"But I'm a Language Teacher!" Dual Immersion Teacher Identities in a Complex Policy Context

Colleen Chesnut
Indiana University

This qualitative study examined dual immersion teachers' identities as they engaged in policy implementation within their school, collaborating in professional learning communities (PLC) with one-way immersion teachers. Data derived from participant observation, interviews, and interpersonal process recall were analyzed through a theoretical lens blending communities of practice theories with theories on identity formation. Findings suggested that the requirement to collaborate across instructional contexts helped the dual immersion teachers to form strong and unique identities that sometimes conflicted with the requirements of their PLC work. The dual immersion teachers' identities were shaped by their roles in the dual immersion program working with ELL students and by their work on PLC teams, and they often felt misunderstood by their colleagues who were not dual immersion teachers. This study has implications for leadership practice and policy research, suggesting that teachers' identities can impact on their engagement with school policies.

Research in school settings frequently examines education policies and assesses their value for students and teachers. However, this top-down approach to policy research often ignores the voices of teachers who directly implement the policies in question. School policies may complement or conflict with each other, and teachers are the primary actors who negotiate these activities. This study explored teachers' roles and identities in the complex policy environment of a school where at least two key policies framed their work: dual immersion instruction and professional learning community (PLC) collaboration. Dual immersion teachers' identities were examined through a conceptual lens that blended communities of practice theories with theories of identity formation, with the following research questions guiding the process:

1. How do dual immersion teachers, working in PLCs with one-way immersion teachers, understand and negotiate their roles as members of these teams?
2. How are dual immersion teachers' identities as teachers shaped by their roles and work in PLC teams?

The following article begins by describing the purpose and conceptual framework for this inquiry, as well as a review of the literature. Methodology for data collection, data analysis, and limitations will be outlined, as well as findings. To conclude, the implications of these findings for research and practice will be discussed.

Research Purpose

While every teacher regularly implements various education policies, the teachers who participated in this research worked in a policy environment that certainly warranted scholarly

attention. Specifically, they were four teachers in a recently established dual immersion program at an elementary school, working collaboratively in structured PLC teams alongside one-way immersion teachers at the same grade levels. One-way immersion programs, by design, serve native English-speaking students, providing instruction in another language (Spanish, in this case) with the goal of promoting fluency in both languages (Fortune & Tedick, 2008), while dual immersion programs serve both English language learners (ELL) and native English speakers in heterogeneous classrooms, providing instruction in both languages (Freeman, 1998; Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003; Howard, Sugarman, Christian, Lindolhm-Leary, & Rogers, 2007; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). At this research site, in a school on the urban fringe of a Midwestern city, nearly all of the ELL students in the first through third grades were in the dual immersion program, whereas the one-way immersion classrooms included only native English-speaking students. Thus, the dual immersion and one-way immersion teachers worked with different demographics of students, utilizing distinct methods of instruction oriented toward promoting bilingualism, while working collaboratively with each other in PLCs. While the literature on PLCs has defined them as supportive groups of teachers who engage in reflective dialogue, collective learning, shared practice, leadership, values, and vision, (Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999; Hord, 2004), the PLCs observed in this study were so named by the school district and did not always exhibit these "ideal" traits. However, the efficacy of the PLC groups as a whole was not under scrutiny for this study; rather, they served as a space, structured through school district policy, in which the teachers' identities were examined. Additional details on the school and research participants are included in the methodology section.

The unique needs of English language learners and the teachers who work with them figured prominently in this research. Nationwide data indicate that educational outcomes are significantly less optimal for ELL students than for native English-speakers (Fry, 2003, 2007; Fry & Gonzales, 2008), and that gaps in standardized test scores between ELL and non-ELL students have changed little in recent years (NCES, 2013). Additionally, the number of ELL students recently has grown in many Midwestern school districts, (Hamman & Harklau, 2010; Mallard & Chapa, 2004; Wortham, Murillo, & Hamman, 2002), and many of these areas lack adequate numbers of certified bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) teachers (Goodwin, 2002; Kindler, 2002). Research has indicated that teachers often feel frustrated by the challenges they perceive in meeting the needs of ELL students (Levinson, et.al, 2007; López & Vasquez, 2006). Schools and districts have adopted various policies to help teachers to better serve ELL students, and dual immersion programs and the PLC model for collaboration are among them (Collier & Thomas, 2004; Freeman, 2000; Palmer, 2007; Paredes Scribner, 1999; Wagstaff & Fusarelli, 1999). However, a gap in understanding persists around how teachers perceive their roles and work on simultaneous implementation of collaborative and instructional policies. Existing policy research has overlooked the potential effects of the implementation process on teachers' identities, particularly when considering the overlap of multiple policies and how their impact on different teachers may vary. Thus, the issues that this research addressed are timely and salient. School and district leaders, in efforts to better meet the needs of ELL students and their teachers, may benefit from more thorough understandings of how their instructional and collaborative policies intersect and impact the identities of teachers who serve ELL students.

Conceptual Framework

Theories on communities of practice, developed primarily through research by Lave (1991) and Wenger (1998), framed the ways in which the teachers' participation in the policy implementation process and their perceptions about their roles in this process were conceptualized here. Learning is one of the central activities that occurs within and among communities of practice, which is defined as a social process in which meaning around a shared practice is negotiated continuously through mutual engagement among community members and non-members (Lave, 1991; Wenger 1998). A key aspect of learning within communities of practice is identity formation for community members, which occurs as they negotiate their experiences and levels of participation with the group. Wenger (1998) succinctly defined identity as "a layering of events of participation and reification by which our experience and its social interpretation inform each other" (p. 151). Thus, identity, like learning, is a socially negotiated concept that is continuously modified by and modifying one's engagement with a community of practice. Members' identities can be impacted by varying levels of participation within and among different communities of practice (Handley, Sturdy, Fincham, & Clark, 2006; Wenger 1998), and a greater level of identity development may take place in the "spaces between multiple communities" (Handley et al., 2006; p. 650). These sites may function in this way precisely because of the social structures of communities of practice and individuals' needs to negotiate and differentiate their roles around these structures. Since this research explored how dual immersion teachers perceived their roles within the policy environment of their school, questions of identity figured prominently.

Additional scholarship on identity has illustrated that the construction of this concept relies both on personal experiences and beliefs around roles and group membership, as well as the social structures in which such roles and groups operate. Stets & Burke (2000) theorized that social and individual identities are not separate within individuals, but rather related across various contexts. Thus, it seems that identity formation takes place within and is inextricably linked to the social structure, including both cultural and institutional contexts, although the form and strength of this connection may vary across different identities (Smulyan, 2000). Burke (2004) further proposed that not only do the surrounding social and cultural environments influence identities, but also that the reverse is true. The identities formed and negotiated by group members within professional, social, and familial spaces subsequently affect the structures and climates of the aforementioned groups. These findings reiterate Wenger's (1998) ideas regarding identity as related to communities of practice, expanding to include the potential for the reciprocal effects of member identity on communities. Employing the concept of identity put forth by the aforementioned scholars of identity theory, social identity theory, and communities of practice allowed for investigation of how identities formed or shifted for teachers as they engaged with communities of practice within their school environment.

Literature Review

Dual immersion teachers' identities were the primary phenomena of interest here, examined within the context of their work in professional learning communities. This section reviews the relevant literature on teacher identities, but also includes a brief summary of scholarship on dual

immersion instruction since a basic knowledge of this will be useful for the reader's understanding of the research context.

Teacher Identities

Research has shown that teachers' personal and professional identities become very closely intertwined, due to their emotional investment in their work (Day & Gu, 2010; Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2006). Furthermore, past experiences, both as students and as new teachers, have been found to interact with the school context and culture to help influence and shape teachers' identities (Flores & Day, 2006). For these reasons, teachers' identity formation is impacted not only by variables in their school environments, but also by changes in their personal lives. As Day et al. (2006) suggested, this intersection may lead to tensions between teachers' individual agency and the social structure of the workplace. These tensions contribute to teachers' formation of both stable and unstable identities, as well as to both positive and negative attitudes around these identities, which, in turn, may impact their work in a variety of ways (Day et al., 2006). Identity formation for bilingual teachers, in particular, is a complex process, impacted not only by their school contexts and personal lives, but also by the unique nature of bilingual instructional programs in relation to more traditional styles of teaching (Varghese, 2004). Additionally, teachers' identities impact the ways in which they implement (or choose not to implement) certain education reforms, particularly those related to accountability (Day, 2007; Sloan, 2006).

For those concerned with teacher identity in their research, Sachs (2001) has argued that two "competing discourses" have emerged around the concept (p. 158). One is defined as the "entrepreneurial identity," characterized by a focus on individualism, competition, and control, which is often externally defined and regulated by outside authority. The other, for which Sachs (2001) seems to advocate, is the "activist identity," grounded in democratic discourse and a collaborative culture of respect (p. 158). Combining these ideas with the previously outlined concepts of fluid and multi-faceted teacher identities seems to indicate that identity and identity formation for teachers are quite complex and are influenced by a wide variety of both personal and professional factors. This research considers how identities formed and shifted for teachers as they engaged in communities of practice within their school environment, and if these identities could be classified as Sachs (2001) has described.

Dual Immersion

A model dual immersion program consists of full integration and balanced ratios of English-speaking students with students who speak a different native language and academic instruction in both languages in roughly equal proportions (Howard et.al, 2003; Howard et al., 2007; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). One-way immersion programs also are designed with the goals of bilingualism and biculturalism. However, one-way immersion targets only native English speakers, immersing them in the second language with a teacher who is a native speaker of that language (Fortune & Tedick, 2008; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Thus, the key distinction between the two programs is the student demographic they serve. Research on dual immersion has revealed improved outcomes for all students, particularly ELL students, increased parent engagement, and strengthened attitudes toward bilingualism and biculturalism (Collier &

Thomas, 2004; Freeman, 1998; Kirk Senesac, 2002; Palmer, 2007). However, some have warned that dual immersion programs may not solve problems of equity in education for ELL students and other marginalized groups of students since there are many other factors, such as poverty, racism, and immigration status, that cannot be addressed through instructional methods alone (Palmer, 2007, 2010; Valdes, 1997). Although this research did not focus explicitly on the quality of or outcomes related to the dual immersion program of the study, this broad overview of scholarship on dual immersion is provided to deepen readers' understandings of the school context.

Methodology

Research Site and Participants

This study examined teachers at a site where two policies, both lauded as potentially beneficial for at-risk minority students, were simultaneously implemented. The school's dual immersion teachers were the primary actors in this implementation. The school, Meadowview[1], was selected for this research due to the potential for interaction between the policy requiring PLC collaboration and the language immersion programs. Meadowview Elementary sits on the urban fringe of a Midwestern city, with approximately 600 students enrolled in grades 1-6. While all schools in its district employed PLC models for collaboration, Meadowview was unique for its language immersion programs. Furthermore, at Meadowview, the instructional models for language learning and the demographics of students differed between the two immersion programs. This research focused on the dual immersion teachers for two reasons: 1) the program was in the early stages of implementation; and 2) according to school and district officials, the dual immersion program was put in place in response to changing demographics of the school community. Specifically, many perceived that dual immersion instruction would better serve the school's growing Latino population, and a majority of Meadowview's Latino students were placed in dual immersion classrooms, because they were also ELL. Previous research at Meadowview indicated that the dual immersion teachers had experienced some frustrations around their collaborative work across instructional programs, particularly since they served most of Meadowview's ELL students, while the one-way immersion teachers primarily taught native English speakers. Thus, Meadowview provided an interesting site for examining how instructional and collaborative policies interacted and how this interaction impacted dual immersion teachers' roles and identities.

When this study began, the dual immersion program at Meadowview was in its third year of implementation. Thus, there were two dual immersion teachers at each of the first through third grade levels. Initially, all six dual immersion teachers were informed of this study and consented to participate. However, due to conflicting meeting times for the PLC teams, only the first and third grade teams ultimately were selected to participate. Primarily, the research participants were the dual immersion teachers for first grade (Barbara and Betty) and third grade (Victoria and Nora). All four teachers identified as female; Betty and Victoria identified as Latina and Barbara and Nora identified as white. Betty and Victoria, who taught the Spanish component of the dual immersion program, identified as bilingual and bicultural, while neither Barbara nor Nora were fluent in another language. Barbara, Betty, and Victoria had at least two years of

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[1] In order to protect participant privacy, pseudonyms are used for the school site and all research participants.

experience as dual immersion teachers when this research took place, while Nora began her first year of teaching in the dual immersion program during the study. All procedures for participant recruitment, data collection, and protecting confidentiality were approved by the Institutional Research Board. While additional teachers and school administrators were present for observed meetings, they were considered secondary participants, because the focus remained on the dual immersion teachers.

Research Design

The phenomena in question were examined through a critical lens borrowing from the synthesized conceptualization of critical theory provided by Kincheloe & McLaren (1998). The goals of critical research include the "empowerment of individuals" on whom the research is focused, as well as an "attempt to confront the injustice" of a particular realm of a social setting (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1998; p. 264). Therefore, this research was conducted with the assumptions that the teacher participants, who served a particular group of diverse students, faced challenges to their work related to their roles as teachers. As a result, the basic research design employed was an embedded case study, in which the experiences of several dual immersion teachers were closely examined within the bounded context of their school setting (Yin, 2012). Data collection began with observation, note taking, and audio- and video-recording of teachers and administrators within their school context (Carspecken, 1996). Observations took place in a variety of settings for structured teacher collaboration, including PLC meetings, grade-level team meetings, PLC facilitator meetings, and whole-school meetings. All meetings occurred during non-instructional time, primarily after school hours. Over the course of approximately one calendar year, a total of 25 meetings were observed, recorded, and transcribed with field notes. This collection of transcripts, notes, and recordings comprised the "primary record" of data, which served as a starting point for reconstructive analysis and the basis for further investigation (Carspecken, 1996).

Additional qualitative procedures also were employed, including semi-structured interviews and interpersonal process recall (IPR) sessions. This "dialogical data generation" was key to finding out more about the teachers' experiences and their individual perceptions of the policies at work in their school (Carspecken, 1996; p. 42). Each of the four teachers was interviewed once within the first few months of the study, and interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Because of the variety of data collected through other methods, including observation and IPR sessions, teachers were interviewed only once. The same interview protocol was used for each teacher; however, the interviews were semi-structured, which allowed for flexibility in asking various follow-up questions based on individual teachers' responses. Finally, each participant engaged in an IPR session during the last few months of the study, after meeting observations had concluded. These sessions involved the researcher and a participant reviewing a video recording and transcript of a PLC meeting together and discussing what took place. During the process, the participant was asked to pause the recording at points that were personally significant and talk to the researcher about what she was feeling or thinking at that moment (Kagan, 1984; Larsen, Flesakers, & Stege, 2008). Each participant could freely choose when to pause the recording and engage in discussion with the researcher; through this process they most often reflected on moments of anger, frustration, or misunderstanding, with more information gained through the researcher's follow-up questions. One IPR session was conducted with each of the participants

on an individual basis; the teacher selected a particular PLC meeting to review, and the entire session was audio-recorded and transcribed. The data generated through the IPR process served as a validity check on the primary record of data, as the researcher's analysis of a meeting's events could be reinforced or challenged by the participant's reflections as she reviewed those moments on video. The IPR sessions also provided another opportunity for the participants' voices to come through in the data analysis, giving them the power to interpret their experiences alongside the researcher.

Data Analysis

Analysis procedures were undertaken with a constructivist approach, meaning that the participants' own viewpoints and experiences were privileged in the processes of interpretation (Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Schwandt, 1998). Utilizing a constructivist framework for analysis aligned well with the original research questions; exploring issues of professional roles and identities requires the researcher to examine the observed experiences as carefully as possible from the perspectives of the participants involved. Data from the primary record were analyzed in several stages, beginning with reconstructive horizon analysis, wherein trends and themes were identified through reconstruction of meaning fields around potentially significant utterances (Carspecken, 1996). Subsequently, validity claims were reconstructed for each of these and categorized into objective, subjective, normative, or identity statements. Following reconstructive horizon analysis, first- and second-cycle coding methods were employed, which involved breaking the data into manageable sections and assigning certain codes to significant portions (Saldaña, 2009). Specifically, In Vivo coding and several affective coding methods were utilized (Saldaña, 2009). In Vivo codes used the participants' own words to code the data, and affective coding methods uncovered the subjective experiences of the participants "by directly acknowledging and naming those experiences" (Saldaña, 2009; p. 86). Additionally, two second-cycle coding methods were used to organize the analysis and to identify and develop themes that resulted from the first-cycle coding (Saldaña, 2009). To this end, the codes generated through reconstructive horizon analysis and first-cycle coding were revisited, employing pattern coding and focused coding to identify broader themes in the data. Pattern codes allow the researcher to group coded data according to common themes or categories (Saldaña, 2009). Finally, focused coding was used, wherein the categories of codes generated through pattern coding were reexamined and organized according to frequency and relation to one another. These qualitative analysis methods allowed the researcher to thoroughly explore the research questions and share the power of interpretation with the participants.

Limitations

There are several factors that may hinder the potential of this research for broad significance or contributions to scholarship. Due to the qualitative approach, the scope of the research was small; the focus was on only a few teachers in one particular school. For future inquiry, it may be useful to recruit participants from another school in the district where PLCs are implemented, in order to provide a basis for comparison around this particular policy. Additionally, the researcher's status as an outsider to the community may have limited the access and insight she was able to gain. There were a variety of community factors beyond the scope of this inquiry that surely influenced the teachers' identities in their policy environments. Just as PLCs do not exist

within a vacuum, schools, teachers, and administrators affect and are affected by their communities and other social, cultural, and political institutions. Because the participants were studied only in their school setting, the researcher was not able to consider how these outside factors impacted their identities. However, by using semi-structured, rather than highly-structured, interview techniques, as well as by spending significant time at the research site, the researcher sought to build trust with participants and mitigate this limitation. While the scope of this study could limit how these findings are applied to other educational settings, there is potential for a variety of stakeholders involved in education policymaking to benefit from increased knowledge around how teachers may fit into their particular policy environments.

Findings

As the dual immersion teachers engaged with their colleagues during meetings, as well as when they reflected on these interactions during interviews and IPR sessions, they revealed how they perceived themselves as PLC team members and how this work impacted their identities as dual immersion teachers, the focus of the two research questions. Data analysis revealed that the themes related to these questions often overlapped with one another. Though presented as distinct questions, it seemed that the dual immersion teachers' identities as teachers were shaped by their roles as PLC team members, so it became useful to think about their roles on the PLC teams in conjunction with their teacher identities. In some ways, their roles as PLC team members were inseparable from their identities as dual immersion teachers.

The study's findings are organized according to three themes that emerged from analysis of the coded data, framed here as statements:

1. Dual immersion teachers are subordinates rather than managers of their own work.
2. Dual immersion teachers are unique (and often misunderstood).
3. PLC work conflicts with dual immersion teachers' beliefs/identities.

In the following section each of these themes will be explored using examples from the data.

Dual Immersion Teachers are Subordinates rather than Managers of Their Own Work

Teachers frequently discussed their perceived lack of voice in decision-making processes through statements around requirements for PLC work or the structure of the dual immersion program. Additionally, they regularly made identity statements differentiating themselves from administrators with more authority. In one of the first coded instances of a teacher explicitly identifying herself as subordinate, rather than in control of her work, Betty shared her feelings on recent PLC tasks. At the beginning of a PLC meeting in early October, the principal reminded the teams that they should finalize lists of students who had been deemed "at-risk," according to early assessment data, so that they could begin receiving extra support. As her PLC team began to discuss this task, Betty expressed her preference for native Spanish-speaking students to be given this support in Spanish rather than English. A discussion ensued around the language of the assessments and what this meant for how students should be supported. After her teammates reminded Betty that these important assessments were in English, Betty backpedaled a bit from her previous assertion that native-language support would be ideal, saying, "If I'm told that I

need to do interventions in English, I will, I guess, because, you know, I wanna keep my job." This utterance was coded as an identity statement; lying in the background of Betty's statement was the assertion that she ultimately did not have the power to decide how to do her job. She positioned herself in this way by referring to doing what she was "told" in order to "keep [her] job." Betty made it clear that, although the district mandate for English assessment did not align with her beliefs about best practices for instruction of ELL students, she would comply because of her subordinate position and perceived inability to change the district's policy.

Another way in which the participants identified themselves as less powerful than administrators related to their roles as PLC facilitators. Two of the dual immersion teachers (Barbara and Nora) served as the facilitators for their PLC teams, which involved creating meeting agendas and keeping their groups on task. Both teachers expressed concern that they did not feel confident in these roles, particularly because they felt underprepared for navigating PLC requirements within the context of the dual immersion program. For example, in response to an interview question regarding her current PLC experience in comparison to previous ones, Nora shared that she had previously felt "confident" as a PLC facilitator, but in reference to her current team, she said, "I feel like I've led them down the wrong road, because of something I, you know, as a leader we were told and then it changes." Nora perceived herself as an ineffective PLC facilitator because she was unclear about expectations which she felt could only be clarified by administrators. Barbara also expressed frustration around her duties as the PLC facilitator. In her interview, Barbara discussed a PLC meeting that she felt had gone poorly, saying, "… as a facilitator, I should have fixed it. . . [but] I feel like I'm not a manager, my bosses need to do that." Here Barbara acknowledged that her role as a facilitator was to keep her group on track, but she qualified this with a normative statement about her relative power to do this. By saying that she was "not a manager," she suggested that she did not have the authority to hold her teammates accountable. As these data indicate, both Nora and Barbara experienced some frustrations as PLC facilitators, and explicitly linked these to their perceived lack of authority in this role. These teachers' statements exemplified a theme that occurred throughout the data record: that in spite of their understandings of good practice and previous experiences, the dual immersion teachers felt that they did not control their work, particularly in the PLC context.

Dual Immersion Teachers are Unique (and often misunderstood)

The theme of the participants' unique identities as dual immersion teachers came up frequently across the data set. As the dual immersion teachers positioned themselves in relation to their colleagues, they made identity statements regarding the challenges they faced in the dual immersion program. These identity statements were often associated with differences in perspectives, which the dual immersion teachers felt were based on the different groups of students in each instructional program. For example, Victoria shared her thoughts during her interview on how her outlook as a teacher had changed since transitioning from teaching in the one-way immersion to the dual immersion program. According to her, teaching in both programs had been enriching: "I've liked that I've had both experiences, because it's completely changed my perspective on how I look at things, how I look at learning." She believed that the major difference between one-way and dual immersion lay in the students, and for this reason, it was difficult for some one-way immersion teachers to understand the unique challenges of dual immersion, where students were more likely to be linguistically, ethnically, and

socioeconomically diverse. This contributed to her identifying more strongly as a dual immersion teacher, and she wrapped up the interview by noting how much she had enjoyed learning how to work with ELL students who she felt would ultimately benefit from dual immersion. While Victoria's identity as a teacher was certainly multi-faceted, she had begun to think of herself as a dual immersion teacher, concerned both with language learning for all students and with the particular needs of the ELL students. Victoria seemed to feel lucky to have transitioned from one-way to dual immersion, because it allowed for her to have a heightened understanding of more diverse students. Furthermore, she felt that one-way immersion teachers could not understand her perspective because they did not have the same experience.

Another way in which the dual immersion teachers expressed feeling unique and misunderstood related to their perceptions of their work in relation to the school district as a whole. In their interviews, both Barbara and Betty opined that the dual immersion program was not well-understood by district-level administrators. According to Barbara, "with dual language, there's some even greater issues that we face. . . [the district] is asking us all to teach the same unit at the same time. I, we can't teach these units in Spanish this way." She felt that the school district's uniform requirements for pacing units of instruction could not be applied in the same way to the dual immersion program at Meadowview. It seemed clear from her statement here that she believed the dual immersion program was distinct from more traditional instructional programs, and that the school district did not quite understand or recognize the unique needs of the teachers and students involved in this kind of learning.

In her interview, Betty described what the district's "acceptance" of the dual immersion program would look like to her, explaining that a different curriculum with regular coaching from a dual immersion expert would be helpful. Although the dual immersion teachers had received some professional development from an expert like this, in Betty's estimation of the district's opinion, it "doesn't matter what she [the expert] says." This was related to Betty's concern about being evaluated, as she continued, "So, I mean, she comes in, we get all hyped up, and then nothing else is spoken about it. Actually, even when we are, um, evaluated, if we are doing anything similar to that, it counts against us." This conclusion illustrates the theme that dual immersion teachers are unique, through an underlying normative statement that they should be evaluated differently than other teachers. Betty felt that it would be unfair for dual immersion teachers to be evaluated using standards that did not account for the differences between instructional programs, essentially saying that best practices vary. There are other similar statements throughout the data, indicating that the teachers perceived their work as both uniquely challenging and misunderstood by some of their colleagues and administrators.

PLC Work Conflicts with Dual Immersion Teachers' Beliefs/Identities

The final theme addressing the research questions was exemplified in the teachers' frequent expressions that they perceived their PLC work to be in conflict with some of their own core beliefs about teaching and language learning. During both meetings and interviews, the participants regularly intimated that PLC requirements conflicted with their identities as dual immersion teachers who held certain beliefs about best practices for language instruction. While this theme came through in statements from all four participants, the Spanish-focused teachers expressed this more frequently and passionately. For example, they shared that they felt devalued

due to the PLC emphasis on English data, that the focus on standardized testing undermined Spanish instruction, and that it was unfair to expect Spanish teachers to spend extra time creating or translating resources.

Discussions of standardized testing were particularly prevalent among the third grade PLC team, perhaps due to the high-stakes tests for their students. During one third grade PLC meeting, as the teachers discussed how to prepare students for the upcoming tests, Victoria voiced her opinions about these requirements, which spurred a challenge from a one-way immersion teacher. When this teacher suggested that Victoria spend time on English instruction (rather than her normal Spanish) in order to prepare her students for the standardized test, Victoria was adamant about maintaining her focus on Spanish, saying, "Yeah, but I'm tired of giving up Spanish. So I'm not doing it during reading. I'm not. I'm not doing it. I'm not taking any more reading time for doing English things or any other things." The other teacher asserted that helping the students to pass the high-stakes test should take precedence over Spanish instruction, and Victoria reiterated her opinion through an explicit identity statement, replying, "Yeah, but I'm a language teacher." This, coupled with Victoria's previous assertion that she would not sacrifice her Spanish instructional time to prepare students for a test, revealed her concerns about high-stakes testing resulted in the devaluation of Spanish instruction. She felt strongly that students in the dual immersion program benefitted from Spanish instruction and that denying them this in favor of English instruction to prepare for a standardized test was unfair to them and to her.

In addition to identity statements like Victoria's, in which she asserted herself as a teacher who cared about language instruction, the dual immersion teachers also identified as strong believers in best practices. Barbara, Betty, and Victoria explicitly stated that they "loved" the dual immersion model or that they were "passionate" about this kind of teaching and learning, particularly for the potential benefits to ELL students. In response to an interview question about Meadowview's programs for language instruction in the context of the entire district, Betty said, "Maybe I get, you know, I get too worried about it, too emotional about it and very passionate, because it's what I've always wanted to do. And it bothers me that other people don't share that passion for it and are not willing to do anything to, to change it." With this identity statement, Betty described herself as "emotional" and "passionate" when it came to dual immersion. This was a program she desperately wanted to succeed, but she feared that the emphasis on English assessment would impede its success. As Betty clarified here, she identified as a dual immersion teacher who wished that others in her school and district shared her passions. Additionally, as Betty stated frequently, she felt that the framework for PLC requirements did not align with best practices for dual immersion. She clearly believed that the program could be successful, and was willing to advocate for increased fidelity to research-based models for dual immersion instruction.

These examples from the data set illustrate how all of the participants discussed their roles as dual immersion teachers: they felt strongly that the dual immersion model could benefit ELL students, but they were frustrated with the obstacles they perceived in implementing dual immersion within the framework of district requirements, including the mandate for PLC collaboration.

Discussion

Examination of teachers' identities can be complex, since so many factors impact on their formation. Some of these factors may be evident in qualitative data collection and analysis, and some may be hidden from the observer in the research context. Like all teachers, these research participants have complicated and ever-evolving identities, which involve many factors, such as race, native language, and class, that could not be adequately explored in the scope of this paper. This discussion focuses on issues of teacher identity raised by the teachers in the contexts of teaching in the dual immersion program and collaborating with colleagues. This section elaborates on these findings, paying particular attention to how they may inform theory and scholarship on teacher identity formation and communities of practice.

Identity Development in Communities of Practice

For these participants, their identities as teachers were closely tied to their roles within the policy environment of their school. This was illustrated in the example of Victoria, who identified herself as a "language teacher" in the context of a disagreement during a PLC meeting. She asserted herself as a teacher who cared deeply about the quality of her instruction and about implementing best practices for dual immersion, in spite of externally imposed requirements that might conflict with the emphasis on Spanish. This is consistent with scholarship on identity theory in that the teachers' identities as dual immersion teachers were shaped not only by their unique work but also by their interactions with other educators in their PLC teams (Stets & Burke, 2000). Additionally, development of teacher identities for the dual immersion teachers also was taking place in the "spaces between" their communities of practice (Handley et al., 2006). If the PLC served as one community of practice for the teachers, as they began to identify more clearly as dual immersion teachers they seemed to be forming *another* community of practice around that role. This impacted the development of their identities. Here we see the potential for this kind of research to build on communities of practice theories. As Wenger (1998) suggested, ongoing identity formation for members of a community of practice may in turn affect that community's practice or other members, but it may also be instrumental in allowing members to branch off into *new* communities of practice. In the case of Meadowview's dual immersion teachers, there may be movement in this direction; as they worked in their PLC teams, their identities as dual immersion teachers came more sharply into focus and they began to recognize that their unique practice led them to concerns that could not adequately be addressed within their PLC teams.

In addition to explicit identity statements, the participants often shared identity statements that were more subtle; when Betty shared her feeling that she was "bother[ed] that others don't share [her] passion" for dual immersion instruction, she compared herself to educators outside of the dual immersion program. When they identified as dual immersion teachers in relation to their tasks of teaching and collaborating, they juxtaposed their teacher identities with those of their colleagues. This theme also emerged when the teachers discussed requirements for PLC work; for example, Betty told her teammates, "If I'm told that I need to do interventions in English, I will, I guess, because, you know, I wanna keep my job." This is another subtle example of how a teacher defined her identity: she had no control over some of the mandates that affected her work and realized that administrators could make decisions about these mandates and her continued

employment. Identity statements in both the foreground and background of the participants' comments were key to understanding how they responded to their roles and their work as dual immersion teachers and/or members of PLC teams.

Although the teachers were mandated to collaborate with their PLC teams, these meetings also provided spaces for teachers to enact and develop their identities among a variety of colleagues, and the communities of practice formed around the PLC teams were important to these processes. As Wenger (1998) theorized, varied levels of participation within and among communities of practice can impact an individual's identities. Although they were the only ones explicitly examined here, the PLC teams were not the only communities of practice in which the teachers were involved in this context, and in some ways the teachers' PLC interactions led to consideration of different communities of practice as more relevant for the dual immersion teachers.

However, the PLC structure was a significant starting point for these teachers to develop their identities as dual immersion teachers. One of trends among the findings reflected the dual immersion teachers' perceptions that they were uniquely situated and often misunderstood by other (non-dual immersion) teachers and some administrators. Their statements illustrated their sense that they felt distinct from one-way immersion teachers on their PLC teams, sometimes because of the differences between their students' backgrounds and their instructional approaches. Victoria explicitly shared her opinions on this during the interview, describing how becoming a dual immersion teacher had "changed [her] perspective." Because the teachers were mandated to collaborate on PLC teams that included all four teachers at their grade levels, dual immersion and one-way immersion teachers spending this time together each week may have helped the dual immersion teachers solidify this identity distinction for themselves. Trends in the coded data illustrated the prevalence of teachers' statements wherein they discussed differences between the one-way and dual immersion programs in instructional time, student characteristics, and evaluation concerns, and these comments occurred across the data set. Pointing out these distinctions through their identity statements, the participants may have been laying the groundwork for a community of practice centered on their common tasks and identities as dual immersion teachers. While a formalized community of practice for the dual immersion teachers did not yet exist at the time of this study, the beginnings of one were evident among the participants who shared common notions about their identities as dual immersion teachers.

Identity Development in Policy Implementation

Another way in which the findings illustrated the complexities of identity formation for these dual immersion teachers was related to their perceived levels of control in policy implementation processes. Trends among the findings revealed how the policies for dual immersion and PLC collaboration intersected and impacted teachers' identities. The dual immersion teachers, particularly those who served as PLC facilitators, felt that they were not fully in control of their PLC work. However, these feelings did not seem to stem from a lack of understanding about the purpose of a PLC. On the contrary, data from all participants included normative statements about the purpose and structure of an "ideal" PLC that were quite similar, perhaps reflecting a shared understanding of PLCs as teacher-led, data-driven, student-focused, collaborative, and reflective (Bryk et al., 1999; Hord, 2004). Furthermore, all the participants expressed the value

they perceived in PLCs where educators strived for the theoretical model of a true learning community. So if the teachers understood, at least theoretically, what a PLC should be, why did they so frequently express frustration and conflict of their identities with their PLC tasks?

The answer to this question lies in the complicated nature of this school's policy environment and also illustrates the various factors affecting the teachers' identities. Just because a teacher understands the theory behind a policy does not necessarily indicate that this teacher will feel capable of participating fully in its implementation, due to practical concerns arising from other policy demands. For example, Nora felt that she had failed to properly facilitate her PLC team, even though she expressed having "confidence" in previous experiences as a PLC facilitator. She attributed her perceived inadequacy as a PLC facilitator to her unfamiliarity with dual immersion, since this was her first year teaching in the dual immersion program and she did not have a background in dual immersion instruction. She believed that her lack of preparedness to fulfill the requirements of this role was not necessarily related to a lack of knowledge about PLCs, but was more about her inexperience with what PLCs should look like in this specific context and her lack of control over how to accomplish this. Although scholarship on PLCs asserts that they should be driven by supported and shared leadership (Hord 2004), it seemed clear that the teachers did not feel as if they had control over their PLC work. This could be due to the fact that PLCs at Meadowview were mandated through district-level policy, and that policy dictated that PLC work should focus on using data to identify struggling students and planning strategies to help them improve.

Thus, the teachers on PLC teams, who were meant to engage in work that would be meaningful for them, also understood that their PLC work had a very particular goal (improve student achievement) to be achieved in a very particular way (examining assessment data). This model does not reflect a true community of practice or even an ideal PLC, but more closely resembles a form of "contrived collegiality," in which collaboration does not occur naturally (Hargreaves, 1994). It is little wonder that the dual immersion teachers, and particularly those who were PLC facilitators, frequently identified themselves as subordinates, rather than managers of their own work, since they did not have much control over the processes or outcomes of their PLC collaboration.

While the dual immersion teachers seemed to view the policy to collaborate in PLC teams as a mandate over which they had very little control, they perceived the policy to implement dual immersion instruction in a slightly different way. The participants seemed to feel a powerful sense of ownership in relation to this policy, as evidenced by their identity statements with regard to their roles as dual immersion teachers. Although these findings also reflected that the teachers did not feel that they had any control over the structure of the dual immersion program, they did share strong opinions about how they believed the program could be improved to benefit ELL students. The teachers did not express the same kind of passion towards the policy for collaborating in PLCs; while they did share opinions on the value they perceived in PLCs, they did not regularly offer up ideas for improving this policy. Rather, it was often within the structure of the PLC team that the dual immersion teachers shared their passion for dual immersion, their desire for more focus on instruction in Spanish, and their beliefs that the dual immersion program should be altered to better serve ELL students. Whereas the dual immersion teachers engaged with the policy of PLC collaboration purely as implementers of a policy

mandate, they assumed a more active role in the policy cycle where the dual immersion program was concerned. Although they were implementing dual immersion as it had been structured by the school and district, they shared opinions during PLC meetings indicating that this policy should be re-examined and that their experiences and expertise could inform this process.

Relating the interaction of at least two policies (PLC collaboration and dual immersion instruction) back to the issue of teacher identities, the complexity of the processes of identity formation and negotiation for these teachers was revealed. What occurred among these teachers was reflective of what Sachs (2001) described as "competing discourses" around teacher identity: the "entrepreneurial identity" versus the "activist identity." One problem with classifying teachers as either "activist" or "entrepreneurial" relates to the fact that most schools, even ones like Meadowview with innovative approaches to instruction, are highly hierarchical in their organization. An "activist" teacher may regularly engage in democratic discourse and collaboration with his or her colleagues, but still be required to comply with certain policies, regardless of whether he or she believes them to be effective. This issue became clear when examining the teachers' identities as they worked in their PLC teams at Meadowview. As a result of all the complexities of their work, many of which were influenced by various policy initiatives, the dual immersion teachers exhibited aspects of each of these contradictory identities. In some ways, these teachers embraced the "entrepreneurial identity," as evidenced by their expressions of deference to the decisions of administrators. However, these teachers also exhibited characteristics of the "activist identity," since they valued the PLC norm of collaboration and demonstrated respect for their colleagues' concerns, sometimes lamenting that these were not equally valued by decision-makers. Furthermore, the teachers claimed to be "*passionate*" about dual immersion instruction, with a dedication to improving the program's quality at Meadowview. While these "competing discourses" around teacher identity described by Sachs (2001) were conceived as two opposing theories among scholars describing aspects of teacher identities, the notion that these two types of identities would intersect within the same individual could be more fully developed in future work. The findings here illustrated that, to some extent, these dual immersion teachers did struggle to assert their identities as both "entrepreneurial" and "activist," and factors related to implementation of various and intersecting policies were affecting their identity formation and negotiation processes.

Recommendations for Practice and Research

Like educators across many contexts, the dual immersion teachers at Meadowview were involved in a delicate balancing act, attempting to negotiate their roles in implementing several education policies that seemed to conflict with their identities. While one solution may not exist to the problem that this kind of policy conflict occurs in schools, the following section offers recommendations that may help alleviate some of the tensions that arose in this research.

Engaging Teachers in Policy Processes

For education leaders, engaging with teachers around issues of policy implementation in ways that reflect understanding of and ability to adapt to the unique contexts of their schools and classrooms is a good place to start. Previous policy research has shown that when educators have the space and power to take ownership over the policies that impact their work, these policies

may be more successfully implemented (Hamman & Lane, 2004; Levinson, Sutton & Winstead, 2009; Mantilla, 2001). The findings here reinforced these ideas; the dual immersion teachers experienced difficulties with implementing the dual immersion program and collaborating in their PLC teams, and reasons for their frustrations could be related back to their feelings of powerlessness with regard to both of these policy mandates. They lamented that they could not implement some of what they knew to be good practice for their ELL students within the dual immersion program because of constraints they perceived as created by the requirements of their PLC work. They did not feel that they had enough control in the implementation processes to allow them to make any changes that they deemed necessary to alleviate their frustrations.

So how can administrators begin to honor teachers' opinions and expertise in relation to their work as implementers of education policy, particularly when those policies are determined by higher level policymakers? The dual immersion teachers at Meadowview could have benefitted from the ability to adapt the policy for PLC collaboration to the context of their unique program. Meadowview followed the commonly used model in the district for the organization of elementary-level PLC teams: the classroom teachers at each grade level comprised the PLC for that grade level, usually with an addition of a "related arts" (P.E., art, music) teacher, who chose the PLC team in which he or she would participate. The findings suggested that the dual immersion teachers felt that it was difficult to collaborate productively with the one-way immersion teachers who served a different demographic of students in a distinct instructional program. Perhaps allowing for a model of PLCs based on a more natural community of practice for these teachers would help to alleviate some of these issues. Since the dual immersion teachers shared many of the same beliefs and opinions about their teaching, as well as the common task of dual immersion instruction, PLC teams could be organized with the instructional program in mind, rather than simply the grade levels. With a small change like this, teachers on PLC teams might be able to work together more effectively and benefit from the support of other dual immersion teachers who may share common concerns.

In relation to the policy for dual immersion instruction, one of the findings of this research was that the dual immersion teachers shared similar passions for teaching in the dual immersion program, but that they often felt constrained by the structure of the program when considering what would constitute an "ideal" dual immersion model. They frequently referred to what would be considered "best practice" for language instruction for ELL students, and these statements generally followed discussions of problems they perceived in the design of the dual immersion program at Meadowview. The problem, as the participants perceived it, was not that they were unaware of how a dual immersion program should be implemented, but that they did not feel that they had any agency in making decisions related to its implementation. Admittedly, some of the teachers' grievances with the dual immersion program were related to issues of accountability, and the requirement for all students (including ELL students) to achieve certain benchmarks on standardized tests is not likely to change anytime soon. However, there are some changes that could be implemented in the process of adopting policies that would allow for increased teacher input. For example, teachers involved in the implementation of a policy could engage with each other and with administrative decision-makers both before and during the process of adopting a policy, giving them the chance to provide valuable input based on their expertise. Of course, this recommendation is retrospective in this case; but it could apply to future decisions regarding policy modification or implementation of new instructional practices.

Valuing Process and Identity in Policy Research

While education policy research often focuses on tangible outcomes resulting from policy implementation, less attention has been paid to the ground-level policy processes and actors involved. Scholars have explored teachers' unique roles in implementation of certain policies, such as teacher leadership initiatives (Smylie & Denny, 1990), and others have highlighted the importance of examining how teachers make sense of education reform policies (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002). Through extensive observations and interviews of teachers involved with the implementation of two key education policies, this study probed educators' identities and experiences as they enacted their roles in relation to their policy environment. The research focused not on whether the teachers' collaboration in PLC teams or their implementation of dual immersion instruction led to improved student outcomes, but on how the educators conceptualized their roles in the interaction of the two policies. This kind of inquiry is important for policymakers to consider because it foregrounds the identities of the policy actors, acknowledges that education policy contexts are highly complex, and frames policy implementation as an ongoing process rather than linear steps taken toward a predetermined goal. While it may be useful to examine certain education policies based on measurable outcomes for students or teachers, exclusively focusing on these in education policy research ignores other factors that may impact and be impacted by the policy implementation process, including teachers' identities and perceptions of their own roles as policy actors. But why do these matter, and what can or should policy researchers do to value them?

First of all, as this study has illustrated, teachers' identities and perceptions of their roles in their school policy context influence how teachers engage in the work of policy implementation as well as with each other around this work. The teachers' formation and negotiation of identities related to their practice as dual immersion teachers and their PLC work, which involved reification of identity processes, all of which reflected scholarship on learning and identity as related to communities of practice (Lave, 1991; Wenger, 1998). The first and third grade dual immersion teachers at Meadowview had begun to shape teacher identities that centered on their roles as dual immersion or "*language*" teachers, and these identities influenced how they collaborated in their PLC teams. For example, one of the themes among the findings was that the participants felt that their PLC work conflicted with their identities as dual immersion teachers, as illustrated through Victoria's utterance wherein she stressed her preference not to "*[give] up Spanish*" in order to comply with the PLC mandate to prepare students for standardized tests. These identities were further complicated by teachers' understandings of their PLC work and whether or not they could exercise any control over the direction of this work. These insights revealed how the teachers engaged with and valued the policies they implemented, and these revelations emerged through multiple interactions with the participants, followed by careful analysis of their utterances.

This leads to the second question of how policy researchers can begin to value and utilize these kinds of understandings, and it begins with inviting more and more rigorous qualitative research into the policy arena. Spending time and energy learning about the experiences of educators involved in policy implementation can and should be a way for policy researchers to discover more about the unanticipated consequences of education policies. To illustrate, consider the policy for dual immersion instruction at Meadowview. A (hypothetical) quantitative study

examining test scores for ELL students in the dual immersion program as compared with ELL students in another school's traditional program may reveal that the policy did not bring about the desired changes; perhaps ELL students in dual immersion performed worse than their peers in traditional settings. However, what this data would fail to illuminate would be the outcomes related to teachers' attitudes toward and experiences of becoming dual immersion teachers. Findings from this qualitative study indicated that the dual immersion teachers were passionate about their work with ELL students in the dual immersion program, and this led them to critical reflection with their PLC teams about the quality of their instructional program. Thus, an unanticipated outcome of implementing dual immersion at Meadowview was a reexamination of the program as it was initially conceived, framed by the teachers' perceptions. The qualitative data revealed what the (hypothetical) quantitative data could not: that through implementing a dual immersion program, the teachers had begun to consider whether the policy as crafted aligned with both their understandings of best practice for language instruction and their identities as dual immersion teachers. For those who engage in policy research, this is an important finding to bear in mind; teachers who are tasked with implementing education policies often have significant reactions to and insights on those policies, which could be helpful for those who wish to improve upon policies already in place.

Conclusion

The phenomena examined here are complex and ever-evolving, subject to impacts from participants' participation in their school's policy environment, community contexts, and personal factors. Thus, it is hard to conceive of research like this with any sense of finality, because the policy and identity negotiation processes are both renewed and ongoing each year, as educators adapt to new contexts and concerns. Shifting student demographics, innovative instructional and collaborative practices, and an increased focus on accountability affect not only decisions about policy adoption, but also the practices of those involved in policy implementation. Although some themes that emerged from this research did reveal problematic aspects of Meadowview's implementation of dual immersion instruction and professional learning communities from the perspectives of the dual immersion teachers, other themes provided reasons for hope that these issues could be resolved. While this study may be limited in that the experiences of only a small group of educators in one unique school were under investigation, implications emerged that could inform educational leadership practices and policy research. Included among these are a call for more teacher agency in policy adoption and appropriation processes, more rigorous qualitative research on the impacts of education policies on teachers' work and identities, and a more refined focus on how policy actors, particularly teachers, perceive their roles in policy processes. For those of us involved both in preparing future education leaders and in the evaluation of the policies that will impact their work, this kind of research illustrates the importance of multi-faceted approaches to policy analysis that privilege the voices and identities of the teachers who must daily negotiate the complex landscape of a school policy environment.

Author Notes
Colleen Chesnut is a Research Associate at the Center for Evaluation & Education Policy (CEEP) at Indiana University School of Education, Bloomington.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Colleen Chesnut at cechesnu@indiana.edu

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