic is more complex than first meets the eye. The Mexican case is national in scope and offers little variation. There is little or no variation between each of the Mexican states or regions. All teachers in Mexican normal schools follow essentially the same curriculum which is prescribed by the central government through the Secretaria de Educacibn Pública. The U.S. system—in reality a hydra's head of state systems—is as variegated as the American states themselves. The role of colleges and universities is also different in the two countries and the subjects and experiences stressed in each country also vary in major ways. Still, upon completing the task, it was clear that enough similarity exists, that there is a solid common base on which to build a unifying structure between the two systems.

The second report in the bi-national education series focuses on the perplexing question of language proficiency of teachers. We explored the issue of whether Spanish-speaking bilingual education teachers in the United States are sufficiently proficient and literate **in Spanish** to function in the more demanding—and more promising—program models such as the dual-language or two-way programs of bilingual education. Michael Guerrero of the University of Texas at Austin authored *Spanish Language Proficiency of Bilingual Education Teachers*, an important probe of a long neglected question in bilingual education: what level of mastery, in Spanish, is required of bilingual education teachers in order to teach effectively in two languages? The results of his analysis are

worrisome. While Guerrero's exploration does not give us a final and conclusive answer, it makes a timely contribution by pointing out major **research** areas that require attention and policy questions that **require** discussion. Building on Guerrero's analysis we can infer that, in this area, Mexican teachers who obtained an full college level education in Spanish, have an important contribution to make to our field.

In this, the third of the series, we report on conversations ~~w~~e held with the *normalista* teachers involved in the Project **Alianza** before they completed their studies and became credentialed in the United States. We sought to discover, in general terms, their views about the teaching profession, on the preparation of teachers, and the role of teachers in the community. This report, co-authored by **Josué M. González** and **Ana Garcia**, shows great congruence between these teachers and their U.S. ~~r~~eared counterparts involved in bilingual education programs. Nonetheless, some differences exist and these may become more marked once the teachers enter U.S. classrooms and begin to practice the profession they interrupted, often for many years, as they sought a social and economic footing in this country.

Editor's Acknowledgments

Many people have contributed to or have encouraged the development of CBER's concept of bi-national education and the concept of a *border pedagogy* crafted expressly for the special needs of the U.S./Mexico border. They share our belief that education **should** not be constrained by borders and that educators must challenge the divisive nature of political borders by **working** together, across borders, in pursuit of their educative mission. Among those who have encouraged us to develop this idea were David Berliner, Dean of Education at Arizona State University; **Margarita Calderón**, of the CRESPAR organization at Johns Hopkins University; and Graciela **Orozco**, of the Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation in Mexico City. All of them have made important contributions to our work in this area.

We invited several colleagues to read our drafts and offer suggestions. We could not have completed the work without their help. We are indebted to **Ashlea Deahl**, Wayne Wright, Gerda de **Klerk**, of **ASU**, and Julie **Coulter** for assistance in line editing the text. The staff of the Center for Bilingual Education and Research were required to use both sides of the brain to complete these volumes. They were outstanding in their support of writers, editors, and artists. **Tó-Pauline Stark**, Administrative Assistant, muchas gracias por **todo**. Andrea Everette and Adriana Robles plunged into the intricacies of desktop publishing software **from** the day they **walked** into the office and never looked up from their screens until the work was done. John Petrovic of the University of Alabama reviewed the contents critically. They are valuable members of the CBER editorial team.

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation underwrote a substantial portion of the costs for writing and producing some of the volumes in the series. We greatly appreciate their support. Special thanks to Cuca Robledo and **Lalo Villarreal** of IDRA, the leaders of the Project *Alianza*. They exercise leadership with warm support,

lots of encouragement, and great humanity. In short, they are architects of this international learning community. Un abrazo para ustedes.

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With all these friends and supporters we could hardly go wrong in any major way. **Still**, for those stubborn mistakes of commission and omission that remain, we take **full** responsibility.

Josué M. González and Ana G. Garcia
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Tempe, Arizona
October, 2000

¹ The *Project Alianza* partners are the Intercultural Development Research Association, Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation, Arizona State University (ASU), California State University at Long Beach (CSULB), The University of Texas - Pan American (UT PanAm), The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and Southwest Texas State University (SWT).

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Introduction

As the Spanish-speaking population in U.S. public schools grows, so does the need to educate and prepare these students for a global society. Teachers have a large share of the responsibility for preparing students and must possess the multicultural and multilingual skills necessary to do so. Multicultural and multilingual skills are important aspects of bilingual education teachers. In addition to language development, they have the responsibility to provide information and enrichment activities in their classroom. But the potential contributions of minority teachers can be greater.

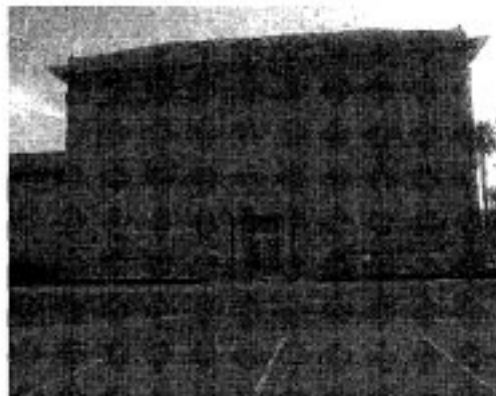
The role of teachers is diverse. One of them is the inspirational influence they have on their students. Teachers can be great role models; their enthusiasm for learning, high regard for the subjects they teach, and their personal integrity can influence children and youth. Because teachers can influence deeply the direction in which children will go, it is important for them to be culturally aware and sensitive to the needs of minority students. According to Fuller (1992) and Gordon (1994), minority students need positive role models to inspire and model expected attitudes and behaviors. Minority teachers who share similar backgrounds with their students provide a connection between the community and school and share similar sociocultural ways of learning (Zapata, 1988). Several researchers have noted that the reason minority teachers represent a positive role model for minority students is that minority students with different sociocultural and language backgrounds present extra challenges for some White, middle-class teachers (Kestner, 1994; Zapata, 1988; Fuller, 1992).

Many researchers have assumed that the way teachers teach is influenced by their behavior in other contexts (Clark & Yinger, 1979; Good & Brophy, 1987). Teachers enact rules as change agents, role models, and leaders in the eyes of children and families. They are capable of changing a child's behavior, attitudes, beliefs, and ultimately their formal learning. Similarly, a related phenomenon concerns the possible impact of teachers' expectations of student achievement. The self-fulfilling prophecy is frequently discussed within the educational arena, although it is frequently neglected in practice. Children learn that teachers expect little from them and, hence, give expected learning responses (Boutte, 1999). However, it is necessary to acknowledge that children's success and/or failure in school is due to a number of factors, such as personalities, home environment, and socioeconomic status, to mention a few, and not solely on a teacher.

To increase the number of such teachers in the Southwest, several universities in the United States are focusing on increasing the number of Hispanic bilingual teachers entering teacher education programs. These institutions are preparing teachers for the changing realities of today's schools and communities. Because our schools are in great need of bilingual education teachers, *Project Alianza* has been recruiting *normalista* teachers (teachers who have been trained in Mexican normal schools) to increase the number of competent bilingual teachers. These are immigrant professionals who left Mexico for personal or economic reasons. They now reside in the United States and aspire to re-enter the teaching profession. This work, funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, is a unique teacher-preparation program that creates opportunities for these immigrant teachers to become teachers and leaders in U.S. bilingual settings.

I

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT



For more than 100' years the school districts in the greater Phoenix area have provided a quality education for its students. This publication contains photographs of some of the oldest school buildings in this region. A special thanks to the Center for Bilingual Education and Research for providing the photographs.

This report will describe a research study conducted at four different universities with *normalista* teachers enrolled in a certification program. This exploratory study was designed to examine similarities and differences between *normalista* teachers and U.S. bilingual education teachers. There has been little research done on the practice of integrating foreign-trained teachers into U.S. schools. There is a growing number of English-language learners in U.S. schools, and it has become evident that bilingual education programs cannot keep pace with the demand for trained personnel (Garcia, 1999). While these experimental programs are already underway, there is a need to learn more about the ways in which these teachers view the teaching profession, the organization and management of schools, and their experiences in and attitudes toward the teaching and learning process. The findings of this study will provide a better understanding of the differences and similarities that teachers have toward the educational system in the United States and Mexico/Latin America where these teachers learned to be students and, later, teachers. It will also shed light on areas that may require closer attention in the preparation of future *normalista* teachers. For purposes of this study when we refer to the term bilingual teachers, we will refer to those teachers who are Spanish and English speakers.

The following research questions are addressed:

1. What are the attitudes and beliefs of these teachers toward their profession?
2. What are the attitudes and beliefs the teachers have toward the school structure and its organization?
3. What are the attitudes and beliefs that U.S. and Mexican teachers have toward the educational programs that prepared them for the profession?

There has been little research done on the practice of integrating foreign-trained teachers into U.S. schools.

Review of the Literature

The literature review is divided into seven general sections. The first section explores the attitudes that teachers in general have toward English-language learners. The second section examines the perceptions and values that teachers have toward the native language of their students. The third section illustrates the need to maximize parental involvement in the schools and offers some explanations for minority parents' lack of involvement. The fourth section provides references that assert why bilingual education teachers need to be proficient in the students' native language. Sections five and six examine the roles teachers play in the educational development of students. Finally, section seven gives an overview of the Mexican normal schools and provides general characteristics of *normalista* teachers.

Research on teachers' attitude and beliefs assumes that classroom instruction is greatly influenced by what teachers feel and believe.

Teacher Attitudes Toward Teaching Non-English Speakers

Research on teachers' attitudes and beliefs assumes that classroom instruction is greatly influenced by what teachers feel and believe (Clark & Yinger, 1979). That is, teachers' beliefs are seen as intricately connected to teachers' instructional behavior (Good & Brophy, 1987). Teachers' thinking may be guided by a personally held system of beliefs, values, and principles (Anning, 1988). Yonemura (1986) examined the thinking and beliefs of one teacher. The researcher reported that the teacher's beliefs and thoughts about children and teaching were central to her role as teacher. This teacher could almost always give an account of the thoughts that led to her actions, which in turn could be traced back to her values and beliefs.

Positive attitudes toward teaching English-language learner (ELL) students can be an integral part of the teacher's teaching process and, in turn, enhance a child's achievement. Negative attitudes, on the other hand, can be detrimental to a child's academic achievement (Shavelson & Stern, 1981). Teachers' negative attitudes toward teaching English-language learners may generate teacher behavior that can lead to, or at least sustain, students' negative attitudes and poor student achievement. The self-fulfilling prophecy perpetuates itself as teachers' negative attitudes, because it may be reinforced by the students' oral and written language. Another implication of research on teachers' attitudes is that teachers' attitudes may influence their evaluation of student performance and achievement, such as children's oral language ability, including oral reading (Shavelson & Stern, 1981). Therefore, a negative evaluation may result in underestimating achievement for the English-language learner.

... teachers' attitudes may influence their evaluation of student performance and achievement.

Perceptions and Values About Language

Language is a powerful tool within communities. Language is constantly changing because society is also changing. The different ways in which people use language to make sense of the world and of their lives are the major distinguishing features of different cultural groups (International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English, 1994). Samovar and Porter (1991) noted that language is a way of defining experience.

While English is the primary language in the United States, numerous English dialects are used throughout the country. Of these, the language considered acceptable and found in textbooks is "educated" standard English (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998). People in posi-

In the 1960s, American policy became more open to English-language learners and their needs.

tions of power and status, such as teachers, make the determination of what is and what is not standard English. However, requiring standard English in the school is a sensitive and controversial issue due to the close relationship between dialects and minority groups (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998). The attitude of teachers and school personnel toward students with nonstandard English may become a problem because of the false assumption that the inability to speak standard English may reflect lower intelligence (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998).

In the 1960s, American policy became more open to English-language learners and their needs (Citrin, 1990). A number of influential laws, notably the Civil Rights Act of 1964,¹ have shaped the recent history of bilingual education and even the English language in the United States. While bilingual education had flourished in the United States until the Americanization movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this form of language education essentially disappeared from the American landscape until the resurgence of support in the 1960s (González, 1975). Even though bilingualism was present and strongly supported in the early years of American history, the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, commonly known as Title VII, was the first policy to recognize the importance of bilingual education programs throughout the United States (Crawford, 1995).

Parental Involvement

Getting parents involved with school activities is, and has always been a constant challenge for teachers. Parent involvement programs have been implemented

in many school districts nationwide. Most recently, a research study has described programs that have been effective **and** has offered suggestions on how to include parents in-educational activities (Boutte, 1999).

Although it is true that in the 1990s parent involvement in K-12 education has become more established, the involvement of minority parents still requires attention. Minority parents want the very best for their children; they support their children's school learning in a variety of ways (Boutte, 1999). The degree of parental support can, however, vary greatly. For example, some educationally and economically disadvantaged parents may verbally encourage their children, but may not be able to help them do their homework (Hilliard, 1992). Other minority parents in the same situation may sit with their children as they do their homework, or may review it to see if they have completed it. Then there are parents who do not encourage their children's schoolwork in any way (Hilliard, 1992). Whatever the situation may be, parents do tend to have expectations that their children will complete their homework (Nieto, 1996). Nieto (1996) contends that an important way in which parents support their children's academic success is through their **continued** use of their native language and the **passing** down of family cultural values. The cultural values of minority families are expressed through religious observance, family rituals, family responsibilities, respect for elders, and high academic aspirations. Finally, Nieto mentions that minority parents have high expectations of their children and that they see their children as a source of hope for the family.

Minority parents expect teachers to help their children learn the academic skills necessary to achieve. Again, this may be because minority parents may be

The cultural values of minority families are expressed through religious observance, family rituals, family responsibilities, respect for elders, and high academic aspirations.

Minority parents do not always feel welcome in schools, in part, because most schools reflect a dominant culture and language . . .

unable to support their children academically. For example, Delgado-Gaitán (1987) found that Mexican parents were very effective in teaching their children to work cooperatively, to respect adults, and to do well in school by obeying teachers. However, regarding academic learning, such as learning English, the Mexican parents had very little knowledge about how to guide their children.

Minority parents do not always feel welcome in schools, in part because most schools reflect a dominant culture and language (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998) that are markedly different from their own. Therefore, teachers may need to reach out to parents rather than expect parents to participate in school and classroom functions automatically. Minority parents may need concrete suggestions and explanations due to language and cultural barriers. This, in turn, may be an extra struggle for teachers who do not speak or know the culture and language of the parents. Some parents do participate, but often teachers find it difficult to persuade others to participate. How teachers feel about this form of outreach may determine whether they pursue it or not.

In some cases it may seem to teachers that parents do not want to cooperate or that they simply do not care about their children's schooling. While this may be true in some cases, De Gaetano, Williams, and Volk (1998) have other explanations for parents' lack of involvement in school. These researchers suggest that working parents have limited time and energy with which to participate in school activities. Other parents may be undocumented immigrants who would rather stay away from school for fear of being "found out" (De Gaetano et al., 1998). In addition, for many new immigrants offering help in the classroom may be impractical due to the language barrier and unfamiliarity with North American schools (De Gaetano et

al., 1998). In short, there are many reasons to explain why parents may not participate in school activities, and why teachers need to make special efforts to find the key that will help minority families feel comfortable with being a part of the school.

Spanish Language Proficiency

Teachers who are teaching in a bilingual education setting are required to deliver instruction in the native language of the student. In the Southwest, most bilingual Spanish-education teachers are expected to have a high level of academic Spanish-language proficiency (Guerrero, 1999). Gaarder (1977), for example, presented the notion that bilingual Spanish-education teachers should be:

Native speakers of the other language or have acquired equivalent competence as a prerequisite to entering a training program; and that they should be literate, that is, be able to read and write in Spanish, at least as well as average American school teachers can do these in English. (p. 84)

Similarly, The National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) (1992) contended that:

Effective bilingual/multicultural teachers have a command of English and a non-English language that allows them to conduct classes in either language with ease and confidence, regardless of the level of instruction. This includes using appropriate and varied language at high levels of accuracy and fluency. Bilingual/multicultural teachers understand and accept dialectic differences in students and their families. Further, these teachers have the ability to serve as translators and interpreters for the students and their families. (p. 19)

... bilingual Spanish-education teachers are expected to have a high level of academic Spanish-language proficiency.

... fluency in the students' native language enables a teacher to help the ELL learn academic Spanish, and facilitate the transition to the English language.

Moreover, the bilingual education teacher should be able to demonstrate proficiency in both the students' native language and English in order to communicate content areas effectively and to be good role models for their students.

There are certain language criteria that pre-service bilingual education teachers should meet before teaching in a classroom. These criteria are usually established by the teacher training institution, and are also in accordance with state language standards (Guerrero, 1999). All states in the United States that offer Spanish-bilingual certification require that teachers pass a Spanish language proficiency exam in order to receive certification (Guerrero, 1999). Therefore, a certified bilingual education teacher needs to demonstrate the appropriate written and oral skills for the passage of such exams.

A research study conducted by Garcia and Marin (1979) found that certified bilingual education teachers had a higher level of language education proficiency than non-certified teachers. The findings revealed that ELL students taught by certified bilingual education teachers improved in English and Spanish. This supports the notion that fluency in the students' native language enables a teacher to help the ELL learn academic Spanish, and facilitates the transition to the English language.

A study by Khisty (1995) dealt with the ability that U.S. bilingual education teachers and Mexican-trained teachers had in teaching mathematics. The U.S. bilingual teachers who had completed their schooling in the United States indicated that, at times, they did not have command of the Spanish vocabulary to explain concepts thoroughly. Khisty also found that those teachers who felt comfortable teaching math in Spanish had also completed all of their schooling in Mexico. Beyond the purely instructional use of Span-

ish, teachers in bilingual education programs have an implicit role in processing the Spanish language, or at least in **valuing** it as a communicative and cultural asset (González, 1993).

Teachers Constructing Knowledge

Teachers play a major role in the educational development of students. They build the teaching and learning environments out of what they know and how they come to know it. The constructivist approach to education is the process of understanding that language and culture, and the values that accompany them are constructed in both community and home environments (Cummins, 1986; Goldman & Trueba, 1987). This approach is rooted in the notion that human knowledge is the result of continuous building and rebuilding (Garcia, 1999). For example, children understand new concepts by applying their previous knowledge to the new information given. For English-language learners, this means using instructional strategies that incorporate the student's native language or bilingual abilities, since language is a substantial part of the social network within which children construct knowledge (Garcia, 1999).

§

The problem here is that U.S. schools transmit a culture that may be different from the culture of the English-language learner. Thus, they may or may not be building on the prior experiences and knowledge base of their students. The hidden culture of U.S. schools is reflected in such practices as:

1. **Tracking, which limits access** to academic courses and justifies learning environments that do not foster academic development and socialization or perception of oneself as a competent learner and language user (Eder, 1982; Oakes, 1991).

The constructivist approach to education is the process of understanding that language and culture, and the values that accompany them are constructed in both community and home environments

2. Teacher-dominated instruction, which deprives students of opportunities to engage in developmentally and culturally appropriate learning in ways other than by teacher-led instruction (Garcia, 1988).
3. The systematic exclusion of the histories, languages, experiences, and values of these students from classroom curricula and activities (Giroux & McLaren, 1986).

The constructivist approach provides profound implications for the teaching and learning of both the teacher and the student. In sum, this approach allows teachers to respect and integrate the students' values, beliefs, histories, and experiences and recognizes the active role that students must play in their own learning.

The constructivist approach provides profound implications for the teaching and learning of both the teacher and the student.

Teachers as Change Agents, Scholars, Leaders, and Role Models

While it may be true that teachers transmit a considerable amount of culturally specific information, they could be masking an assimilationist ideology. That is, the school and home culture can be incompatible for the minority student, causing them to fail and eventually drop out of school. The culture of the school is resistant to change. Once an idea has taken hold, it develops a life of its own, regardless of its usefulness or effectiveness (Nieto, 1996). Nevertheless, teachers can influence a child's academic direction and lead them to success. There are things that teachers have to teach in the classroom in order for minority students to achieve academic success.

Schools are not only charged with teaching information and skills but also with ensuring that students develop socially acceptable attitudes and values. Since teachers can engender new ideas and new ways of doing things with their students, they are in a posi-

tion to influence both the direction and the pace of change in our society. Teachers have to have a comprehensive-knowledge of subject matter so that they themselves can become agents of change. Greene (1986) stated that teaching should guide students from a position where they can be easily swayed by others to one in which they are change agents. Similarly, Giroux and McLaren (1986) noted that teachers should be "transformative intellectuals" who can teach their students to be critical thinkers and active, informed citizens. With this in mind, teachers who were once thought to be skilled workers or technicians are now playing the role of philosopher, making sense of their world rather than merely following orders and meeting expectations (Zeichner, 1983). In turn, some teachers are actively teaching and urging their students to do the same by modeling critical-thinking skills.

There are teachers who have begun to exercise change in positive ways. For example, Garcia (1999) reported that some teachers have undergone great change in their approach to learning and instruction, that they have shifted paradigms. That is, teachers who once advocated skills-based and authoritarian modes of instruction were now considering and experimenting with child-centered approaches. Garcia also added that these teachers felt free to implement change and that they enjoyed some autonomy in their schools. Over all, these teachers were highly committed to improving themselves and their services to students.

Teachers who are considered effective instructors for minority students are highly experienced, not novices to teaching or to the instruction of these students. Many minority students need teachers who can act out familiar life patterns for them. Teachers who model behaviors that affect the lives of minority students have a chance to personally connect with their

Teachers who model behaviors that affect the lives of minority students have a chance to connect personally with their students.

students (Hill, 1989). These teachers make the effort to understand the communities, families, and students whom they serve (Garcia, 1999).

A Note on Normal Schools

In the United States of the mid and late nineteenth century, elementary teachers were trained in normal training schools (Herbst, 1989). The normal school course was two years in length, and diplomas were awarded upon satisfactory completion of work in two departments (theory and practice) of the normal school. By 1915, normal schools and the universities had formulated an agreement for a combined course in order to increase preparation in the area of professional education and supervised practice teaching for state certification. Students who attended the university for three years, completed the required work, and then entered normal school to complete the practice training, received the bachelor of science degree in education (Kline, 1998).

The basic teaching profession is studied in Mexico in the Escuela Nacional de Maestros (the National School of Teachers) in Mexico City, in state normal schools, and in some Mexican private schools (Andrade de Herrera, 1996). In the mid 1950s, completion of middle school was required in order to enroll in one of the normal schools. After three-years of studies, students received the title of Teacher of Elementary Instruction (Profesor de Educación Basica). Today, to enroll in the same normal school, the *bachillerato* (a high school diploma) is required. The course work is four years, after which students go through an intense student-teaching experience. Finally, the degree of *Licenciatura* (Baccalaureate) in primary education is obtained (Andrade de Herrera, 1996). Normal schools are separate entities from universities in Mexico dedicated solely to teacher-train-

Normal schools are separate entities from universities in Mexico dedicated solely to teacher-training . . .

ing; however, they are now on an academic par with other institutions of higher education (Petrovic, Orozco, González, & Diaz de Cossio, 1999).

One of the characteristics that Mexican teachers have that has endured throughout the numerous educational reforms is a deep sense of professional identity (Petrovic et al., 1999). Throughout the years, *normalistas* have been expected by society to be a second guardian, that is, to educate and discipline students when students are away from home. They also take the role of leaders within the educational system. Similarly, these authors reported that Mexican teachers would often get involved and become leaders within their communities. The Mexican society (as well as other Latin American countries) sees a teacher as an extended family member, someone they can trust and respect (Garcia, 1999). In Mexico, the teaching profession is held in high regard. In the United States however, the teaching profession is considered to be of low status in relation to other professions such as medicine, law, and engineering (Lawson, 1985). It can be assumed, therefore, that this differentiated status may be an issue for some *normalistas* during their transition into U.S. schools.

The Mexican society . . . sees a teacher as an extended family member, someone they can trust and respect.

II

METHOD



Phoenix Elementary School is the oldest inner city district in the West. The original district office was located on Lincoln Street and was moved to its present location on 7th Street in 1987.

Participants

A sample of 58 *normalista* teachers was obtained from four participating universities (California State University, Long Beach; the University of Texas, Pan American; the University of Texas, San Antonio; and Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos). Most *normalista* teachers were born and educated in Mexico, with a few being from other parts of Latin America. All are legal residents or U.S. citizens and reside in California or Texas. All of the teachers received their teacher preparation through normal schools in Mexico or Latin America, and the majority of them were certified teachers in their native countries.

Those teachers who were not certified had immigrated before completing the public service component required in their teacher-training program. Those who were certified had taught more than five years in their native country and almost half of them had worked as paraprofessionals for some time in the United States. The mean age of the *normalista* sample was 39.5 years (median of 38) with a range of 36. In the *normalista* sample there were 7 males and 51 females. Most of the teachers had experience teaching at the elementary level (51.8%). Only 7.2% had previously taught in a *secundaria* or *preparatoria* (middle or high school).

The comparison group consisted of 52 practicing bilingual-education teachers who were born in the United States or came to this country before the 4th grade. All of the U.S. teachers had earned their bachelors degrees in education and had endorsement to teach in bilingual education programs. These teachers were recruited from three schools in the Phoenix metropolitan area and from the Los Angeles area. The mean age of the U.S. sample was 33 years (median of 30)

Most *normalista* teachers were born and educated in Mexico, with a few being from other parts of Latin America.

with a range of 38. In the U.S. sample there were 12 males and 40 females. The majority of these teachers were teaching at the elementary level (72.5%) and only 53.6% were teaching at the middle and high school level.

Instrument

A 26-item survey (see Appendix A) was used to measure teacher perceptions and beliefs about the teaching profession, the school structure/organization, their preparation programs, selection of teachers, and the leadership role of teachers. Several questions probed beliefs concerning the constructivist approach to teaching. The survey was made available in both English and Spanish and respondents had a choice of answering in English or Spanish.

The first part of the survey consisted of basic demographic questions about the origin and educational background of each participant. The second part was the actual 26-item survey, using a 5 point Likert-type scale. In addition, a focus group interview was conducted at each of the four sites as a follow-up to the survey. According to Krueger (1994), focused interviews provide insights about the meaning and interpretation of the results, which can also suggest action strategies for problems that were addressed in the survey.

Procedure

The surveys were mailed to each university coordinator of *Project Alianza* and they were responsible for distributing the surveys to each normalista teacher and for collecting them. Following the completion of the surveys, the researchers visited each participating university and conducted the focus group interviews.

A 26-item survey was used to measure teacher perceptions and beliefs about the teaching profession. . .

The questions for the focus group interview were prepared in advance. They were designed to probe deeper into the survey questions. Follow-up questions were **introduced** throughout the interview as needed. Four focus group interviews were conducted in total, one from each participating university. Each interview lasted approximately **90** minutes and was audiotape recorded. The groups ranged in size from **10** to **15** participants. Both the survey and the interview were voluntary.

Similar procedures were followed for the comparison group. The researcher contacted several administrators (principals or bilingual education coordinators) to obtain permission to conduct research at their schools. After permission was obtained, surveys were mailed or distributed personally to teachers. After completion of the survey, two focus groups were conducted. Each focus group lasted approximately one to one-and-a-half hours. Among the **U.S.** teachers a larger group participated in the survey than in the focus group interview. There were **5** participants in the first focus group and **15** in the second group.

III

RESULTS



Tolleson Union High School established in 1929, had an average student population of 1560 in 2000. The original school building is located on Van Buren Street and is still in use as a community center.

Results of the Normalista Teachers

The following analysis introduces the response that *normalista* teachers gave in part I (personal profile) of the survey. Most of the *normalista* teachers reported teaching at the elementary level (51.8%, n = 29) in Mexico and the remaining ones reported teaching a combination of high school and middle school. However, when it came to the question of what grade level they anticipated teaching in the United States the majority reported that they would teach at the elementary level (76.8%, n = 43). It is interesting to note that those teachers who once taught at the high school level in Mexico were now going to teach at the elementary level in the United States (see Table 1).

Table 1
Normalistas' Response in Percentage to Grade Level Taught in Mexico and Anticipated Grade Level in the United States (N = 58)

Anticipated Grade Level in the U.S.	Percent	Grade Level Taught in Mexico	Percent
Elementary	76.8	Elementary	51.8
Middle School	5.4	Middle School	5.4
High School	5.4	High School	1.8
Other	3.6	Elementary & Middle	1.8
Elementary & Middle School	3.6	Elementary, Middle, & High	8.9
Elementary, Middle, & High	1.8	Elementary & High School	5.4

All of the *normalistas* were U.S. residents and over half of them resided in Texas with the remainder in California.

The following section (part I) probed the years that *normalista* teachers taught in the United States and in Mexico or other Latin American countries. Half of the *normalista* teachers indicated that they had no experience working as a teacher in the United States. Another 28.6% (n = 16) reported teaching or working in a school setting in the United States either as a teacher or a teacher's assistant. The majority of *normalistas*, however, reported that they had taught more than 13 years in Mexico or in another Latin American country (see Table 2). Thirty-six percent (n = 21) of the *normalista* teachers stated that they had been living in the United States 6 to 10 years and 33% (n = 19) reported ten or more years. All of the *normalistas* were U.S. residents and over half of them resided in Texas with the remainder in California.

Table 2

Normalista's Response in Percentage to Years Taught in Mexico and Years Taught in the United States (N = 58)

Years	Percent of years taught in the U.S.	Percent of years taught in Mexico
0 Years	50.0	3.5
1-3 Years	28.6	19.3
4-8 Years	14.3	24.6
9-12 Years	7.1	15.8
13-20 Years	0.0	29.8

Results of the U.S. Bilingual Teachers

The following section introduces the results that U.S. bilingual education teachers reported in part I (personal profile) of the survey. The same set of questions that *normalista* teachers had were given to the U.S. bilingual teachers.

The majority of the U.S. bilingual teachers reported teaching at the elementary level (72.5%, n = 37), with only a few teaching in middle school (21.6%, n = 11) (see Table 3).

Table 3

U.S. Bilingual Education Teachers' Reponse in Percentage to Grade Level Currently Teaching (N = 52)

Grade level Currently Teaching	Percent
Elementary	72.5
Middle School	21.6
High School	2.0
Other	3.9

The U.S. bilingual education teachers did not have as much teaching experience as the *normalista* teachers (see Table 4). The majority of the U.S. bilingual teachers indicated having 4 to 8 years of teaching experience. These teachers were relatively young compared to the *normalistas*.

The U.S. bilingual education teachers did not have as much teaching experience as the *normalista* teachers.

Table 4
U.S. Bilingual Education Teachers Responses in Percentage to Years Currently Teaching (N = 52)

Years	Percent of Years Teaching
0 Years	00.0
1-3 Years	30.8
4-8 Years	46.2
9-12 Years	3.8
13-20 Years	19.2

... the majority of the participants were bilingual Spanish and English speakers who taught in a bilingual setting.

Since the purpose of this study was to look at bilingual teachers, the majority of the participants were bilingual Spanish and English speakers (84.6%, n = 25) who taught in a bilingual setting. The remaining were teachers who were somewhat bilingual but taught in an ESL setting. The last group, (7.7%, n = 7), thought of themselves as both bilingual and ESL teachers and had taught in both settings (see Table 5).

Table 5
Personal Identification as a Bilingual or ESL Teacher (N = 52)

Identifies Self as Bilingual or ESL Teacher	Percent
Bilingual	84.6
ESL	7.7
Both	7.7

Of the U.S. bilingual education teachers (50%, n = 26) indicated that Spanish was their first language. This information tells us that half of the participants learned Spanish at home and then at some point in time learned English as their second language (see Table 6).

Table 6

The Stated First Language of U.S. Bilingual Education Teachers (N = 52)

First Stated Language	Percent
English	48.1
Spanish	<i>50.0</i>
Other	1.9

In order to determine *normalista* and U.S. teacher differences with respect to teaching practices, school organization, and teaching preparation/selection, a series of t-tests were run. The means and standard deviations for the *normalistas* and U.S. teachers were also calculated (see Table 7).

An independent sample t-test was computed on the responses that teachers gave on the 26 survey items. In order to identify differences between the two groups, the mean scores of each group were examined. For each significant question, statistical results are presented first, followed by qualitative results of major patterns or themes emerging from the interviews. It must be emphasized that there are substantial variations among the teachers within the group, as well as commonalities across groups. Since this was an exploratory study, we must urge caution about over-generalization.

Table 7
T-test Comparison of Teacher Responses

Questions	Normalista Teachers		U.S. Teachers		
	M	SD	M	SD	t
1	3.5	1.3	3.0	1.0	
5	4.5	.73	4.1	.75	
11	3.5	1.1	3.9	.98	-2.0
15	2.14	1.04	2.54	1.1	-2.0
19	3.49	1.18	2.74	1.02	3.5**
20	4.68	.466	4.4	.846	2.2
25	2.67	1.11		1.08	-2.8*
p < .05, *p < .01, **p < .001					

In the following section, the findings from both the survey and focus group data are presented together as they relate to our three research questions. Survey items that indicated significant differences between the two groups (i.e., at the .05 level of significance or better) inform the questions. Appendix A illustrates the survey question items and Appendix B provides the focus group interview protocol.

What are the attitudes and beliefs of these teachers toward their profession?

Survey Question 1. In the end school success is measured by how many of its graduates go to college.

Results indicated that *normalista* teachers agreed **more** with this statement than U.S. bilingual teachers. This finding was also supported by the focus group interviews, where *normalistas* reported a strong correlation between a college degree and success.

Survey Question 5. Collaborating and sharing expertise, working on school committees, and participating in school decision-making are integral parts of my responsibilities as a teacher.

Normalista teachers strongly agreed with this statement. They saw themselves working on school committees, participating in school decision-making and sharing their expertise as a responsibility of their job.

U.S. teachers also agreed with this statement, but it was to a much lesser degree.

Focus Group Question 1. What is the biggest difference between being a teacher here in the United States and Mexico?

The *normalistas* responded that teaching is a “*vocación*” (a calling, vocation). They teach because it is in their heart and they are not motivated by salary. The U.S. group indicated that teachers are much more pressured individually for students’ performance on test scores. They felt that they were the ones being tested and not the students. They also felt the expectation that society holds for teachers was much higher in the United States than in Mexico. That is, they had to do more than just teach; for example, they had to attend staff meetings, seminars/conferences, and continue taking classes after graduation.

Focus Group Question 2. How do you measure success?

The majority of *normalista* teachers defined success by the individuals’ moral values, the vision or goals they had, and their college attendance. U.S. teachers, on the other hand, did not measure success by the number or proportion of students attending college. They indicated that each individual person was responsible for defining success.

The U.S. group indicated that teachers are much more pressured individually for students’ performance on test scores.

U.S. bilingual teachers believed that the most important role of the teacher was to teach subject matter.

Focus Group Question 3. *What is a teacher?*

Participants from each group attributed many roles to teachers. Some of those roles were defined as a counselor, nurse, friend, mother, father, therapist, policeman, and educator. *Normalista* teachers saw a difference between the term education (instruction) in English and “*educación*” in Spanish. (In Spanish, the term “*educación*” means the development of students academically and as polite, well-mannered individuals). They saw a teacher, therefore, as someone who has to take control of their classroom, instruct effectively, and teach good manners to their students.

What are the attitudes and beliefs the teachers have toward the school structure and its organization?

Survey Question 11. Parents should feel free to walk into my classroom at any time.

U.S. bilingual teachers more strongly supported this statement than the *normalista* teachers. U.S. teachers did not mind having parents walking into their classroom at any time of the day, whereas *normalistas* seemed to mind this idea.

Survey Question 15. The most important role of the teacher is to teach academic subjects as opposed to teaching polite behavior, good manners, and courtesy.

U.S. bilingual teachers believed that the most important role of the teacher was to teach subject matter. However, *normalista* teachers thought that polite behavior, good manners, and courtesy was the most important role of the teacher. This was also noted in the focus group interview.

Focus Group Question 4. *What are your greatest worries that you have about teaching in the United States?*

Normalistas had a keen concern regarding the legal interests of each individual and the complex nature of school regulations. The *normalista* teachers mentioned that in the United States too many things were prohibited, for example, sitting a child on their laps during story time, hugging a child for an accomplishment, or the mere touching of a child in a comforting or encouraging manner. They also noticed that students have a **strong interest** concerning their personal rights and educational services while Mexican students do not. U.S. teachers, on the other hand, did not mention anything regarding this matter, arguably because they are taken for granted by students.

Focus Group Question 5. *What is it about U.S. education that worries you, or bothers you, or that you wish were different?*

There was a strong opinion among *normalista* teachers questioning the notion of social promotions vs. retention in the United States. They did not understand why students were passing a grade when they did not know how to read or write at that level. They noted that students' **academic** deficiency would later affect them, **perhaps** leading them to drop out of school. A couple of teachers at one campus mentioned that retaining students affected their self-esteem and socialization among their peers. However, this notion was not mentioned by the rest of the *normalista* teachers at the other three campuses.

One **belief** about the curriculum was based on the fact that in **Mexico** the curriculum is a national curriculum; all teachers follow the same objectives.

Normalista teachers also believe that Mexican students are expected to do more homework every night

... in Mexico the curriculum is a national curriculum; all teachers follow the same objectives.

as opposed to students in the United States. In some cases, this perception was gained by their own experiences with their children attending U.S. public schools and seeing their children regularly bringing home little or no homework.

Focus Group Question 6. *Are there any customs or traditions that Mexican children bring with them from home that do not fit in well with American values and that impede with their progress in school?*

U.S. teachers indicated that there were gender traits among Mexican boys that fell in this category. Mexican boys were more aggressive, liked to tell girls what to do around the classroom, and would play only with boys' toys. They also mentioned that the boys in their classrooms came with a strong opinion of the differences in gender roles and a lot of them followed their fathers' model. They reported that some of their students would dress and act as if they were older and they would not be caught playing in the kitchen.

What are the attitudes and beliefs that U.S. and Mexican teachers have toward the educational programs that prepared them for the profession?

Survey Question 19. *If there are teachers who speak only English, the State should also allow teachers who speak only Spanish to be credentialed.*

Normalista teachers supported this statement to a higher degree than the U.S. bilingual teachers. *Normalistas* supported the idea of having Spanish-speaking teachers credentialed just like their English counterparts.

Normalistas supported the idea of having Spanish-speaking teachers credentialed just like their English counterparts.

Survey Question 20. Maintaining or developing Spanish language skills in reading and writing is important for Hispanic/Latino students.

Results indicated that *normalista* teachers agreed with this statement much more strongly than U.S. bilingual teachers. *Normalistas* were much in accordance on having Latino students maintaining and developing their native language. In addition, U.S. bilingual teachers also agreed with this statement but to a lesser degree. This finding was also noted in the focus group interview.

Survey Question 25. Most of the bilingual teachers I have met in the United States have adequate literacy skills in Spanish.

Interestingly enough, the *normalista* teachers did not agree with this statement. They believed that the bilingual teachers they had met in the United States were not competent in Spanish vocabulary; however, the U.S. bilinguals did believe that U.S. bilingual teachers had adequate literacy skills in Spanish.

Focus Group Question 7. *At a personal level, what have been the most serious problems and obstacles in regards to the teacher preparation programs that you went through?*

All *normalista* teachers felt that one of their personal difficulties and worries was speaking English "correctly." One group felt that speaking without an accent was very important because a lot of parents worry about having their kids in a classroom where the teacher speaks with a strong accent. All groups agreed they needed more practice in writing, grammar, tenses, and in communication. When the same question was asked of the U.S. teachers, some said that they had no problem if someone spoke with an accent, and that judging someone based on their accent was wrong. However, within that same group,

All *normalista* teachers felt that one of their personal difficulties and worries was speaking English "correctly."

other teachers mentioned that if someone spoke with a heavy accent it would be hard to understand them and that it would be of concern to them.

Focus Group Question 8. *What is your opinion about the social status that teachers have in Mexico and in the United States?*

Both groups agreed that Mexican teachers are respected much more by parents, students, and Mexican society in general. *Normalista* teachers said that Mexican families teach their children that teachers must be respected at all times and that they become like second mothers/fathers to the child.

Focus Group Question 9. *In the Latino community, how do they value Spanish in this region?*

Normalistas indicated that maintaining and developing the Spanish language was very important for the Spanish-speaking child. The U.S. teachers, on the other hand, did not see it as important. *Normalistas* also responded that the Spanish language was not valued in the United States. They indicated that a difference existed, however, among the socioeconomic levels. Upper- and middle-class parents valued Spanish much more than parents with lower socioeconomic status.

IV

DISCUSSION



Riverside School District is the second oldest school district in the county.

Riverside School was built in 1948 and currently has a student population of 186.

This study revealed that differences existed among *normalistas* and U.S. bilingual education teachers. Results of this study have shown that *normalista* teachers, to a higher degree than their peers, considered attending college as the most important element for judging school success. This is consistent with a study conducted by the New York-based Public Agenda (Levinson, 2000), which reported that Hispanic and black parents are more likely to rank a college education as an important measure of success. In contrast, non-minority parents reported that getting along with people, having a good work ethic, and gaining skills on the job are the most important elements for measuring success. It is not clear, however, whether U.S. teachers held lower aspirations for college attendance by their students or whether their conceptions of education and its end goals are simply more diverse.

Furthermore, *normalista* teachers believed that collaborating, sharing expertise, working on school committees, and participating in the school decision-making processes are things that a teacher should embrace as important parts of the teacher's responsibilities. This notion of responsibility may come from the confidence that they have in their teaching given their prior experience. This is consistent with the results of another exploratory study of *normalista* teachers. Flores & Clark (1999) found in a sub-sample of this group that *normalistas* had a high personal efficacy and felt confident that their teaching made a difference in the lives of their students. However, this notion of the value of prior experience is not only held by *normalista* teachers but also by bilingual education teachers who are teaching in the United States. Flores (1999) found that bilingual education teachers' beliefs

Normalistas had a high personal efficacy and felt confident that their teaching made a difference in the lives of their students.

... *normalista* teachers were also more optimistic about getting involved with school activities, doing home visits, and being change agents.

about how bilingual children learn appear to influence their teaching practices.

Based on our focus group interviews, *normalista* teachers were also more optimistic about getting involved with school activities, doing home visits, and being change agents. In a sense, these *normalistas* seemed ready to become teachers again, and to be active participants in the classroom and the school. Admittedly, these teachers had not yet practiced their craft in the United States since they had not yet earned U.S. credentials.

When it came to parents feeling free to walk into the classroom at any time, U.S. teachers were more supportive than *normalista* teachers. This can be explained by the fact that the *normalistas* indicated that parental involvement in the United States is encouraged by teachers and administrators. In Mexico, parental involvement is not customary and not reinforced by school administrators in a sustained manner, whereas in the United States, the term approximates mantra status.

Since the majority of the *normalista* teachers do not yet work in the schools, they did not know much about what attitudes Mexican students bring with them that did not fit in the classroom. *Normalista* teachers reacted to this cultural conflict question a bit differently. They referred to customs and traditions that Mexico celebrates. That is, special days are celebrated by having students perform a dance, act in a play, or share food. *Normalistas* had the perception that students who attended private schools came with a higher academic level than students who went to public school. They also mentioned that the socioeconomic status of students had an impact on student achievement. This notion is of no great surprise. Many researchers have reported that a student's

socioeconomic origins have a substantial influence on the amount and type of schooling received and, in turn, the type of job obtained (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998; Ovando & Collier, 1998).

U.S. teachers in this study believed that teaching academic subjects was more important than teaching good manners and polite behavior. This notion was supported by the focus group interviews, where *normalista* teachers stressed that in order to be a good and well-rounded teacher, one should teach academics, values, and polite behavior to all students. U.S. teachers also reported that when Mexican parents attended meetings, they were mainly concerned with their kids' behavior and much less with their academic progress. The perceptions that minority parents have toward the role they play in their children's education may differ from school ideas about the role of parents. For example, Ovando and Collier (1998) noted that some parents believe in a separation between home life and school life. That is, parents are entrusting the education of their children to the teachers and do not feel that it is their role to challenge the authority of the school.

Normalista teachers strongly supported credentialing teachers who speak only Spanish. This makes sense to them since they already have been credentialed in Mexico (or other Latin American countries). These credentials, they argue, should be recognized here regardless of their original language. *Normalistas* also conveyed that maintaining the Spanish language should be important for students, parents, and teachers. *Normalistas* believed that Spanish is not valued highly in this country and that many people who spoke Spanish spoke it incorrectly. They were very concerned with teaching and using standard Spanish with their future students. They thought that many bilingual teachers in the United States did not have ad-

The perceptions that minority parents have toward the role they play in their children's education may differ from school ideas about the role of parents.

The U.S. bilingual teachers in this study felt that they and other bilingual teachers they had met had adequate literacy in Spanish.

equate Spanish literacy skills, and were unable to speak Spanish sufficiently well to be considered biliterate. Guerrero (1999) found that many bilingual education teachers have low Spanish-language proficiency and that their measurement of academic Spanish is uneven. The U.S. bilingual teachers in this study felt that they and other bilingual teachers they had met had adequate literacy in Spanish. It is not surprising that immigrant teachers who had their own educational training elsewhere in Spanish felt that the Spanish spoken in the United States is inadequate even among teachers who are certified to teach bilingually. In contrast, the U.S. teachers maintained that the Spanish spoken in the United States is used well.

V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH



*Tolleson
Elementary School
District, founded in
1923, is part of the
Pendergast School
District. The
district has grown
considerably since
its beginnings in the
late 1800s.*

This study was an exploratory study that helped identify research topics related to the preparation of foreign-trained teachers. The majority of Mexican teachers are prepared in normal schools; however, several universities, notably the *Universidad Pedagógica Nacional*, also offer teacher preparation programs (Petrovic et al., 1999) that were attended by some of the teachers in the study. Teachers throughout Mexico's history have played many roles, such as founders of rural schools and cultural missionaries. In the first half of the century many were active participants in literacy campaigns (Petrovic et al., 1999). The positive sentiments associated with these actions have been passed down from one generation to another.

In rural areas, Mexican teachers were the ones to reach out to a community and become leaders within that community. Perhaps this is because in small towns, they were part of the few people who were literate within their community. Again, normalista teachers in both the survey and interviews conveyed this notion. According to Petrovic et al. (1999), Mexican teachers have always had a close involvement with the community they serve. Indeed, one of the requirements for graduating from normal schools is a lengthy community service commitment in addition to the student teaching practices.

The present study validates the position that attitudinal and belief differences exist between Mexican and U.S. teachers. Although we acknowledge that these differences may be due to cultural differences, we did not set out to study such differences in an anthropological way. A Limitation of the study with respect to cultural differences is that we did not set out to determine the causes of the differences we encountered.

In rural areas, Mexican teachers were the ones to reach out to a community and become leaders within that community.

Both U.S. and *normalista* teachers emphasized that the societal status of teachers in Mexico was higher than that of teachers in the United States.

The little background information we did gather was based on the introductions of the interviews, in which the majority of the *normalistas* reported only generally about their lives.

This demographic data may, upon further analyses, help explain why certain *normalista* teachers responded a certain way with regards to the prior schooling and to the region from which a Mexican child came. Oppenheimer (1996) provides an introduction to the three different regions of Mexico. A Mexican national may agree that Mexico is three countries in one. There is the northern region, which is the industrialized, the modernized, and the energized region. Then, there is the central region, which is dominated by the capital and serves as the political center of the country's government. Finally, there is the southern part of Mexico, which is an isolated, poverty-stricken region. Since most of the *normalistas* mentioned that they were from the northern region, this research lacks the representation of the southern *normalista* teachers, which are predominantly indigenous.

Both U.S. and *normalista* teachers emphasized that the societal status of teachers in Mexico was higher than that of teachers in the United States. Thus, another area for future research might involve investigating how Mexican teachers earned and maintained that status. Some of the *normalista* teachers reported that they showed respect to parents and students, and in return gained respect from parents and students.

The results of this study will not only assist U.S. universities to better prepare *normalistas* in making a smooth transition to becoming teachers in the United States, but will also assist in developing better pro-

grams for the preparation of bilingual education teachers. Current efforts related to the present study include ~~implementing~~ programs that will assist other ~~foreign-trained~~ professionals who have the skills to work in areas where bilinguals are needed. It seems clear that minority professionals can become role models to our students and assist with the shortage of bilingual candidates. This research study provided information on how normalista teachers and U.S. ~~bilin-~~gual education teachers perceive the world and is intended to provide ideas and suggestions in identifying areas of further research.

In conclusion, future research variables (i.e., socioeconomic status, region of birth, where one was raised, and how teacher status was earned) can provide insight regarding future teacher-preparation programs and may provide a more comprehensive view of the topic examined here.

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APPENDIX A

FALL 1999 SURVEY OF NORMALISTA
PARTICIPANTS PROJECT ALIANZA

Encuesta de Maestras Normalistas del Proyecto Alianza
Center for Bilingual Education and Research

Arizona State University
Josué M. González, Principal Investigator
Ana Garcia, Research Assistant

In this survey we are attempting to find out more about who you are and what you believe about important aspects of our profession. The teaching profession, the organization and management of schools, and the preparation **programs(s)** you have undergone are the main topics of the survey. In the future you may be asked to help us explore other dimensions of this new concept of bi-national teachers of whom you are a pioneer. At a focus group meeting to be held after you complete this instrument, we will talk with you about what you have told us here, and discuss some of the items that are of most interest to you. ***Thank you for your participation!***

En esta encuesta intentamos aprender más acerca de usted y lo que usted cree acerca de ciertos aspectos importantes de nuestra profesidn. Los puntos principales de ésta encuesta son la profesidn de maestro, la organización y el manejo de las escuelas, y la preparación a la cual usted ha sido sometida. En el futuro le pediremos que nos ayude a explorar otras dimensiones en este nuevo concepto de maestras bi-nacionales, en el cual usted es una iniciadora. Después que haya terminado este instrumento, el grupo se reunirá para hablar sobre lo que usted nos ha informado y conversar sobre algunos datos que son de interés para usted. ¡Gracias por su participación!

PART I
Personal Profile

In **the first** part of this survey we ask you to tell us about **yourself without** having to tell us your name. This will allow us to create a profile of the respondents to this survey and to study the responses.

En la primera parte de esta encuesta le pedimos que nos cuente acerca de usted sin decirnos su nombre. Esto nos permitirá crear un perfil demográfico del grupo para esta encuesta ~~x~~ poner rnarco a las respuestas.

Please respond to the following questions by placing a check mark on the appropriate line. You may answer in either Spanish or English.

Favor de responder a las siguientes preguntas rnarcando una contraseiia en la linea apropiada.

1. Gender/Sexo Male____ Female____

2. Age/Edad _____

3. At what grade level do you plan to teach in the United States?
¿En qué nivel piensa enseñar en los Estados Unidos?

K-Elementary____ Middle School _____

High School _____ Other _____

4. At what grade level did you teach in Mexico?
¿En que nivel enseñó en México?

K-Elementary____ Middle School _____

High School _____ Other _____

None/No enseñé _____

5. Other than in Alianza, how many years have you taught in the United States?

¿Fuera de su participación en el programa Alianza, cuántos años ha enseñado en los Estados Unidos?

0 years (*años*)

1-3 years

4-8 years

9-12 years

13-20 years

6. How many years did you teach in Mexico or in another country?

¿Cuántos años enseñó en México o en otro país?

0 years (*años*)

1-3 years

4-8 years

9-12 years

13-20 years

7. How long have you lived in the United States?

¿Cuántos años ha vivido en los Estados Unidos?

Less than 1 year (*menos de un año*)

1-5 years

6-10 years

More than 10 years

Part II Survey/Encuesta

We want to know your personal opinions and beliefs. Please do not discuss the survey with colleagues before responding. There are no correct or incorrect answers and your responses are anonymous. Indicate what you believe, rather than what you think you should believe. Unless otherwise noted the survey relates to your experiences in the United States.

*Queremos saber sus opiniones y creencias personales. Por favor no **discuta** esta encuesta con sus colegas antes de contestar. No hay contestaciones correctas o incorrectas y sus respuestas son **anónimas**. Indique lo que usted piensa, y no lo que usted **crea** que deba pensar. A **menos** que sea indicado la encuesta se relaciona con sus experiencias en los Estados Unidos.*

Please respond to the following questions by circling the best answer for you.

*Marque su preferencia con un circulo alrededor de la **palabra** o **frase más** indicada **según** su **punto** de vista.*

1. In the end, school success is measured by how many of its graduates go to college.

*En resumidas cuentas el **éxito** de las escuelas se mide por el **número** de graduados que van a la universidad.*

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<i>Firmemente De Acuerdo</i>	<i>De Acuerdo</i>	<i>No estoy Segura</i>	<i>Desacuerdo</i>	<i>Firmemente en Desacuerdo</i>

2. It is as important for women to go to college as it is for men.

*Es de **igual** importancia que las mujeres **asistan** a la **universidad** como los hombres.*

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. Teachers have a responsibility to work closely with **parents** and community groups.

*Las maestras tienen la responsabilidad de trabajar de cerca con los padres de sus **alumnos** y los **grupos** comunitarios.*

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. Teachers should live their lives so as to be good role models for their students.

*Las maestras deberían vivir sus **vidas** dando un buen ejemplo para sus **estudiantes**.*

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. Collaborating and sharing expertise, working on school committees, and participating in school decision-making are integral parts of my responsibilities as a teacher.

*Colaborar, **compartir** pericias, trabajar en **comités** escolares y participar en la **toma** de decisiones escolares **forman** parte **esencial** de mis responsabilidades como **maestra**.*

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. I want children to formulate their own ideas and to reach their own conclusions even if they sometimes disagree with me.

*Quiero que los estudiantes formulen sus **propias** ideas y lleguen a sus **propias** conclusiones aunque a veces este'n en desacuerdo conmigo.*

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. Teachers should consult their students on how to conduct the class.

*Las maestras deberian consultar a sus **estudiantes** con frecuencia pidie'ndoles sugerencias e ideas de **cómo** llevar a cabo la clase.*

Strongly Agree **Agree** Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. It is better to have a tightly integrated curriculum in all grades rather than teaching subjects in isolation of each other.

*Es **mejor** tener un plan de estudios (un curriculum) fuertemente integrado en todos los niveles escolares en vez de enseñar las materias una por una.*

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. The teaching/learning part of the school day is too short.

Las partes del dia que se dedican a enseiir y a aprender son demasiado cortas.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. Teachers should have a strong say in making school policies and determining how the school is administered.

Las maestras deberían tener una voz importante en cuanto al establecimiento de políticas escolares y en la determinación de la escuela.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. Parents should feel free to walk into my classroom at any time.

Los padres se deben sentir libres de entrar al salón de clase cuando quieran.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

12. Cooperation and teamwork among teachers is important.

Entre las maestras la cooperación y el trabajo en equipo son importantes.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

13. Children should be punished for cheating on tests or homework.

Se debe castigar a los estudiantes cuando hacen trampa (copiar) en los exámenes o tareas.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

14. The biggest job of the principal is to provide instructional leadership.

*El **trabajo** más importante de un director de escuela es proveer liderazgo **educacional**.*

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

15. The most important role of the teacher is to teach academic subjects as opposed to teaching polite behavior, good manners, and courtesy.

*El **papel** más importante de una maestra es el de enseñar las **materias académicas** y no el de enseñar buena **conducta**, buenos **modales** y **cortesía**.*

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

16. Faced with cultural conflict, children should be encouraged to follow and defend the cultural preferences they learned at home.

*Al **confrontarse** con un **conflicto** cultural, los **niiios** **deben** ser **animados** a utilizar y defender las preferencias culturales que **aprendieron** en sus hogares.*

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

17. Teachers should visit the homes of their students regularly to discuss with parents their children's progress.

*Las **māestras** deberían visitar los **hogares** de **sus** estudiantes con regularidad para hablar con los **padres** sobre el **progreso** del estudiante.*

Strongly Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly
 Agree
 Disagree

18. It is important that teachers speak English without an accent.

Es importante que las maestras hablen inglés sin acento.

Strongly Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly
 Agree Disagree

19. If there are teachers who speak only English, the state should also allow teachers who speak only Spanish to be **credentialed**.

Si hay maestras que solamente hablan inglés, el estado debería permitir que las maestras que solamente hablan español obtengan sus credenciales también.

Strongly Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly
 Agree Disagree

20. Maintaining or developing Spanish language **skills** in reading and writing is important for Latino students.

Mantener y desarrollar las destrezas de leer y escribir en español es importante para los estudiantes hispanos/latinos.

Strongly Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly
 Agree Disagree

21. Maintaining or developing Spanish language skills in reading and **writing** is important for **all** students in the Southwest.

Mantener y desarrollar las destrezas de leer y escribir en español es importante para todos los estudiantes en el sudoeste del país.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

22. **Teachers** are more highly regarded (by parents, students, and society in general) in Mexico than they are in the United States.

*Las maestras en **México** reciben más respeto de parte de los padres, estudiantes y la **sociedad** en general que las **maestras** en los Estados Unidos.*

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

23. The courses I took in Mexico to earn a teaching license were harder in content than the courses taken by **U.S.** teachers.

*Los cursos que tome' en **México** para obtener la licenciatura fueron más **difíciles** en cuanto al contenido que los cursos tomados por las maestras en los Estados Unidos.*

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

24. I think I am getting good opportunities to learn and practice the **English** language through this program.

*Yo **pienso** que estoy recibiendo buenas oportunidades para aprender y practicar el **inglés** en este **programa**.*

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

25. Most of the bilingual teachers I have met in the United States have adequate literacy skills in **Spanish**.

La mayoría de las maestras bilingües que he conocido en los Estados Unidos tienen destrezas adecuadas en la lectura y escritura en español.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

26. Most of the bilingual teachers I have met in the United States have adequate literacy skills in English.

La mayoría de las maestras bilingües que he conocido en los Estados Unidos tienen destrezas adecuadas en la lectura y escritura en inglés.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the biggest difference between being a teacher here in the United States and Mexico? What about respect **from** the teacher to the student?
2. How do you measure success?
3. What is a **teacher**?
4. What are your greatest worries about teaching in the **U.S.**?
5. What is it about U.S. education that worries you, or bothers you, or that you wish were different? Any other insecurity you feel and are not sure how to solve? Any suggestions or recommendations?
6. Are there any customs or traditions that Mexican children bring with them **from** home that do not fit in well with American values and that impede their progress in school?
7. At a personal level, what have been the most serious problems and **obstacles** in regards to the teacher preparation programs **that** you went through? What kind of opportunities did your program provide for you to become a teacher?
8. What is your opinion about the social status that teachers have in Mexico and in the United States?
9. How does the Latino community in this region value Spanish? How **important** do you think for your students to know that you speak **good English/Spanish**?

About CBER

The Center for Bilingual Education and Research (CBER) is part of the College of Education, Arizona State University. CBER was founded in 1980. It is one of several university units that promote scholarship and discourse on issues and opportunities related to language, race, and ethnicity. During its early history, CBER served mainly as a technical assistance unit providing training and assistance to schools in the Southwest. In 1998, CBER shifted its focus and is now concerned with policy analysis and scholarship in bilingual and dual-language education.

CBER collaborates with others who share an interest in contextualizing bilingual and dual-language education in a broader framework of needs involving school restructuring and modernization better to serve all children. CBER's vision is to inform binational pedagogy uniquely suited to education in the borderlands.

About IDRA

The Intercultural Development Research Association is a vanguard leadership development and research team working with people to create self-renewing schools that value and empower all children, families and communities. It is an independent, non-profit organization that advocates the right of every child to a quality education. For more than 25 years, IDRA has worked for excellence and equity in education in Texas and across the United States. IDRA conducts research and development activities; creates, implements and administers innovative education programs; provides teacher, administrator, and parent training and technical assistance; and develops leadership in communities to result in enlightened educational policies that work for all children.

About Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation (Fundación Solidaridad México Americana)

The Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation was created to encourage closer ties between Mexicans and the Mexican American and Hispanic community in the United States, as well as to foster collaboration and improve relations between the United States and Mexico. It is a binational, private, non-profit, nonpartisan organization.

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