LESSONS FROM THE MAYAWEST WRITING PROJECT: A CASE STUDY OF AN ENGLISH TEACHER

by

Nataly Rodríguez González

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Approved by:

_____ _____
Rosita Rivera, PhD   Date
Member, Graduate Committee

_____ _____
Catherine Mazak, PhD   Date
Member, Graduate Committee

_____ _____
Kevin S. Carroll, PhD   Date
President, Graduate Committee

_____ _____
Keith Wayland, PhD   Date
Graduate Studies Representative

_____ _____
Kevin S. Carroll, PhD   Date
Chairperson of the Department

ABSTRACT

The focus of this case study is to examine the results of a teacher's participation in a teacher-run organization. The mixed method approach to this case study documents the practices of an English teacher who participated in the Mayawest Writing Project (MWWP) and one of her eighth grade groups. The study examines the lesson demonstrations from the MWWP Summer Institute 2010 introduced into the classroom, along with how the teacher perceived the approaches learned improved her teaching. Finally, the study seeks to shed light on how such lessons influence students' perceptions of their English class. The results show that the participant did indeed incorporate lessons from the MWWP into her curriculum on a weekly basis and that these lessons generated positive results. Furthermore, students enjoyed certain MWWP lessons, but disliked specific practices characteristic of the MWWP. The data also points to a variety of external factors and factors in the classroom that affected the teaching and learning processes, consequently hindering the effectiveness of the MWWP lessons.

RESUMEN

Este estudio busca examinar los resultados consecuentes a la participación de una maestra en una organización de maestros. Los métodos mixtos utilizados en el estudio documentan las prácticas de una maestra de inglés participante del Mayagüez Writing Project (MWWP) y uno de sus grupos de octavo grado. El estudio examina las clases tomadas del instituto de verano 2010 del MWWP, junto con cómo la maestra percibe y considera que dichas clases mejoraron su enseñanza. Finalmente, el estudio busca informar sobre cómo tales clases influencian las percepciones de los estudiantes sobre su clase de inglés. Los resultados muestran que la participante semanalmente incorporó actividades y prácticas del MWWP a su currículo, y que dichas clases generaron resultados positivos. En adición, según la data colectada, los estudiantes disfrutaron de ciertas clases del MWWP, pero sintieron disgusto con ciertas prácticas características del MWWP. La data colectada señala hacia una variedad de factores externos e internos del salón de clases que afectaron los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje, como consecuencia afectando negativamente la efectividad de las clases tomadas del MWWP.

DEDICATION

To Nathaniel David Rodríguez, Elías David Rodríguez, and Sofía Jolie Guerrero

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The specific objective of this case study is to explore the benefits, if any, of a teacher who participated in a teacher-run organization. For this specific study, the focus will be on one participant of the Mayawest Writing Project (MWWP) who is an English language teacher in an eighth grade classroom in western Puerto Rico. For the purpose of this study, teacher-run organizations have been characterized as structured programs that aim to prepare and empower educators to change their way of teaching with the purpose of complementing and/or responding to the top-down regulations decreed by institutional governing bodies, such as frameworks and curricula. I was interested in learning how a program like the MWWP might impact the empowerment of a language teacher, her teaching practices, and her students' learning in an English classroom in a Puerto Rican public school.

The MWWP has been identified as a teacher-run organization, and as a potential grassroots teacher organization in the future, because of its focus on teachers teaching teachers by exchanging the top-down model with a bottom-up school reform approach. Currently, the MWWP is supported by federal funding but it is in danger of losing all external funding. If this occurs, the administrators and teacher consultants from the MWWP will be challenged with the task of raising funds to keep the program running. If the participants of the MWWP manage to run the program without external funds, it would make the teacher-run organization a true grassroots organization run solely by the hard work of the teachers.

I had the opportunity, in 2010, to participate in a summer institute of the MWWP which is part of the federally funded National Writing Project (NWP). The focus of this organization, and of the NWP, is for teachers to teach other teachers with the purpose of expanding the array of strategies for teaching writing the experienced teacher participants come in with. The

MWWP focuses on the improvement of teaching writing across grade levels and disciplines. It also provides lesson ideas for oral development opportunities.

The MWWP hosts school orientations, daylong open institutes, and summer institutes that take place on an annual basis. Upon completion of the annual summer institute, teachers are referred to as teacher consultants (TCs). Throughout the subsequent years after the summer institute, TCs offer lesson demonstrations to teachers in both in-school and out of school workshops. For this case study the focus is on a single teacher participant of one summer institute because the summer institutes are the most intense and direct teacher development activity offered by the project. The English teacher was selected as the participant because the aim of the study was to discover the benefits of a teachers' grassroots organization in a language classroom. From this point on in the document, the English teacher will be referred to by the pseudonym Isabella. Observations were conducted of one of her eighth grade classrooms and of her implementation of MWWP lessons to her teaching. These observations lasted three months. In addition to the observations, interviews were conducted with Isabella and a survey was administered to the eighth graders observed.

The objective of this study was to learn how, in what way, and how often Isabella incorporated lessons learned in the MWWP SI 2010 into her curriculum. Moreover, there was a specific interest in how the students perceived the implementation of these lessons and how they impacted their learning. In addition to understanding the impact of the summer institute on daily activities, my goal in this study was to uncover Isabella's views and opinions. I was interested to learn how she considered being a part of the organization helped her in the act of teaching and how her participation might have improved her students' language learning.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives and goals stated for the case study, a series of three research questions were constructed. These questions were designed to reflect the context of study and are framed within a language-as-a-resource orientation (Ruiz, 1988), keeping in mind the goal of critical educational theory. My questions for this research are the following:

1. How is the teacher incorporating lessons and/or materials created in the MWWP into her curriculum?

2. How does she perceive the MWWP approaches as working to improve the teaching of language in an eighth grade English classroom in northwestern Puerto Rico?

3. How do students perceive the MWWP approaches used in the classroom?

These research questions were designed to optimize the chances of being answered successfully with the analysis of the information and data gathered from the various forms of data. Given the fact that the focus of this study is on the MWWP and its implementation in an eighth grade English class, the questions were designed in a manner answerable solely by the case study conducted.

Document preview

For the second chapter of this document the literature that serves to inform this study is discussed. Its purpose is to understand the context in which this study was conducted and by extension Puerto Rico's socio-historical context. The many changes in language instruction policies are described, as these decisions have had a direct effect on language instruction on the island. Following these is the explanation of the theory and language orientation that serve as my theoretical framework. Lastly, previous studies are discussed. These studies were conducted outside of Puerto Rico and have served to inform my study because of their similarity and support of teacher-run organizations and grassroots movements in education, critical education

theory and the language-as-a-resource orientation. The chapter concludes with a description of the teacher-run organization I focus on for my case study, the MWWP.

The third chapter of this document covers the methodology used to collect the data for the case study. Based on the objectives and goals proposed, and the three research questions for the study, a combination of three data collection tools was selected: observations, questionnaires, and interviews. In the methodology chapter each method, and how I made use of them, is explained. The participants of the study are discussed, as well as who contributed to which data collection method. For instance, it is explained how the secondary level English teacher and one of her eighth grade classes were part of the observation process, how the teacher underwent two interviews and how the students answered questionnaires.

The fourth chapter of this document focuses on the data collected. It is organized in a way that chronologically represents the data collection process. First, the observation process is discussed, followed by the interviews, and lastly the questionnaires answered by students. In the observation section, a description of Isabella's typical routine in the classroom is provided along with highlights of different lessons that were specifically learned in the MWWP SI 2010. For the interviews, it is first stated what Isabella was asked, and then her answers are provided. Regarding the questionnaires, the students' answers are provided in the percentages of students' responses, and for the open-ended questions, quotes of students' answers are included.

The fifth and final chapter focuses on the discussion and analysis of the data collected by means of observation, the questionnaires administered to the students, and interviews done with the English teacher. In this chapter, the type of teacher Isabella appears to be and the specific qualities she possesses that make her a good educator are first discussed. I move on to identify the factors outside and inside her classroom that directly affect her teaching and explain how

they came up in the data collected. The chapter also includes the MWWP lessons that were used in the eighth grade classroom, and how both Isabella and the students interpreted these new activities introduced into the classroom. Finally, how these lessons were implemented is discussed, from the planning, organization, execution, and outcome and how they relate to relevant literature related to teacher-run and grassroots organizations.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature and Theoretical framework

Working within a language-as-a-resource (Ruiz 1988) orientation and framed in critical educational theory, a case study has been planned and conducted to discover the benefits in language instruction that might result from public school teachers participating in teachers-run organizations. Specific attention and study has been put on the Mayawest Writing Project (MWWP), a teacher-run organization in Puerto Rico with the potential of becoming a grassroots organization, devoted to helping educators improve the teaching of writing in all subjects. However, in order to understand the participant as well as the context in which this study was conducted it is essential to identify Puerto Rico's language situation and review the island's socio-historical context.

Puerto Rico has been a colony of the United States since the conclusion of the Spanish-American War in 1898. In addition to describing the socio-historical context of the island, in this chapter the many changes in language instruction policies are explained, as these decisions have had a direct effect on language instruction on the island.

Previous studies conducted outside of Puerto Rico, such as Warner (2001) and Moll and Diaz (1987), have served to inform this study and support the viewpoint of the language-as-a-resource orientation proposed by Ruiz (1988). Throughout this chapter I will discuss this influential research and conclude with an explanation of teacher-run and grassroots organizations and how they have been used in contexts outside of Puerto Rico to improve education.

Socio-historical context

To frame this study in its appropriate context, it is crucial to review the historical background regarding the teaching of English on the island. In 1898, the "American occupation began [and] the political relations of Porto Rico with Spain were at an end" (Carroll, 1975). Shortly thereafter English was introduced as the medium of instruction in Puerto Rico's public school system with

the primary purpose of Americanizing Puerto Ricans. Just as political leaders in the United

States utilized the teaching of English as a means to achieve their goal of Americanization,

Puerto Rican political leaders did the same with the Spanish language for their own political

gain. As Algren de Gutierrez (1987) summarizes:

> Puerto Rican leaders, motivated by political reasons, used the issue of language to
> advance the cause of political autonomy thus fostering the conception of language
> as a symbol of national identity which has led to a climate of competition between
> Spanish and English on the Island (p.1).

The movement to attempt to Americanize Puerto Ricans through the teaching of English in

public schools was strong, as well as the movement *against* the teaching of English in Puerto

Rico (Algren de Gutierrez, 1987). Political leaders used Spanish and English for political

purposes; an example of this being the Puerto Rican leader Epifanio Fernandez-Vanga and his

rhetoric against the teaching of English in Puerto Rico (Algren de Gutierrez, 1984). He used

language as an identity symbol, claiming that for Puerto Ricans, Spanish was their souls. He

viewed bilingualism as a curse that made individuals intellectually and spiritually handicapped

(Algren de Gutierrez, 1987). As a consequence, Puerto Ricans began perceiving language as a

political matter, and just as the political leaders did, they too chose sides.

Currently, a number of Puerto Ricans are still choosing sides while others are unsure

because of the insecurity that somehow by learning English they are, in a sense, betraying their

Hispanic heritage, while simultaneously, not learning English could limit their potential for

socioeconomic mobility (Schweers & Velez, 1992; Pousada, 2000; Nickels, 2005). In some

aspects, mixed feelings about English in Puerto Rico are still reflected because although "English

enjoys great prestige among Puerto Ricans" (Schweers & Velez 1992, p.24), there is still

indecision as to learning English. Therefore, because of the movement against the teaching of

English, some Puerto Ricans, although certainly not all, still reflect and act upon sentiments of

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the resistance towards English in defense of Spanish as an identity marker. Furthermore, some Puerto Ricans view language as linked to specific political parties and for that reason reject the English language in the attempt to reject the pro-statehood party.

Morris' (1995) study used interviews with Puerto Ricans regarding the subject of language in Puerto Rico. Similarly, Solís analyzed participants' answers to Morris' interviews and found that "the articulations forwarded by different political perspectives […] resonate repetitiously, locking the different perspectives in a kind of safe-house of political rhetoric, unable or unwilling to elaborate the meanings and logic of the positions taken" (2000, p.167). In other words, Puerto Ricans questioned about language on the island gave answers that expressed ambiguities in islanders' thoughts and perceptions regarding the relationship between English and Spanish.

Because of Puerto Rico's colonial history, the island has witnessed numerous changes in policies concerning the language used as the medium of instruction in the public educational system. From 1898 to 1949 there were changes in these policies on numeral occasions. Godoy et al. (2006) articulated the different policies during ten periods of time, summarized in the following table.

Year	Language Policy
1493 to 1898	Spanish was the medium of instruction.
1898 to 1900	English as the medium of instruction in all grades, with Spanish taught as a subject.
1900 to 1905	In elementary grades (1-8), Spanish as the medium of instruction and English taught as a subject. In high school (9-12), English as the medium of instruction with Spanish taught as a subject.
1905 to 1916	English as the medium of instruction in all grades; Spanish taught as a subject.
1916-1934	Spanish and English alternate as subject and the language of instruction. The first four grades (1-4) use Spanish as the language of instruction, fifth grade serves as the transition grade with half the subjects taught in Spanish and half in English and from grades 6 through 12 English is the medium of instruction.

1934 to 1937	In elementary grades (1-8), Spanish as the medium of instruction and English taught as a subject. In high school (9-12), English as the medium of instruction with Spanish taught as a subject.
1937 to 1942	Spanish is the language of instruction in 1st and 2nd grade with English as a subject. From 3rd grade to 8th grade both Spanish and English are used for instruction in varying subjects. In high school (9-12), English becomes the medium of instruction with Spanish as a subject.
1942- 1945	Spanish as the medium of instruction in elementary school (1-6) and English in secondary school (7-12).
1945- 1949	Gradual transition to Spanish instruction in all grades.
1949-present	Spanish is the official language of instruction in all levels of Puerto Rican public schools, with English taught as a preferred subject.

In response to the numerous changes in language policies in Puerto Rico, Godoy et al. (2002) states that:

> the use of language policy to achieve political ends has produced a stalemate on language policies, which has made it difficult to change the school curriculum to improve the quality of English instruction and, thus, expand the share of Puerto Ricans proficient in English (p. 17).

Hence, according to Godoy and colleagues, the top down model attempting to improve Puerto Rican proficiency in English by changing the language teaching policies has been relatively ineffective.

Currently, public schools and public school English teachers are required to follow a series of documents stipulated by the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE). These documents are the Curricular Framework, the Content Standards and Grade-Level Expectations, and circular letters. The Curricular Framework's purpose is to establish the philosophical principles of each study program for all grade levels. It is not a curriculum per se, but it provides general recommendations for the curriculum design. The Content Standards and Grade-Level Expectations cover the areas that should be taught in each grade level for the specific literacy skills of listening and speaking, reading, and writing. Circular letters, on the other hand, establish instructions to be followed by the PRDE personnel regarding all educational aspects. The PRDE

website provides a circular letters section. In this section more than a hundred and thirty circular letters can be found, ranging in topic from federal funding, use of technological materials, teacher certification, teachers' school transfer and replacement to the shutting down of schools.

Language as a resource orientation

In the following section the theoretical framework for which this research is couched will be discussed. One of the primary premises of this research builds on the notion that languages used and brought into the classroom should be seen as a resource, as argued by Ruiz (1988). It is my understanding that the view of language as a resource orientation coincides with the vision and mission of the Mayawest Writing Project and it thus forms one of the primary pillars of my theoretical lens through which I conduct this research.

The notion of a language-as-a-resource orientation was originally developed by Thompson (1973) and further elaborated by Ruiz's (1988) call for the articulation of a new language orientation. Before proposing a new one, Ruiz mentions two existing language orientations, which are language-as-problem and language-as-right. According to Ruiz (1988), language policy planners with a language-as-problem orientation will create policies with the sole purpose of solving language problems, for example, economic disadvantage. On the other hand, a language-as-right orientation is found in movements which "advocate consideration of language as a basic right" (Ruiz, 1988, p.10), for example, the protection of minority languages and their use for mother tongue instruction.

While language-as-right and language-as-problem orientations are prevalent ways in which people view language, Ruiz proposes a different language orientation that frames language issues and develops positive language attitudes, which could "[alleviate] some of the conflicts emerging out of the other two orientations" (Ruiz, 1988, p.15). These ideas lead Ruiz to suggest the consideration of a language-as-resource orientation, which he defines as a

language orientation that focuses on enhancing the language status of subordinate languages, and might help ease tension between majority and minority languages.

I agree with Ruiz's claim that, "a fuller development of a resources-oriented approach to language planning could help reshape attitudes about language and language groups" (1988, p.16). It is thus my belief that the particular case of Puerto Rico could benefit from a language-as-Resource orientation in regards to attitudes about English and what it represents to master the language. "Language-as-resource acknowledges the importance of majority and minority languages in the social, educational, and economical spheres of the modern world, and it is concerned with language development as well as conservation of existing languages" (Jasso-Aguilar 1999, p.10). Therefore, this orientation fits Puerto Rico's case because it recognizes the benefits that come with learning a second language and promotes second language acquisition and first language maintenance, in contrast to language orientations that view language teaching with a language as a problem orientation.

Critical educational theory

It has been suggested that language instruction in Puerto Rico has been affected as a result of language being linked to political matters, and of the several changes in language teaching policies (Godoy 2002). Politics and top-down policies have had salient influences on education. Such policies are the driving impetus to examine the effectiveness of more bottom up approaches to education. Such approaches, which have been identified as teacher-run organizations for purpose of this study, might play an important role in the improvement of the teaching of language in Puerto Rico, as a way of combating or at least neutralizing forceful top-down policies. Instead of solely relying on the curricular framework stipulated by the Department of Education, this research serves to examine how beneficial it might be if teachers

participate in teacher organizations and are able to incorporate into the existing curriculum innovative activities and lessons. Thus the extent to which participation in a program like the Mayawest Writing Project Summer Institute has had a positive impact on the language instruction of one participant is analyzed and evaluated in this study.

One of the objectives in conducting this research is to trigger change for the benefit of Puerto Rican students. I hope to promote change in the way new lessons and activities are introduced in the language classroom. I am under the impression that if more Puerto Ricans have the opportunity to learn a second language, this could potentially reduce issues of inequality on the island, because as Schweers and Hudders (2000) conclude, "the average Puerto Rican needs and benefits from a knowledge of English" (p. 70). When all new policies concerning the teaching of language come from top down regulations, teachers potentially feel limited in how much they can contribute to a positive change regarding the way language is taught. In other words, teachers might feel disempowered, potentially negatively affecting their teaching.

The goal of inciting change coincides with critical educational theory in which this research is rooted. Cohen et al. (2000) described this approach toward impacting social change when they wrote:

> Its intention [critical education theory] is not merely to give an account of society and behaviour but to realize a society that is based on equality and democracy for all its members. Its purpose is not merely to understand situations and phenomena but to change them. In particular it seeks to emancipate the disempowered, to redress inequality and to promote individual freedoms within a democratic society (p. 28).

Because the primary goal of the MWWP is to use writing across content areas to promote a more informed and equitable society and it was founded by local educators, it can be considered an example of the teacher-run organizations that I hoped to examine in this study. The project reflects critical pedagogy traits in that it is "an ambitious entity that seeks nothing less than a

form of educational adventurism that takes us where nobody's gone before" (Kincheloe, 2008, p.4). The MWWP promotes change by providing teachers with new teaching strategies to introduce in their classroom for the improvement of writing. While the MWWP operation promotes change, it also empowers teachers to make decisions over the curriculum to modify and improve it for the benefit of the students.

Critical educational theory is a paradigm that questions the legitimacy of both the powerless and powerful. Relying on this paradigm, my research looks to discover to what extent the MWWP provides the tools for teachers' self-empowerment.

Relationship of study with related research

There have not been specific studies done in Puerto Rico in which teacher-run and grassroots teacher organizations have been evaluated to verify the impact they might have on language teaching. Nevertheless, there are studies conducted outside of Puerto Rico, in which language as a resource orientations and an emphasis on critical education have been used. Such examples of these are the cases of (1) the movement to revitalize Hawaiian, (2) the change of instructional conditions, by using the students' resources, and (3) grassroots movements that have been successful in the improvement of the quality of education.

Hawaii's historical background has similarities to Puerto Rico's in the sense that both nations became territories of the United States and eventually English was used as the medium of instruction in the public school system. In contrast to Puerto Rico's case, Hawaii suffered "a rapid decline in strength and prestige of the Hawaiian language and culture" (Sato, 1991 as cited by No'eau Warner, 2001, p.133). This historic shift away from Hawaiian has motivated the Hawaiian people to attempt to revitalize their language. Such language revitalization has been spurred by an organization called the Kula Kaiapuni which is attempting to revitalize the language by creating a Hawaiian language immersion school curriculum (No'eau Warner, 2001).

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This movement follows the language as a resource orientation because it provides "an opportunity for Hawaiian students to learn their language, culture, stories, and histories" (No'eau Warner, 2001, p.143). Such language teaching and learning is viewed as additive bilingualism whereby the learning of Hawaiian does not threaten English, but works to instill Hawaiian identity among the participants in the program.

Another study that serves to inform this research is Moll and Díaz's (1987) study on the change of instruction strategies in minority students' schools in San Diego. Their study was based on the notion that the instruction strategies used in the two classrooms observed were constraining students and teachers' accomplishment and possibilities. The studies were conducted in two different classes; a writing class and a reading class. Both classes were made up of Spanish speaking Latino students who were learning English as a second language. For the reading class the researchers intervened by permitting students to react to the story read in class for class discussion in Spanish. This was done to evaluate comprehension since students would struggle when discussing in English the material read in class. Moll and Díaz labeled this strategy as "'bilingual communicative support' in comprehending English" (1987, p.306). This case is a noteworthy example of language being used as a resource for education. For the writing class the goal was for students to write for communication (Moll and Díaz, 1987). To measure this, the teacher participant followed the researchers' suggestion and assigned students to write about issues in their community. In this case, the teacher participant changed their approach for the teaching of writing by making the lesson relevant for the students. These changes produced "important changes in performance" (Moll and Díaz, 1987, p.309). The actions described in Moll and Diaz's study are very similar to the MWWP goals of improving writing, while at the same

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time making lessons and activities relevant for students, to cause positive changes in students' performance.

A study of four grassroots groups organizing for high quality education done by Oaks, Rogers, Blasi, and Lipton (2008) concludes that establishing high quality education as a right requires the intervention of grassroots groups. The four examples of grassroots movements provided in the study were successful in the improvement of the quality of education in the U.S. This research serves to inform my study since the MWWP is a teacher-run organization run by and for educators, with the potential of becoming a grassroots movement program. However, it is important to note that the movements presented in Oaks et al. (2008) study were led by activists, in contrast to the MWWP, which is an organization that targets leaders within schools to participate in the Summer Institute and then go back to their schools and spread the change via workshops and other professional development in their schools and community.

Oaks et al (2008) stresses the important role grassroots movements' play in pushing the issue for quality education to be a legal right. They conclude that "establishing education as a fundamental right requires social movement activism" (p. 2). Oaks et al. (2008) state, that "unlike conventional technical improvements of education reform, social movement activism addresses the resistance to equity reforms that arises when status is jeopardized" (p. 352). Therefore, grassroots movements can create a resistance towards what benefits only a few, and promote laws, and in the case of the MWWP, educational strategies that benefit the vast majority. In the case of Puerto Rico, I am interested in a type of social movement that takes action by empowering teachers, and not on the type that focuses on protest. The work of empowering teachers, I believe, complements the MWWP mission and vision and therefore is

one of the pillars of this research. The next section will more fully describe the history and purpose of the MWWP as it is known today.

The Mayawest Writing Project

The MWWP from the UPR in Mayaguez was initiated in 2008 and directed by Dr. Ellen Pratt from the English Department. The MWWP follows the National Writing Project's (NWP) mission and objectives. One objective is to prepare teachers of all levels to apply what they learn during an intense summer institute to become better teachers of writing in their own classrooms. Another objective is to prepare teachers to become competent consultants who will serve as supporters and advisers for best practices in literacy instruction in their regions and areas (Pratt, 2010).

The NWP, founded by James Gray and colleagues in 1974, started as the Bay Area Writing Project (Gray, 2000). The idea grew out of the genuine concern for the teaching of writing in Bay Area of California and the deficiencies in writing showed by first year U.C. Berkley students. The initial and current focus of the project is on "teacher to teacher exchanges, teachers coming together to frequently to talk about what they were doing" (Gray, 2000, p.50), teacher demonstrations being the "number one heart" of the project. The Bay Area Writing Project fomented an atmosphere of appreciation and recognition between academics and teachers, and for both "the Bay Area Writing Project model managed to reverse the top-down, voice-from-Olympus model of so many past universities efforts at school reform" (Gray, 2000, p.56).

At the beginning of the NWP, there were both trials and tribulations, but after two consecutive years of success, the potential to expand was noticed and addressed. When the project reached a fourteenth site, a national network had been established and it became the

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National Writing Project. Today, the Mayawest Writing Project is one of two NWP sites in Puerto Rico, and one of the 200 NWP sites around the nation.

The Mayawest Writing Project's specific goals are to develop a team of teachers within the public school system, from levels K-12 and all subject areas, to become experts in the teaching of writing and in the training of other teachers in this area. Because Puerto Rico has two official languages, both Spanish and English are both utilized in the program. The development of teachers is done through teachers' participation in an intense, three to four week, summer institute. The summer institute requires working with experienced teacher trainers by providing theoretical knowledge about teaching writing and intense practice in developing their own writing skills.

Summer institutes are approximately four weeks long and usually held at the UPR Mayagüez's facilities. The goals of MWWP summer institutes are based on the premise that writing is crucial for learning in all subjects, and that reading and writing reinforce literacy skills and need to be taught together (Nagin 2006 as cited in the 1st MWWP grant proposal). The writing experiences provided to teachers by the summer institutes range from creative to professional, covering a variety of writing genres. Participants in the institute are required to write three main pieces, and give a demonstration presentation on a successful strategy they have used in their classroom.

Once the summer institute is completed, the teachers become teacher consultants (TCs). TCs participate in monthly continuity meetings throughout the school year to share their experience and continue their professional development. During these meetings teachers continue practicing their writing, and new demonstration presentations on successful writing lessons are given. Furthermore, new follow-up projects and activities are planned and discussed

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during these meetings. Some follow-up activities have consisted of daylong institutes and school demonstration presentations. Day-long institutes offer a variety of demonstration presentations given by TCs, and are targeted toward teachers and students in teacher preparation programs. School demonstration presentations consist of TCs presenting their teaching writing lessons in different schools that request it. TCs have also been hired by partnering schools, both public and private, where visits to local schools allows TCs to further spread the knowledge they learned in the summer institute.

Summary

Throughout this chapter, Puerto Rico's socio-historical has been discussed, describing how actions and decisions taken by our predecessors have affected the teaching of language on the island. The connection between language and political parties along with Puerto Rican identity has meant numerous changes in language policies affecting Puerto Ricans' perception of Spanish and English. In order to combat the traditional view of language-as-a-problem orientation, the use of what Ruiz (1988) referred to as a language-as-resource orientation has been proposed. This positive view of bilingualism is seen through the lens of critical educational theory, whereby it has been suggested that problematic top down policies can be remedied by the rise of teacher-run organizations such as the Mayawest Writing Project. Despite the void in studies focused on research about teacher-run organizations and education focused grassroots movements on the island, a brief explanation of different studies informing this research was provided. The studies ranged from the attempt to revitalize Hawaiian in Hawaii to the alteration of instructional procedures by using local knowledge and mother tongue instruction. In the next chapter the methodology and the process of analyzing the data of the study will be discussed.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The objectives of this study are to discover if there are any benefits in a language classroom when the teacher introduces writing lessons learned from a teacher-run organization. The case study is focused on Isabella[1], a teacher participant of the MWWP Summer Institute 2010. To complement the study of this teacher, one of her classes has been identified to observe and poll students on the success of the teacher's lessons. With the use of the data collecting tools, the goal is to discover how the MWWP lessons were implemented, and how they were aligned with the Department of Education's curriculum.

Based on the objectives and goals previously stated, and the three research questions for this case study, I decided on a combination of three data collection tools: observations, questionnaires, and interviews. For the observations, Isabella, a secondary level teacher, and one of her eighth grade classes were observed. In addition to the observations, two different interviews were conducted with the teacher. The students, in addition to being observed, participated in the study by answering two different questionnaires. Thus, the research questions for this research are the following:

1. How is the teacher incorporating lessons and/or materials created in the MWWP into her curriculum?

2. How does she perceive the MWWP approaches as working to improve the teaching of language in an eighth grade English classroom in northwestern Puerto Rico?

3. How do students perceive the MWWP approaches used in the classroom?

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[1] All names used in this thesis are pseudonyms chosen by the author

Methodology

      For this research, qualitative and quantitative research methods were combined. Both types of research provided benefits to this study, and I was able to take advantage of this by merging them. The qualitative methods used were observations through the collection of field notes, as well as semi-structured interviews with the teacher participant. The quantitative method used came in the form of two questionnaires that were administered to the students in the eighth grade section observed. By using three methods for the data collection, the study's validity and reliability was increased through triangulation. Triangulation is defined by Cohen et al (2003) as combining two or more methods of data collection to attempt to explain more fully the richness and complexity of human behavior, using both quantitative and qualitative data.

      The type of research I conducted is considered a qualitative case study. Merriam (1998) defines qualitative case studies as the "intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 27). The study's case was of Isabella, an English language teacher and participant of the MWWP and on her eighth grade classroom meeting from 7:15- 8:05am (the first class of the day).

      A qualitative case study approach was chosen because of its detailed and descriptive nature. Such case studies can be characterized as particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic (Merriam 1998). A particularistic case study is characterized when the focus of the research is on a particular situation, event, program or phenomenon; descriptive is when the focus of the research is providing a rich, thick description of the case under study; and a heuristic study provides understanding and discovery about the case under study. The study touched on all three characterizations, but the focus was that of heuristic style, since its purpose was to explain why an innovation worked or failed to work (Olson 1982 as cited by Merriam, 1998).

Research site

The school used for the study was a public school in a town in western Puerto Rico. This school is starting in the fall semester of 2010, on an interlocking schedule, meaning that the school serves intermediate grades during the morning (seventh, eighth, and ninth) and high schools grades during the afternoon (tenth, eleventh, and twelve). The school is run under admirable conditions as it is noticeably kept clean and in order. The intermediate school principal seemed very much engaged in school activities, as well as in making sure teachers provide excellent classes. To assure this, he regularly paid visits to the classrooms. In addition, during the time of the observations, there were frequent activities involving the school and the community, for which teachers and students were encouraged by the school administration to participate.

Participants

The focus of this case study was on Isabella, an eighth grade English teacher in a public school in Puerto Rico. Her group was composed of twenty eight students, twelve girls and sixteen boys. Among the students, there were several with special needs. Isabella worked by herself, except for one instructional aid assigned to one of the special need students.

Isabella was chosen because of her participation in the MWWP SI 2010, and her ongoing active participation in continuity meetings and activities related to the program. The participants of the MWWP SI 2010 were composed of five UPRM teaching assistants, two art teachers, one math teacher, one Spanish teacher, two history teachers, a kindergarten teacher, a librarian, and three English teachers. Out of the three English teachers, one was a teacher at a private bilingual school where she taught science, math, and English. Another was unemployed at the moment, and the third one (Isabella) was a secondary level teacher in the public school system. Even though the MWWP welcomes teachers from all subjects, Isabella was chosen because she was

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the only MWWP SI 2010 participant appropriate for this study because of the study's focus on

language instruction policies regarding Puerto Rico's public school system. Thus the goal was to

observe an English teacher's implementation of the English curriculum stipulated by the

Department of Education and to examine in which ways she was able to complement the

curriculum with lessons and activities acquired from the MWWP program.

Methods

As was stated earlier, the research was mixed method in nature, for the purpose of

creating a holistic and descriptive account of the impact that the MWWP has had on one

particular English teacher. In order to do so the research methods were partitioned into three

primary areas: observations, interviews, and questionnaires.

Observations

Throughout the fall 2010 academic semester, I observed Isabella's first section of eighth

grade English twice a week for three months and for an additional month during the spring 2011

semester. The specific type of observations conducted were characterized as unstructured

observations, given the fact that I had no guidelines for the observations, but instead was

interested in "[seeking] to catch the dynamic nature of events, to seek intentionally, and to seek

large trends and patterns over time" (Cohen, 2000, p.306). Those patterns identified were used to

create flexible guidelines for the continuation of the observations scheduled in January 2011. To

collect the data observed, a journal was used to write the field notes. Each journal page was

divided in two vertical columns; the column on the left was used to write only observations, and

the column on the right was used to document my interpretations of my observations.

The continued observations during the spring 2011 semester were not classified as

unstructured observations, but as semi-structured, in the sense that I had "an agenda of issues but

[gathered] data to illuminate these issues in a far less pre-determined or systematic manner"

(Cohen 2000, p. 306). The last month of observations, I did not take notes of all that took place in the classroom, as I had done with the first three months of observations. During this final period of observations I paid close attention to previously observed events to confirm whether or not my observations were reoccurring or unique events.

Throughout the observations, my desire was to assume a complete participant, or participant-as-observer role, but I anticipated this would be difficult, due to the fact that I was an outsider to the classroom. For the first set of observations this was the case, and I had to assume a role of an observer, with minimal participation only on some occasions. For the second set of observations, it was my goal to assume the role of an observer-as-participant because of the little contact I had with the group of students being observed during the first set of observations. As the semester progressed, I managed to be more involved with the students when they were working in groups, or when they had questions. I was seated at all times, but was able to interact with the students seating near me when they asked for help.

Interviews

For this research, interviews were used with the purpose of gathering data generated by a participant. Isabella was the only participant who partook in the interviews. In addition to gathering data, the use of interviews for this research allowed me to learn about Isabella's opinions regarding the school, her classroom, students, the MWWP program, and the implementation of the MWWP lessons into the classroom. Because of the scope of proposed data collection, two separate interviews were conducted. The first interview was focused on Isabella; her background, current circumstances, and teaching experience. The second interview was focused on her experience in the MWWP participation, the implementation of MWWP activities in the classroom, and her current school, classroom and students. Students were not

interviewed because enough data was solicited via questionnaires, observations, and informal conversations with students. Thus, there was no need for students to be formally interviewed.

For this study, the interview guide approach style was used (Patton 1980:206, as cited by Cohen, 2003), in which issues and topics to be covered are specified in advance (Cohen, 2003). Aspects of informal conversational interviews were implemented, and new questions were formulated and asked during the course of the interview, depending on the direction of the interview and how it related to my research questions. Cohen (2003) identifies the interview approach used for this study as the less formal approach, where the interviewer is free to modify and make changes as the interview progresses. I designed an outline/set of questions, but was flexible and willing to change the wording, to add or eliminate, and to change the order in which I asked the questions, as I found fitting, depending on the flow of the interview.

For both interviews, notes were taken while the interview took place. After the interviews, reflective field notes were written where additional details I remembered from the interviews were added. A consent form was designed for Isabella to give the authorization to be interviewed (See appendix A). Both interviews took place outside of the school where Isabella worked. It was the intention for the interviews to be carried out in a stress free environment, therefore one took place in a university tutoring space, at the end of the workday, when we could have a quiet place to talk, and the other in a restaurant. Regarding length, the first interview lasted twenty five minutes, while the second lasted thirty minutes. Both interviews were strictly two way conversations, in which no third party was involved.

Questionnaires
Questionnaires were given to the students, who had the appropriate consent and assent forms completed (see appendices B and C), as an instrument for the collection of data. The students enrolled in Isabella's first section of eighth grade English were given two different

surveys. The first focused on students' use of the English language, and the second focused on

their thoughts about the MWWP lessons and activities incorporated in their English class (See

Appendices F and G for complete list). For the second type of survey, students were given a brief

summary of a class they had taken, and they evaluated it, for a total of four classes; two of which

MWWP activities had been implemented, and for two in which students worked from the

workbook or copied from the board to answer in their notebooks. The classes were not identified

as MWWP lessons, and the detail of students rating MWWP classes was not revealed to them.

They simply rated four classes they had taken, not aware that one MWWP lesson and two classes

containing MWWP practices were selected for their rating.

Because questionnaires can be a possible intrusion of privacy, it was of utmost

importance to consider ethical issues when these were carried out, even more so because the

participants were minors. To address this concern two consent forms were designed; one directed

to the participants' parents, and another designed for the participants who were minors. It was

stated in the consent forms, and was clarified the moment the questionnaires were given, that if

any participant wished not to answer a specific questionnaire, or to retract his/her participation,

they were free to do so. In addition, the questionnaires were designed to guarantee confidentiality

and anonymity in the research since name and age were not requested.

For the design of the questionnaires, the research objectives and questions were analyzed

and used as the source for the development of the questionnaire items. This was the process of

operationalizing, defined by Cohen (2003) as taking the general set of purposes and transforming

them into concrete items from which actual data can be gathered. In addition, the questionnaires

were designed as semi-structured, giving respondents the freedom to respond in their own terms,

the questionnaire "[setting] the agenda but not [presupposing] the nature of the response" (Cohen 2003, p. 248).

To be consistent with the type of questionnaire (semi-structured) that was employed, the types of questions used were rating scales (a Likert scale) and open ended questions. By using these types of questions, the questionnaires had characteristics of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Open-ended questions are considered qualitative because they serve to collect rich and personal data. Ranking questions are considered quantitative because, although flexible, they provide the opportunity for measuring part of the data collected from the questionnaires.

The questionnaires were not piloted because Isabella was suddenly moved to another school; therefore I had limited access to the school and students. Despite the change and this limitation, I went to the school with my IRB approval and signed consent forms and asked the new teacher for permission to administer the questionnaires. She allowed me to administer both questionnaires that same day. The questionnaires' data are mildly limited because students had a short amount of time to answer both, and because time had passed since the lessons were given and as stated by some students, they did not recall some details of the classes.

Summary

As detailed above, three methods were selected for the case study; observations, interviews, and questionnaires. The purpose of selecting three data collection tools was to triangulate my data among the various methods of data collection. Isabella, a teacher participant of the MWWP SI 2010 and one of her groups served as the participants in this case study. Both the teacher and students were part of the observation process, but in addition, Isabella participated in interviews and the students in questionnaires.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

The goal of this study is to understand the impact or the benefits resulted from a teacher's exposure to a teacher-run organization that provided a different view of how to teach language to students. In the specific case of Puerto Rico, the teaching of language can be complicated when there are two official languages involved. Despite having both Spanish and English as co-official languages, the majority of islanders speak Spanish as their native language. Furthermore, historically, language in Puerto Rico is linked to the island's different political parties. To carry out this case study, I participated in the MWWP Summer Institute 2010. From the group of teacher-participants, Isabella, an English teacher from the public system was selected as part of the case study. Thus, this case study is composed of Isabella's implementation of lessons and activities learned in the MWWP 2010 Summer Institute and their effect on one of her eighth grade English classes.

This chapter is organized in a way that chronologically represents the data collection process. To gather the data three data collection tools/ methods were employed; observations, interviews, and questionnaires. First the observation process is discussed, then the interviews, and lastly the questionnaires answered by students. In the observation section, a description of Isabella's typical routine in the classroom is provided. Furthermore, different lessons that were specifically learned in the MWWP SI 2010 are highlighted. For the interviews, what Isabella was asked is first stated, and then her answers are provided. Regarding the questionnaires, for the first part of it the percentages of students' responses are provided, and for the open-ended questions, quotes of students' answers are included.

Observations: Case study

An eighth grade English class and their teacher Isabella were observed for approximately four months; three months in the fall semester of 2010, and a month in the spring semester of

2011. In total, thirteen class periods were observed. Originally, the second set of observations were arranged to last more than a month, but had to be cut short when Isabella received surprising news that she was being transferred to another school in a matter of days. For the first set of observations, thorough observations were done, taking rich notes of almost all the details of the dynamics taking place in the classroom. For the second set of observations the plan was to focus on the particular factors I understood were important for my study and could result in beneficial data or discovery for the project, the teacher, language teachers, and the teacher organization serving as focus.

School environment
The school functioned as both an intermediate school and a high school by means of an interlocking schedule. Seventh, eighth and ninth grade took their classes during the morning, and tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade took their classes throughout the afternoon. Because of this arrangement, classrooms were shared by the teachers. In the case of Isabella's classroom, a History teacher used it during the afternoon.

The exterior of the school was kept clean and organized. Projects promoting caring for nature were noticed to take place in the school's yard. There were a variety of signs indicating what projects were about. There were clean areas available for students to sit and lounge. There was a school guard in the school entrance and the school's principal was often seen walking around the school to make sure everything was in order.

Classroom environment and daily routine
The following section covers ground on the environmental aspects of the classroom where the observations took place and the typical routine followed by Isabella and her students. The dimensions and layout of the classroom are explained, as well as what kinds of learning materials could be found. In addition to the physical and visual aspects, the atmosphere in the

classroom regarding climate and noise are also described. In addition, the typical routine Isabella had with her section of eighth grade English is described.

Classroom environment

The English classroom had two chalk boards in the front and back of the classroom. The chairs were arranged in a way that allowed for a free space in the middle of the classroom. There were two groups of chairs on either side of the classroom, the groups of chairs facing each other. From the front of the classroom, one would have one group of chairs to the right and one to the left, and the teacher's desk on the left side of the room. The classroom's walls were filled with grammar posters, decorative pictures, and students' work, such as drawings and acrostic poems.

Materials, such as textbooks and dictionaries, were available in the classroom. Underneath each chair there were textbooks, though they were not related to English. The classroom was shared by a History teacher during the afternoon, and for this reason History textbooks and materials for the History class were found around the classroom. In addition to individual material for students, there was a projection screen available for both teachers. However, to be able to display data, they had to borrow one of the few data projectors the school owned.

The classes observed were early in the morning and at that time the classroom's climate was cool. For ventilation, the windows were usually open and one of two doors was open as well, providing a slight breeze throughout the room. There were a couple of floor fans, which were turned on when necessary. The openness of the classroom setup sometimes allowed for outside noises to interrupt lessons. The noises sometimes came from the teacher and students in the classroom next-door, but usually students who were loitering outside in the hallway caused the noises. Such loitering was commonplace when a teacher was absent and no teacher was sent to replace him/her.

Daily routine

Shortly after starting the observation process I noticed Isabella followed a daily routine. She would greet the students, call attendance, give the instructions for the day's task, allot the students an amount of time for them to finish their work, stamp students' finished work, and, if time allowed, review the answers or have students share their work. This was the typical routine when she gave classes designed from a textbook and/or the Department of Education's assigned curricular framework, as well if she gave classes designed from a MWWP teacher demonstration. When variations to her daily routine were made, they were minimal.

Both Isabella and I were participants of the MWWP SI 2010, so I was able to distinguish the difference between classes planned from the textbook, and classes which were inspired or followed a format learned during the MWWP SI 2010. For the purposes of this case study, the first will be referred to as regular lessons, and the latter as MWWP lessons. Not only were some classes influenced by the MWWP, but Isabella also decided to include some NWP specific practices into her class, like the daily scribe[2] and the use of a journal. Students usually forgot it was their turn to be the scribe, and as a result, the scribe failed to be done every day, despite it being designed to be a daily activity in which the previous class would be recalled. The journal, on the other hand, was often used, both for MWWP classes and for regular classes.

Other lessons usually revolved around a specific topic, for example, a grammar task or a short story. MWWP classes, on the contrary, were usually very innovative, the task at hand seeming to be just for fun, yet not connected to any grammar task or previous classes. In the following sections a more detailed account of both "regular classes" and those influenced by the MWWP is provided.

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[2] A person is chosen to retell the happenings of the previous class in written form and present it to the rest of the group. This is expected to be done in a creative way, with the use of poetry or music, for example.

Regular classes

Among the classes called "regular lessons", there were some for which the students read assigned texts, discussed them in class, and answered exercises from the board or textbook. For example, one of the classes observed was the day after students had read a story and they had to answer exercises from the textbook related to the story. Another similar class was one in which students read the story aloud in class and then answered some questions from the board about the plot of the story. For one specific class, Isabella tried to mix her usual approaches to reading, with a MWWP teacher's demonstration. In this case she read a story about a fortress to the students, and then they drew a picture of a fortress and created an acrostic poem.

Other types of classes among the regular classes were those for which students had to answer questions or textbook exercises in their notebooks, these were usually about grammar or reading comprehension material. Another example is the fact and opinion class, for which the Isabella had prepared a power point presentation, but when the data projector failed to turn on, students had to answer fact and opinion exercises from a handout. Sometimes the subject would vary and students would answer questions about a topic given by the teacher, for example, a class was observed in which students answered a variety of questions concerning the profession they wanted to practice when they grow up.

Besides typical regular classes, the opportunity presented itself to observe another type of regular class; that of the test day. The whole class period was dedicated to the test, but the students wasted a lot of time. On the day of the exam, like any other day, the classroom was very noisy, and students were talking among themselves. Isabella started by standing in front of the classroom and watching the students, but specific students required her help, and when "the teacher focus[ed] on one student, the others quickly [got] rowdy" (Field notes, February 8th, 2011). Students were commenting aloud about topics unrelated to the test, like about a school

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shirt they had paid for, about some of them being sick, and about them not having class the next day.

The classroom was very noisy and Isabella reacted to a specific student who was interrupting and not allowing others to concentrate on the test. This student was so out of control that Isabella decided to move his chair to the middle of the classroom, which made matters worse "because now he [was] talking where all students [could] hear him and see him" (Field notes, February 8th, 2011). She told this student that he would work on the test in the classroom and not during the time he spends in the special education classroom. She then told the whole class that "she [wouldn't] allow for them to talk and bother in the classroom to later go to the special education classroom and miraculously get an A" (Field notes, February 8th, 2011). The class period was almost over and students were "sing[ing], others talk[ing], others mak[ing] noise with their feet and pencils, others playing with their cellphones, and others bother[ing] their peers" (Field notes, February 8th, 2011).

As described, regular classes were usually based on covering the material required for the grade level. These classes were usually predictable, consisting of material read and questions to answer, grammar rules explained and exercises to practice, or a topic given and questions to answer, sometimes to later present in front of the class. All classes were directed towards improving skills that would be tested in standardized tests, but the regular classes showed this in an obvious way, while more creative classes tended to tackle the same skills more discretely.

Mayawest writing project classes
During the MWWP Summer Institute, all participants presented a class demonstration of a writing activity they had done in their own classroom. Teachers were instructed to select a class they felt was effective for teaching their content area, while at the same time being an innovative way to introduce writing in the classroom. All the demonstrations were presented in a

manner that gave room for teachers of all levels and subjects to adapt the lessons to their specific

teaching context.

One of the primary goals of this research was to see if Isabella, a recent TC, would

implement lessons learned in the MWWP SI 2012. To my satisfaction, the teacher participant

weaved in a number the lessons and activities learned in teachers' demonstrations at the MWWP

SI 2010. Some lessons that touched on the artistic side were the ones where the students created

masks and another where they created a puppet. While not able to observe the mask creation

class, I had the opportunity to hear some of the students present their masks in the author's chair

the following day. For the puppets class, each student had to create one that represented the

profession they would like to be in a future. Some writing focused classes were the one about

descriptive writing in which students worked in pairs to describe a picture of a monster, and later

on another group followed those instructions to draw the picture of the monster. Also, students

worked on activities like adding dialogue to a comic strip and creating calligrams. In all, five

classes where MWWP lessons were used were observed, for which the description in more detail

is provided below. In addition to the classes observed, Isabella would tell me about classes

inspired by MWWP teacher's demonstration that she had taught during the days I was not

observing.

MWWP Class #1: comic strip (November 4*th*, 2010)

The first lesson adapted from a MWWP demonstration that was observed was one for

which students added dialogue to a comic strip. Isabella began the class as usual by calling

attendance, and as she called attendance students were arriving late to class. The student who

was supposed to be the scribe that day forgot, so Isabella proceeded to ask all students what had

happened during the previous class. Some students answered they had *repaso*[3], which prompted other students to desperately ask if they had a test the following day.

For this lesson's activity, the students worked with comic strips. The teacher had three different kinds of comics students could choose from. Students were noticeably excited they got to choose the one they most wanted (in most cases The Simpsons' one). The instructions on the board were the following (exactly as written by Isabella): "write an imaginary conversation according to the images. Don't be afraid to let your imagination run! Write in a complete sentences" (Field notes, November 4th, 2010). Isabella told the students that they could work in groups, but that not too many people should be in one group.

After listening to the unclear instructions, some students got together in groups while others worked by themselves. As recorded in my field notes, I thought that "if the teacher would have given clearer and more specific instructions about the assignment, maybe the students would feel in the mood to work" (Field notes, November 4th, 2010). I decided to help some students and give them ideas to develop their dialogue. I told them to work on it in their notebooks and then pass it to the comic. After my advice, they quickly started working.

In groups or by themselves, some students were working while others were having conversations about trivial topics unrelated to the class or task at hand. Some boys seemed to find it hard to concentrate on their work and would easily get distracted by conversations, their cellphones or iPods. Out of all the students with special needs in this classroom, there were two who needed extra attention. One of them had a teacher with him at all times, but the other one did not. Isabella usually spent a large amount of time helping this specific student, but as a result, she did not have enough time to help the other students.

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[3] Material review

On the other hand, some students showed obvious interest in learning. They would ask me and Isabella to review their work to make sure it was correct. One student asked me how to write certain words in English. The first time I helped the student look up the words in the dictionary, and the second time she did not ask me how to spell the word, but instead asked me to pass her the dictionary. Of the students who were working, some finished before the others. In this group some students would finish in fifteen minutes, and then spend the rest of the class doing nothing. On the contrary, some failed to finish, so Isabella allowed them to finish the work as homework.

MWWP Class #2: Calligram (November 9th 2010)

The class to be described was a demonstration presented during the summer institute by a Spanish teacher. Isabella adapted the class to introduce it to her English classroom. In addition to the lesson adapted from the demonstration, there was a scribe for this class. The student wrote and presented the scribe in Spanish. He was hesitant to read it, but proceeded to do so. The rest of the students kept silent while he read, but as soon as he finished a girl said: "*¡¿Se murió?!*" ("it died?!" Translated by author[4], from Field notes November 9th, 2010). She said this because he finished his presentation with the line "*nos dió*" ("gave us." from Field notes, November 9th, 2010). Everyone laughed.

After the scribe, Isabella explained the day's activity to the students; they would work with calligrams[5]. Students already knew what a calligram was, and did not pay much attention to the instructions, but instead talked with each other. "As the teacher talk[ed], students respond[ed] in silly ways, trying to call attention and be funny" (Field notes, November 9th, 2010).

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[4] All translations in this document were done by the author.
[5] Drawings made out of words and/or sentences

Isabella gave out blank papers for the students to write on, and she passed some calligram examples around. As noted in the field notes, "there [were] no clear instructions regarding topic or themes. After [students] seem[ed] confused with what to do, [the teacher] suggest[ed] for them to write about their goals" (Field notes, November 9th, 2010). Isabella also gave a second example because students were very confused regarding what they were supposed to do. She gave the second example in Spanish, which prompted students to ask if they could do their calligram in Spanish, to what the teacher answered that they could.

Eventually, students started working on their calligrams. As usual, some students seemed interested in the activity and others appeared to care little about it. Those who did not get to finish it, could take it home and finish it as homework. One specific student told me he didn't like anything and that he was bored, after I asked him what he would draw. He had drawn two circles, and so I suggested he could draw a car and use the circles as the wheels. Isabella was praising another student's work, but suggested to the student who had drawn just the two circles to "do something like a ball, so you don't have to think much" (direct quote from Field notes, November 9th, 2010). This student was one of the special needs students.

MWWP Class #3: Puppets (November 23rd, 2010)

This class was a demonstration presented during the MWWP summer institute, but it was the demonstration given by Isabella. I decided to include it as one of the MWWP lessons because it is an innovative activity for which she received feedback from the teacher participants of the institution, therefore it is supposed to be an improved version of the one presented.

Each student had to create a puppet that represented the profession they would like to be in the future. On the board there were four questions about the puppet. Isabella asked them the name of the puppet, the role of their profession in society, how their profession contributes positively to society, and why they had chosen that role. Students were provided with drawings

they could use and with all other materials needed for the activity like paper bags, glue, scissors and coloring pencils and markers.

Considering the type of activity, it was understandable that students were noisier and more hyper than usual, but even when Isabella was discussing the instructions students were walking around the classroom and talking. Some students started working as soon as she was done giving instructions, but others were distracted with conversations about their weekend "hangout." As recorded in the field notes, students were "making fun of each other and even hitting each other" (Field notes, November 23rd, 2010).

Once the majority of the students were working, I noticed that some put on their iPods and listened to music while working. Many students were "working and talking at the same time [and some] would call each other by screaming from the other side of the room" (Field notes, date). While they worked they also asked questions to the teacher to find out if they had class the next day. From what I was able to catch from their conversations I wrote: "[students] say that if they have shorter periods of classes they won't come" (Field notes, November 23rd, 2010). I was not present the following day, and so I was not able to confirm if indeed the absence rate was higher that day.

Isabella was very active for the puppet's class. She was running around the classroom assisting any student that asked for or needed help. Also, for the first time since I had been observing, the group of students who usually refused to do their work were working on their puppets. They were not working on the written section of the assignment, but it still called my attention that they were working. Isabella allowed students to finish the work as homework. Roughly half the students finished and half took it home with them to finish the puppets as homework.

MWWP Class #4: Hand (February 1st, 2011)

The next class to be described was inspired by a MWWP continuity meeting activity which is a monthly meeting held for TCs to collaborate and share success stories and improve lessons. A guest speaker spoke about various innovative activities she had used and found effective. Among the various activities presented, Isabella used one that dealt with identity in a very artistic way. Students drew their hands on a paper and on the hand they wrote words that described themselves.

Isabella started the class with her usual routine, but warned the students that they were going to work on an activity, yet if they got out of control, she would give them a quiz. Students proceeded to draw their hands on a big paper that was laid on the floor. Once they were done tracing their hands on the paper, they would cut the drawing and go back to their seats. The students wrote the words that described them on the hand's fingers. Some students asked the teacher if they had to write the words in English or Spanish. I recorded in my field notes that "the teacher answer[ed] it could be in English or Spanish, whatever they want[ed]" (Field notes, February 1st).

While the class was on its way, the student with special needs, and who has a teacher assigned to him, brought a big trashcan into the classroom. As noted on the field notes, "the teacher [had] to handle the situation while the teacher who is supposed to be helping with [the student] [was] cutting his hand drawing" (Field notes, February 1st). Later on during the class, the same student tried to hide another student's backpack. While this was happening, the teacher in charge of him kept working on his hand drawing.

Isabella allowed students to write the words on one side of the hand and decorate the other side to make the hands their own. Students were asked to write five words (one per finger) but some students became very creative and wrote words all over their hands. Others only came

up with two or three words to describe themselves. During the last minutes of the class period, students presented their work in front of their classmates.

MWWP Class #5: descriptive writing (February 10th, 2011)

This following class was taken from a teacher's demonstration during the MWWP SI 2010. This class dealt with descriptive writing. The lesson's activity consisted of students working in groups to describe the picture of a monster. While Isabella was explaining what students were expected to do for the activity, "she seemed a bit confused with the instructions. Students were interested, but the teacher was losing their attention" (Field notes, February 10th). Isabella's confusion with some of the instructions was something that was observed in other lessons and something that will be discussed later in this work.

Students worked in groups of three. They were given a blank paper where they were expected to make a list of detailed descriptions about the picture of a monster the teacher had provided. Students seemed to enjoy the activity and to be engaged in the activity. Yet some students were apprehensive about writing in English. Some students rested on the fact that Isabella told them they could use Spanish, and did so.

When they all finished their lists, Isabella collected the pictures and gave out another blank paper for each group. She collected the papers with the descriptions and gave them to other groups. With group effort, students would use the descriptions to draw the monster. The original plan was to later compare the drawings with the original monster pictures, but time did not allow for this.

Interviews

As mentioned before, two different interviews were conducted with Isabella. The interviews were done with a couple of months between them since time was needed for Isabella to adjust to her new school after her sudden and unannounced transfer went into effect.

Therefore, the first interview was completed weeks after the observations ended, but the second interview was conducted two months later. The purpose of the first interview was to uncover Isabella's goals, and her route to becoming a teacher. The second interview was directed more specifically towards the MWWP lessons and practices she incorporated in her classroom and the effect that the MWWP has had on her overall teaching.

For the first interview Isabella was asked where she has lived and where she has studied, at all levels, including the university level. Also, she was asked about her current plans and her future plans; academically and as a professional. In addition, she was asked about her teaching, how she decided to be a teacher and her current experience teaching. Isabella was also asked questions about the school, which areas were exceptional and which needed to be improved. These questions were originally intended for the school where the observations were done, but because she was moved to another school, she was asked to answer these set of questions for both schools. She answered quickly and without hesitation about her new school, but she seemed to have a hard time answering the questions for the previous school. The answers were no longer fresh in her mind because she was not working in that environment anymore. Concerning the students, specifically public school system students, Isabella was asked if she noticed any attitudes (positive or negative), and the problems she faced when teaching them. Last of all, she was asked her about her profession, if she enjoyed it and if she followed a teaching philosophy.

Isabella lived in New Jersey until she was nine. At nine years of age she moved to Puerto Rico and has lived here ever since. She studied for part of her elementary school in the United States and the other part in Puerto Rico. She studied junior high and high school in Puerto Rico as well. Isabella obtained her bachelor's degree from the Inter American University of Puerto Rico, an accredited private university on the island. She is currently pursuing her master's

degree at one of the University of Puerto Rico campuses, with hopes of graduation in December 2011.

Regarding her goals in life, she said she wishes to improve her English to help students do well. She attends workshops in the attempt to better in this area. As well, she mentioned she wishes to go to the United States and continue studying. Not only that, but she also hopes to teach in the United States, specifically in the public school system. She said she wants to compare our educational system with that of the United States. Isabella did not start out her academic journey by studying education, but gained interest in this field while studying for her first associate's degree.

When asked to name three areas she believed her school was doing an exceptional job in, she mentioned three areas for her current school, and one for her former school, the one that served as the site for my case study. For her new school she said that the faculty liked to work together, that it was well organized, and that they provided some materials for her class. For her former school she said that they had access to some technology they could use in their classrooms. When asked to name three areas she believed her school needed to improve, she mentioned two for her former school and one for her current school. Regarding her former school she said that they failed to provide materials and that group work within the faculty needed improvement. About her current school she said that there is some technology available, but it is difficult to plan around it because she has to run around the school from classroom to classroom, and not all classrooms have the same technology available.

For six years Isabella had been teaching in the public school system at the secondary level, from seventh grade to twelfth grade. She affirmed that there is notable attitude against English in students. She went on to mention some of the reasons why she believes students show

a negative attitude toward English when she said: they think it is not important to learn a second language, they do not find English appealing, instead they find it boring, and students "fear to talk and participate [in English]. They feel [other students] are going to make fun of them" (Interview #1). Isabella did not talk about positive attitudes she might have noticed in her students concerning the English language.

When asked about the problems she faced when teaching, Isabella mentioned that sometimes she has to study before she teaches. She added, "I don't teach what I'm not confident in" (interview #1). She said that she skips teaching some specific grammar rules she has problems with herself. In the same line of problems faced while teaching, I brought up the topic of students' behavior. She said that they avoid participation because of a lack of motivation. Right after pointing out the problems she faced when teaching, she confidently answered "yes, I do" when asked if she enjoys her profession.

Finally, we talked about her teaching philosophy and the ideas or concepts that inform her actions in the classroom. Isabella said she uses different techniques and strategies, but that she specifically uses Steven Krashen's five hypothesis of second language acquisition. In addition to this, she said she tries to make students feel comfortable, to encourage them, and to balance being strict and flexible.

For the second interview, Isabella was asked how she first became interested in the MWWP and about her experience as a participant in the Summer Institute of 2010. I was also interested to know how she usually planned her classes, and how she incorporated the MWWP activities and practices to her class plans. In addition to the incorporation of MWWP activities and practices, I was eager to learn if there was a different reaction from students when these activities and practices were implemented, be it in behavior, attitudes, and/or learning. Isabella

was also asked if there were any outside factors that negatively affected the effectiveness of the MWWP lessons introduced, or if there was anything that limited how much of the MWWP she could incorporate in her classes.

Isabella learned about the MWWP when she attended a workshop at her university. In that workshop they gave out the application forms for that year's summer institute. She was very interested in the program because she heard the program focused on the improvement of teaching writing techniques. She told a fellow teacher about it, who got accepted, though unfortunately she did not because she was busy teaching a class at the moment the program called to do the interview.

The following year Isabella reapplied and was accepted to participate in the MWWP Summer Institute 2010. When asked about her experience during the summer institute she answered that she liked everything done, and that it was something different. She enjoyed learning all the new activities and practices, like the scribe, which she still uses, and she really enjoyed the idea of teachers teaching teachers. Isabella enjoyed the opportunity that all the teachers had to share what has worked for them, and the idea that there is always room for improvement.

According to Isabella, she usually incorporated MWWP lessons and/or practices three times a week. She said she used the teachers' demonstrations more or less how they were presented, but adapted them to the students' needs. The teacher added that because of the standardized test *Pruebas Puertorriqueñas de Aprovechamiento Académico* (PPAA), she wanted students to write more and the strategies learned during the Summer Institute helped her achieve that goal.

Isabella was asked if she had noticed any difference in students' behavior, attitudes, and learning when MWWP lessons were implemented. She answered that students seemed to care about producing a bit more text when writing. Concerning behavior, Isabella said students seemed more willing to listen and cooperate when MWWP influenced classes were given. She added that because the classes were different, students enjoyed them, even though they hate to write. Isabella said that when she first introduced MWWP lessons and/or practices, students did not want to write, but towards the end, students were writing more. Among the benefits she understood came with the introduction of MWWP lessons and practices to her classes, she mentions that the class goes on more smoothly, and that students participate more and share their interests. She added that students used what they like in their favor and in favor of the class.

When asked if the MWWP SI 2010 had impacted her class in any way, Isabella answered that it had. To give an example, she mentioned that after the MWWP SI she was more aware that she needed to give students different writing prompts for them to analyze and become critical thinkers. She said that with the lessons and activities learned during the MWWP SI 2010 she was achieving this. Isabella added that she is using the MWWP lessons and practices at her new school after seeing how well they worked at her old school, the school where the study took place.

Throughout our discussion, Isabella described her classes and the material she taught previous to her participation in the MWWP SI 2010. She said she would give a lot of vocabulary words, questions to answer, a little grammar, and reading. Isabella recognized she did not focus much on writing, but after the summer institute, she did focus more on writing. She said she always uses the curricular framework provided by Puerto Rico's Department of Education. In addition, she claimed to review the standards and to try to come up with new ideas. According to

her, when she participates in workshops and plans to introduce new strategies into her classroom, she tries to match them to the standards. Isabella added that this is something she is expected to do, and therefore she must keep plan accordingly.

Because only one group was observed, Isabella was asked if different groups reacted differently to the same MWWP classes. She answered that her different groups responded very differently to the same classes. For example, she claims her first group (the one observed for this study) was slower and would go at their own slow pace. According to Isabella, the other groups were faster and would produce more work and be more enthusiastic. For example, other groups would fight over who would present first on the author's chair, while the first group had to be compelled to present. Furthermore, the students' reaction depended on the activity. Isabella said they would enjoy some but disliked others. She gave the example of one that dealt with music; students enjoyed it so much they wanted to do it again another day. According to students' reactions Isabella decided to mold the upcoming activities related to the MWWP.

When asked about factors that could have affected the effectiveness of the MWWP lessons that were introduced into her classroom, Isabella said that the erratic changes made by the school administration usually affected her lessons. The administrative changes for various student meetings usually affected or changed the plans she had already made. Another factor negatively affecting teaching was that students with special needs required additional help, and this help was not provided for all of them, therefore she had to do it. Isabella was also asked if anything limited how much of the MWWP she could introduce in her classes, to what she answered that there was not. She explained that it depends on her how she gives the class and how much writing she gives. She added that although the Department of Education requires

certain skills to be covered, it all depends on how the teacher decides to combine the skills with writing.

Questionnaires

After observing an eighth grade English class for three months, two questionnaires were distributed to the students willing to take it. Before administering the questionnaires, they were approved by UPRM's Institutional Review board for human subjects. Additionally, parents completed consent forms for their children and students completed assent forms to either consent or refuse participation in the study. The day the questionnaires were administered, some students who had previously refused to participate, had changed their minds, as well as students who had previously agreed to participate but no longer wanted to. Ultimately, twenty two of the twenty eight students participated. The observations stopped on February 2011 and the questionnaires were administered two months later.

Information inquired by the questionnaires

The questionnaires, which can be seen in Appendix F, were designed to learn about students' language use and students' thoughts and opinions concerning specific lessons. The first questionnaire's primary purpose was to understand the population of this eighth grade group, in terms of their language use. The questionnaire was divided in two sections; one in which they answer on a likert scale to measure participants' use of Spanish and English. The second portion of the instrument was an open-ended section where participants answered whether or not they believe they are bilingual, were able to write about the relationship to English and Spanish on the island. They also answered if they believe there is a benefit in knowing two languages, and if there is a benefit in knowing English.

The second questionnaire was entirely focused on rating four classes they had during the academic year 2010-2011. For all four classes I was present as an observer. Two classes were

taken from the MWWP summer institute, and the other two followed a more traditional textbook approach. Similar to the previous questionnaire, they answered questions on a likert scale, as well as open-ended questions. Each class was evaluated using the same questions. For each class they answered if they understand what they learned, if it was fun for them, and if they would like to have similar classes more often. The open ended questions asked what they liked most and least about the class, what they would change about the class, and what exactly did they learn during the class.

Results from the first questionnaire

When students were asked about their language use, they reported more use of Spanish than of English, yet they still reported significant use of English. For the Spanish language, a combination of seventy-seven percent reported they use it to watch TV always or almost always; eighty-one percent reported not to use subtitles when watching movies in Spanish; and forty-six percent reported to read in Spanish outside of school related texts.

For the English language, a combination of forty-five percent reported they always or almost always watch TV in English; forty-five percent answered that they sometimes watch TV in English, and only nine percent reported never to watch TV in English. When asked if they used subtitles to watch movies in English, a combination of forty-five percent said they always or almost always did, twenty-three percent said they sometimes used subtitles, and thirty-two percent said they never use subtitles to watch movies in English. Nine percent of the students reported to always read in English out of school related texts, twenty-seven percent reported they almost always read in English, thirty-six percent said they sometimes read in English, and twenty-seven percent reported to never read in English. A combination of thirty-two percent of the students said they always or almost always encountered opportunities to speak English

outside the English classroom, while forty-one percent answered sometimes, and twenty-seven

percent said they never had opportunities out of the English classroom to speak English.

TABLE 1: Language use report
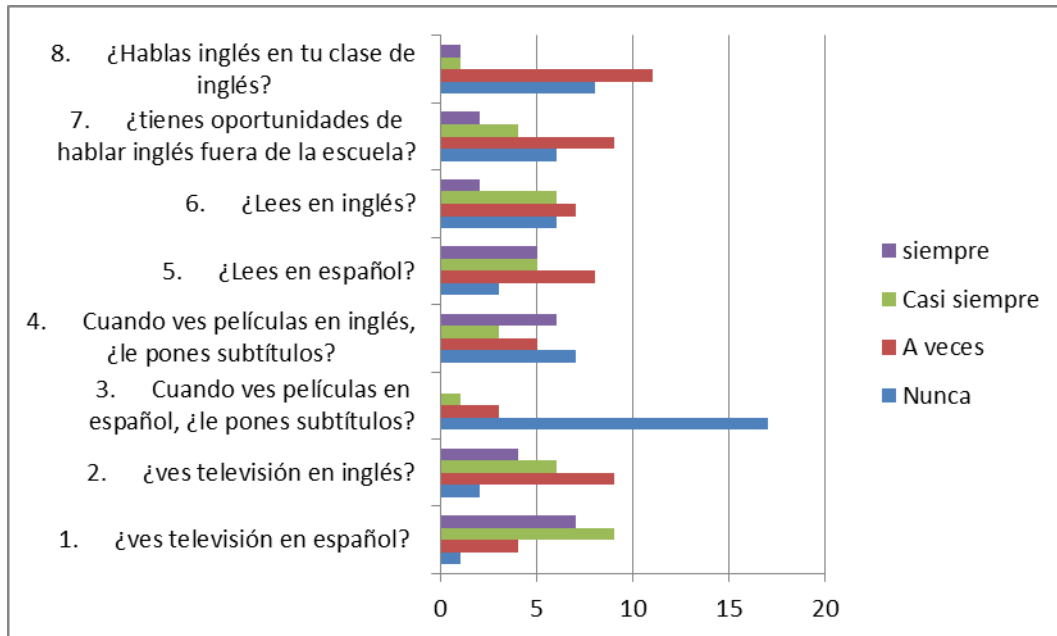
When students where asked in the open ended questions section if they were bilingual,

there were a variety of answers. Nine students simply answered: no, while seven plainly

answered yes. One student answered *no*, but added that he/she did not know much English, and

then added *sometimes* in parenthesis. Another student answered: "no sé, hablo inglés pero

lentamente" ("I don't know, I speak English, but slowly." From questionnaire #1). Another

answered: "regular, porque hablarlo me da vergüenza", ("Somewhat, because it embarrasses me

to speak it." From questionnaire #1). Some students who did not answer plainly yes or no, but

were more positive, said "a lot," and "Sí. Me gusta hablar inglés con mis amigas" ("Yes, I enjoy

speaking English with my girlfriends." From questionnaire #1).

In the open-ended question section, students were asked to answer what they liked about

Spanish and English. When asked what they most liked about English, the answers varied from

"que cuando hay muchas personas entrometidas, hablo inglés para que no entiendan" ("that when there are a lot of nosy people, I speak English so they do not understand." From questionnaire #1), "como se pronuncian las palabras porque suenan con más estilo" ("How the words are pronounced because the sound more stylish." From questionnaire #1). In addition, some students said that they liked being able to communicate with other people, being able to understand videogames, that it is a language spoken in many countries, that it sounded funny, and some answered that there is absolutely nothing they like about English. Regarding Spanish, most answered that what they most liked about the language is that they are able to speak it, speak it with ease, and have conversations in which both participants understand each other. The rest of the participants showed an affinity to their mother tongue when they wrote things like: "me gusta mucho porque es mi idioma" ("I like it a lot because it is my language." From questionnaire #1), "que es mi language" ("that it is my language." From questionnaire #1), "que es mi lengua principal" ("that it is my main tongue." From questionnaire #1).

Participants were also asked what they liked least about both Spanish and English. Regarding English, students who participated said they did not enjoy speaking it, nor having to speak in front of other people, and the difficulty pronouncing words. Others answered that they did not like the fact that they did not always understand it. Some said they did not like writing or reading in English. However for Spanish, the majority answered not liking to use accent marks, or the many rules (grammatical rules, I imagine) the language has. Then a couple also answered they disliked reading and writing in Spanish.

The last two open ended questions asked about the benefits the participants thought there was in knowing two languages, and in knowing English specifically. For knowing any two languages, some answered that it would be good for one's future, in regards of finding a job. A

good number of them answered to travel to other countries and to be able to communicate with other people. Still, without the mention of English some answered to find jobs in the US, and one answered that he/she did not like the English in school because he/she was learning nothing.

The final question looked at how the participants perceived English to be of help to them and many provided answers like: to communicate; with other people, with Americans, with family and friends, and to meet new people. A few answered to get a job, and one specifically said to get a job as an interpreter. Two answered that for personal gain learning English was important and one because it is supposed to be our (Puerto Ricans') second language.

The Second Questionnaire

The second questionnaire was focused on four classes given during the fall 2010 semester. I specifically selected these four classes for two reasons: (1) I was present as an observer for all four classes, and (2) because one of the lessons used for the questionnaire was attained by a teacher demonstration presented during the MWWP SI 2010. Two of the other classes assessed in the second questionnaire were a combination of a traditional class where MWWP practices were implemented, and the fourth class was is in no way related to the MWWP and therefore was what I would refer to as a traditional class. I did not want students to notice a pattern in which I solely asked about classes that were exceptional or different from their routine, so I decided to incorporate one traditional class into the questionnaire.

For each class the same likert scale was used along with the same open ended questions. The questions asked were: (1) Did you learn something in this class? (2) Was this class fun? (3) Did you like the class? and (4) Would you like to have more classes similar to this one? For the open ended questions they were asked what they liked most and least about the class, what two things they would change about the class, what they learned, and again they were asked if they would like to have more classes similar to this one.

The first class that the students had to rate was one that imitated a MWWP demonstration presentation. For this class students were put in pairs and given a picture of a monster. Their task was to come up with a list of detailed descriptions of the monster. After all the students did this, the papers were collected by Isabella and then she gave the instructions to different groups. Students had to follow the instructions written by their classmates and draw the monster. After this, the students were shown the monster pictures for comparison with their drawing.

Fifty percent (50 %) of the students answered they learned a lot with this class; forty-five percent said they learned enough ("bastante"), and five percent (1 student) answered a little. Eighty-six percent answered the class was very fun, and 68% answered that they liked it a lot, yet a combination of eighteen percent of students answered they liked it a little or not at all. Seventy-seven percent said they would very much like to have more classes like this one, fourteen percent said sometimes, and nine percent reported not wanting to have classes like this one.

TABLE 2: Monster class evaluation
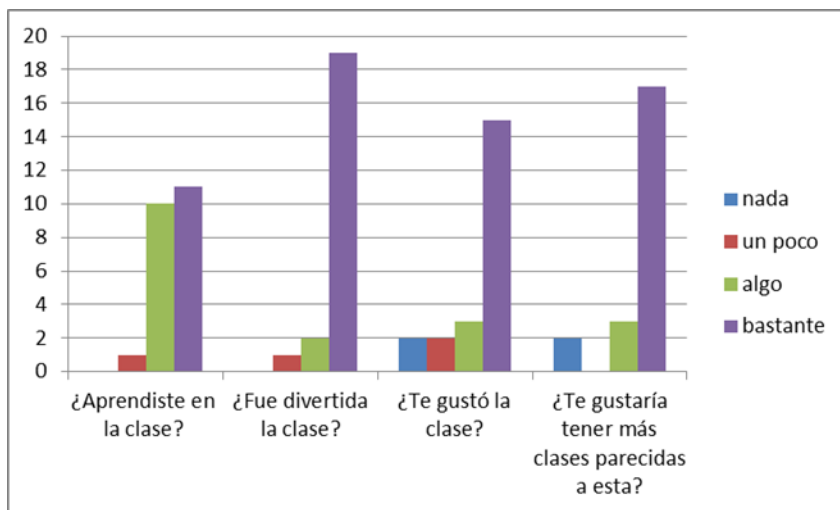
In the open ended questions, when asked what they liked most about the class, six students reported that they enjoyed drawing the monster. Five students liked to work in groups

the most. Three answered they enjoyed trying to decipher what the monster looked like, and another three said they liked that they were not writing like they had been in past classes, and that the class was different. In terms of what the participants liked least, only five answered: two said that they were not able to finish their drawing; another two said that there was not enough time, and one said that the teacher was scolding the students too much. To improve the class, two students said they would have given more time for the activity, two students answered they would improve their own behavior, and another two said less talking in the classroom (which I imagine was in reference to their classmates). Four students said they learned how to describe, and one student was more specific by stating he/she learned vocabulary words for describing. One said he/she learned that when you give the correct descriptions, others can understand you. Only one student answered if they would like more classes like this, and he/she said they would because the regular class is very boring.

In the second class, the students rated had nothing to do with any of the MWWP demo presentations, but it did feature a writing journal, which was introduced by Isabella as an influence from the MWWP. For this class students had to answer some questions that were on the board about the profession they would like to practice when they grow up. These questions were answered in their journals. They read to the rest of the class what they had answered.

When asked if they learned anything with this class, fifty-five percent of the students answered that they learned a lot, twenty-seven percent answered they learned something, and a combination of eighteen percent said they learned a little or nothing at all. The numbers are exactly the same for the "was it fun?" question; fifty-five said a lot of fun, twenty-seven percent said it was somewhat fun, and a combination of eighteen percent answered a little fun or not fun at all. Fifty percent of the students said they liked the class, thirty-six percent said they kind of

liked it, and the rest said they did not like it (fourteen percent). When asked if they would like

more classes like this one, fifty-five percent said they would, eighteen percent said they kind of

would, eighteen percent said they would a little, and five percent (1 student) said they would not.

TABLE 3: Future profession class evaluation
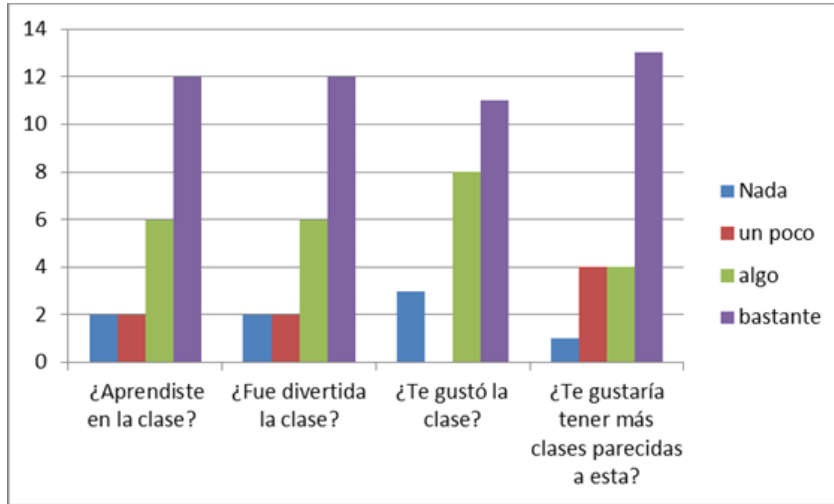
For the open ended questions, five participants said what they enjoyed most about the

class was to know what they want to do when they grow up. Three students reported that they

enjoyed sharing with others what they wanted to do, and two said they enjoyed talking about

themselves. One said that what he/she enjoyed the most was listening to what others want to be

in the future. When referring to what they liked the least about the class, three answered they did

not enjoyed talking in front of the class, another three said they disliked answering questions.

One student said that the whole class was a waste of time. One said the class was too long, and

another said the least enjoyable task was writing. About what could be improved for this class,

two students answered the behavior in the classroom, one said not to answer the question but just

write. For the improvement, those who answered, answered differently from the rest, for

example they said to improve organization, make it more fun, one suggested to incorporate a

drawing, read from their seats, and for it to be less boring. From the two who answered the question "what did they learn?" One answered: "nothing," and the other said he learned how to say "químico" (chemist) in English. Two said they would like more classes like this one, one said definitely not, and two answered "maybe."

The third class rated by the students was in no way connected to the MWWP. For this class the students read a story from their text books and afterwards talked about the story in the classroom. They all read the story together. The story was about a female athlete who had an injury and could no longer play. She went to a church and received a miracle, being able to play again.

On the likert scale, fifty-five percent of students said they learned a lot in this class. Twenty-three percent answered they learned something, and another twenty-three percent said they learned a little. Fifty-nine percent of the students said the class was very fun, thirty-three percent said it was a lot of fun, and nine percent said it was a little fun. When asked if they liked the class, fifty percent said they liked it a lot, twenty-seven percent said they somewhat liked it, eighteen percent said they liked it a little, and five percent (1 student) said they did not like it. Forty-five percent of students answered they would like to have classes like this one more often, forty-one percent said they would sometimes like more classes like this, and the remaining students answered never.

TABLE 4: Short story class evaluation
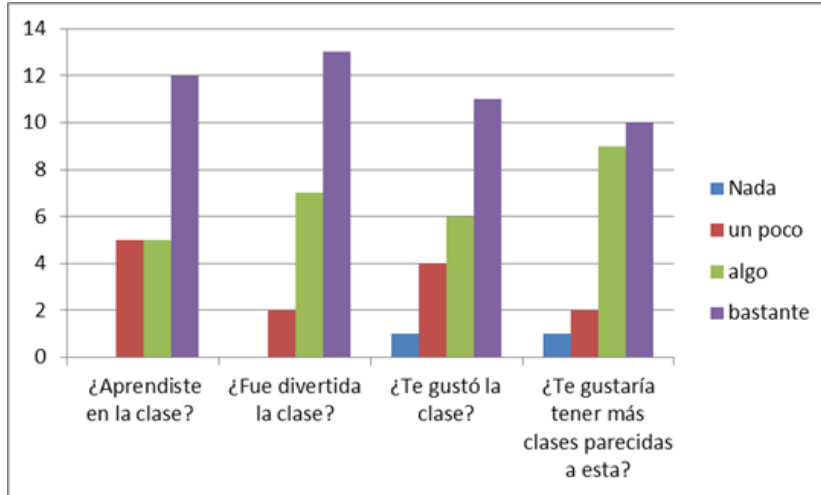
When asked what they liked most about the class, seven students answered they enjoyed reading the story, and four students said they enjoyed reading it with the group. In addition, two other students said that what they liked the most was the story. Two students said what they least liked about the class was to answer questions; three said they disliked reading too much, and another three said they disliked the story being so long, while two other students answered that they disliked reading. Three students said they disliked the fact that there was too much noise in the classroom because the students would not be quiet. Among the suggestions to improve the class were to dramatize the story, to display the story using power point, and for the class to be more interactive. Two suggested the improvement of behavior from their classmates. When asked what they learned, almost all of them answered some kind of life lesson learned, for example, not to give up. When asked if they would like more classes like this one, just one student said yes, two answered that just sometimes, and one said no because they are boring.

The fourth class students rated, I chose with the specific purpose of evaluating how they felt about the author's chair, which is a strategy straight from the MWWP. The specific class they were rating was one where they had to write their new year's resolutions and then read them

in front of the class. Every student had to participate because it was worth class points (not

bonus).

When asked how much they learned with this class, sixty-five percent of students said

they learned a lot, twenty-seven percent said they learned something, five percent said a little,

and another five percent said they learned nothing. When asked if the class was fun, fifty percent

answered it was a lot of fun, twenty-three percent said it was a lot of fun, eighteen percent said it

was a bit fun, and nine percent said it was not fun at all. Forty-one percent of the students said

they would like to have many more classes like this one, thirty-two percent said they would like

some more classes like this one, five percent said they would like just a few more classes like

this one, and twenty-three percent said they would not like more classes like this one.

TABLE 5: Author's chair class evaluation
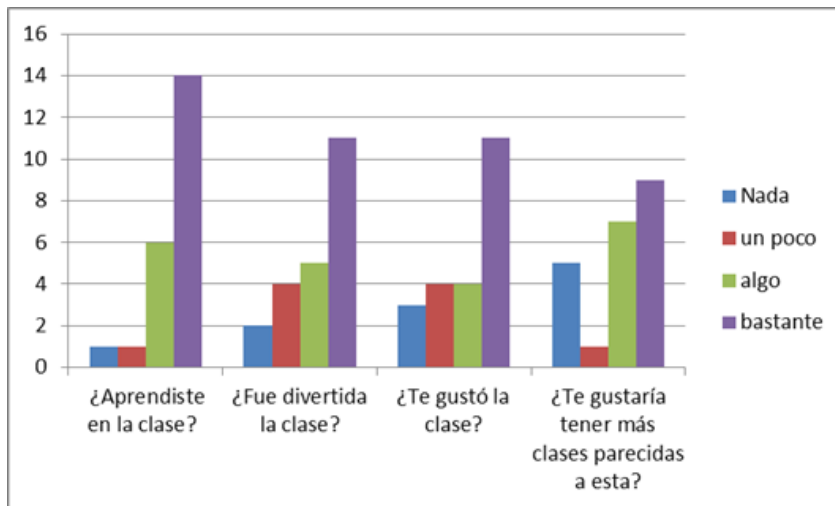
Eight students said that what they liked the most about this class was listening to their

classmates speak, while only two said that what they liked most was to give the oral report, but

three said they liked to talk about their resolutions. Two others said they liked being able to come

up with resolutions. Ten students said they disliked giving the oral report, others disliked the

assignment being worth little points, being nervous in front of the group, that others were staring,

and that the class was disorganized. It is important to notice that one student answered giving the oral report as the thing enjoyed the most and least. Not many suggestions to improve the class were given, and no suggestion was repeated. Among the suggestions: no oral presentations, to be able to read it from the seats, more time, and the behavior. Only three students answered something for the question asking what they learned: how to develop my expressions, to listen, and to plan. A couple answered yes, a couple sometimes, and one no to the question asking if they would like more classes like this one.

Summary

After months of classroom observations, two interviews with Isabella, and two questionnaires administered to 22 students, valuable information was collected. With the observations, I was able to collect rich descriptions of the dynamics that took place in the eighth grade classroom observed, such as teaching strategies, introduction of lessons from the MWWP, students and teacher language use, classroom behavior, and students' reaction to the MWWP lessons. Both interviews with Isabella served to collect information about her as an educator, and her view of her school, students, and the MWWP lessons she utilized. Lastly, the students' questionnaires served to better understand the participants' language use, but most importantly, their assessment of a specific lesson. In the next chapter, I will further analyze my data and provide a discussion of the findings.

Chapter 5: Data analysis and discussion

Introduction

This chapter covers the discussion and analysis of the data collected by means of observation, questionnaires administered to the students, and interviews done with the focal participant. The focus of this project is to discover the benefits, if any, that have resulted from the participation in a teacher-run organization, which focuses on the increased implementation of writing in the classroom. The organization used for this study is the Mayawest Writing Project (MWWP). it is first discussed in this chapter the type of teacher Isabella is, and the specific qualities she possesses that makes her a good educator. Despite her positive qualities, there are factors outside and inside her classroom that directly affect her teaching and her students learning process. These factors are identified and it is explained how they emerged throughout the data sets. It is later explained how lessons learned in the MWWP were used in the eighth grade classroom and how both Isabella and her students felt about these lessons when compared to more traditional classes where writing is taught. How these lessons were implemented, from the planning, organization, execution, and outcome are then explained.

The teacher's effectiveness and positive qualities that benefit students
Planning ahead

It was evident that Isabella planned her classes ahead of time. There was not one day when she would come in the school not knowing what she would teach. On some occasions, if her original plan encountered difficulties, she would go to her alternative plan, which exemplifies her dedication to her students and planning. More often than not, she had scheduled weeks in advance and at the beginning of every week she knew what she would teach every day for the remainder of the week. She was never unprepared, and her students seemed well aware of it. This trait showed she is committed to her profession, and also to her students.

Active in the classroom

While giving class, Isabella took the role of a very active facilitator in the classroom. She was usually walking around the classroom trying to ensure students were on task, and answering their questions. If students needed additional tools like dictionaries or writing material, Isabella would provide them. She paid special attention to certain students that required more individual help than others. This quality of hers shows that she was striving for learning to take place in her classroom and she was willing to take the role of the facilitator in the classroom, rather than merely lecturing. This student centered classroom was advantageous for student learning as students had the opportunity and space to become engaged with the lessons.

Open to introducing innovative lessons, activities and practices

Isabella was not only open to lesson demonstrations from other participants of the MWWP SI 2011, but she was also very open to the suggestions of her students. On one occasion she had planned to teach the differences between fact and opinion utilizing a power point presentation. The data projector was not working and so Isabella decided to have her students copy and answer practice exercises in their notebooks. After a while the projector started working and she decided to give the presentation, but the students were already focused on answering the exercises and getting a stamp. One student suggested it would be best to finish the work that day and work with the presentation the next day. Isabella was very humble and did as the student suggested, agreeing that that was the better option. Being open to suggestions and new practices was a quality that she possessed and it was also evident numerous times in her participation and implementation of the MWWP lesson demonstrations, but it also came through in the case mentioned above. This specific quality shows that she is willing to improve her practice by following others' advice without showing a hint of arrogance.

Furthering education and balancing studies, jobs, and family

A very admirable fact about Isabella is that she has decided to further her education. She has a bachelor's degree, and was, at the time of the study, pursuing her master's degree. It is commendable for a working teacher to leave her comfort zone and pursue graduate studies. This is the case with Isabella. For the purpose of improving as an educator, she has taken on the mission of teaching and studying. Her attitude towards improvement and personal growth as an educator is not only shown in her pursuit of a second degree, but also in her participation in the MWWP Summer Institute. Teachers who participate and become part of this organization have specific qualities like acknowledging the fact that there is always room to grow and improve, and an understanding that they can become empowered to positively affect their students' lives.

Isabella is admirable as well for balancing numerous responsibilities. As stated before, she is studying to obtain her master's degree, yet in addition to this, she has two teaching positions. One job is teaching English at an intermediate level public school during the day and the other is teaching English at an alternative school during the evenings. To be able to cover all areas, she deals with long commutes as she lives, studies, and teaches in three different towns. On top of all, she is a single mother with a son who was still living with her. Balancing all these responsibilities at the same time, and doing it by choice, shows that Isabella is committed to growing as an educator.

External and environmental factors affecting classroom teaching

As an observer, I noticed external factors that affected the teaching and learning process for the teacher and students. I inquired about them in the interview portion of the study so that she would have an opportunity to further explain some of the external factors that may not have been necessarily obvious to me as an observer. Question regarding this issue were included in Isabella's interview, but when asked about areas that needed improvement in her school, she had

a hard time answering. She only mentioned the absence of materials and the lack of group work among the school's teaching personnel. However, throughout the observations it was clear that there were greater negative factors affecting her teaching and the learning process of her students that she did not have control over. Why she was not able to mention them in the interview is a question I still have. Nevertheless, using mainly the field notes, it was obvious to me that some of the external factors that affected her classroom teaching were: numerous school activities which were implemented at the last minutes, a shared classroom, and Isabella's sudden mandatory move from the school in the middle of the semester.

During the observation period, on various occasions Isabella's lesson plans were interrupted by different school activities. These activities were not planned in advance and often left teachers scrambling to patch up lessons or having to leave topics and activities unfinished. These unplanned interruptions had a negative impact on teachers' planning, as it was almost impossible to keep their calendars straight and plan accordingly. Usually, a notice or letter would be provided to Isabella informing her of the activity a few days, or sometimes, just a day in advance. She talked to me personally about the issue, which I documented in my notes on October 26, when I wrote: "[t]wice already the teacher has expressed (to me) her frustration with all the activities that are added to the calendar with only a few, even one day's notice, and she has to change all her plans." As I wrote in my field notes, whenever this happened, Isabella would have to redesign her plans for the week or following week.

Furthermore, there were many school activities that required class periods to be shortened meaning that a significant number of students would be absent that day. I heard students say that if there was a half a day or a special activity they would not come to school that day. This greatly affected Isabella's plans, which she always designed in advance. In addition, the school

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administrators would promote specific topics in these school activities and teachers were then required to introduce and reinforce the topics discussed in their own classes. These events only worked to further delay and interrupt Isabella's previously arranged plans.

Another external factor affecting her teaching came as a result of the school's interlocking schedule. Because of this recent arrangement, different teachers shared classrooms. Sharing the classroom with another teacher was an issue that negatively affected Isabella and her students. During the morning the classroom belonged to Isabella, but for the afternoon the classroom belonged to a history teacher. The space she was accustomed to was reduced and she had to put everything away so the afternoon teacher could have his/her space as well. In addition, materials Isabella put aside for the following class could be easily misplaced. On one occasion, instead of being able to provide handouts for the students, she had to make them write from the board because the papers were misplaced. The classroom felt cluttered, to the point that Isabella sometimes seemed lost in her own desk.

From the various external factors affecting the students and teacher, the one that affected them the most was that Isabella was moved to another school with just a week's notice before she was expected to start at another school within the district. She was asked to stop teaching in the middle of the day and never taught again in that school. Isabella was very emotional when this happened, and the students did not seem happy with the change when I went to give them the surveys. The move happened in the middle of the semester and with no warning whatsoever. This specific affecting factor did not explicitly come up in observations, questionnaires and interviews, but I met with Isabella the day she received the news and witnessed how the change affected her greatly. The sudden change affected both the teacher and students, as can be expected, and sadly they had absolutely no control or say over the matter. The removal of

Isabella from the classroom was a traumatic experience for her and one that unfortunately, I was not able to better understand. After that event, I could see that Isabella was much more distant and less enthusiastic about teaching and participating in the research. It would be interesting to contact Isabella sometime after her transition into the new school to figure out what exactly happened and what the rationale was for her replacement. Nevertheless, this event showcases the negative aspects of the Puerto Rico Department of Education and the extensive control it exercises over public schools and public school teachers, which is what is referred to in this study as the top-down approach at school reform.

As shown by these examples, Isabella was held back by events and other external factors that were out of her control. These external factors had a negative impact on the implementation of Isabella's lessons. Therefore, the strong qualities she possessed that might have resulted in positive outcomes, such as her advanced planning and being organized, were diminished, despite her hard work and effort. Furthermore, the external factors obstructing the teaching and learning processes also affected her emotionally, specifically the sudden mandatory change of schools.

Factors affecting teaching inside the classroom

While the main purpose of being an observer inside the classroom was to observe the implementation of MWWP lessons in the language classroom, there were other factors that arose and affected Isabella, the students, the teaching of language, and the learning process. Some of these factors come up in the data collected by interviews and questionnaires and were present in all of the observations, which suggest they merit attention. Among the factors inside the classroom that affected teaching and learning were: the lack of assistance to students with special needs, students' behavior, micro planning of the lessons, and language use.

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Special education students without adequate assistance
Almost one third of the classroom was deemed to be eligible for special education.

Throughout the time of the observations, Isabella pointed out the students with special needs in the classroom. These students were integrated into the regular classroom and only one of them had an auxiliary teacher with him. These students had to meet with the special education teacher various times during the week. If there were in-class assignments they were unable to complete in the time allotted during the class, they were allowed to finish them in the special education classroom, whenever they met with the special education teacher. Isabella mentioned that sometimes they would come back with very high scores, a statement that raises concerns because this was said in a way that suggested the correct answers were being given to the students and that they did not produce the answers on their own. An example of this was on February 9th, 2011, when a specific student with special needs was not cooperating the day of the test. Isabella said "she [would not] allow for them to talk and bother in the classroom to later go to the special education classroom and miraculously get an A" (Field notes, February 9th, 2011).

Although the matter of students with special needs should be a private and confidential matter, which is dealt with delicately and with tact, this was not the case. It seemed that the whole class knew who was deemed special needs and if a student was absent, others would say he or she was in "educación especial," which translates to special education. In addition, Isabella would be very open about it and point the students out to me, or comment about it out loud and in the presence of others. This matter was not dealt with carefully, and in my opinion, respectfully. The fact that everyone in the classroom knew who the students with special needs were, allowed for them to feel markedly different, resulting in them not giving their best effort.

Another factor that hindered students with special needs' attempts to do well in the class was that Isabella did not expect excellent work from them, and this was obvious to them. I make

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such a claim resting on my observations, one example being the class in which the students were creating a calligram. A student with special needs was struggling with deciding on what to draw. He had drawn two circles and Isabella told him to draw a ball because this required little thinking. From the student's reaction and lack of response, it was noticeable that the comment did nothing to motivate the student. I decided to sit beside this student and asked him what his interests were. After listening to what he had to say, I suggested he use the two circles to draw a car, headphones, or a long dumbbell. He decided on a car. I believe the difficulty of this matter lies on the teacher not expecting excellence and the students possibly perceiving such sentiment towards them.

It is understandable that students with special needs in a regular classroom might need extra help for their productivity and behavior. It is, as well, unreasonable to expect the language teacher, in this case Isabella, to cover this area because she is not trained in special education, and because she has to assist 25+ students. In this specific classroom, there was clear lack of individualized help for students with special needs. Only one of them had a teacher with him at all times, but even with that extra help, the student was constantly disruptive. The particular student would "shout random comments about someone who bought a bike, some 'stupid' cousin of his, or a friend who got a shirt as a gift" (Field notes, October 26th, 2011). Another time, while Isabella was paying attention to other students, this specific student left the classroom and came back in with a big trash can from outside and put it right in front of the whole class. Needless to say, as a result of episodes like these, the class was disrupted, and Isabella was limited in terms of resources and training to deal with these difficult situations.

In addition, the extra help provided to this one student did not seem to be of much help to him, and sometimes even obstructed his learning and the execution of classes. As I mentioned

before, even with extra help this specific student caused disruptions in the classroom. The main reason for this was because the auxiliary teacher would focus on doing his work, instead of helping him do it. Consequently, the student had free time to do and say whatever he felt like doing or saying, and still his work got done. On top of this, it is recorded in the field notes on January 18th, 2011, that while students were presenting in the author's chair, the special education teacher was talking with a parent at the door, just some feet away from the spot in which students were presenting their work. The auxiliary teacher who was supposed to help and provide much needed relief for Isabella and the students, in a way became yet another factor that negatively affected Isabella's teaching by disrupting the students' presentations.

Students' behavior
The one aspect that most impacted and affected the class and the implementation of new and innovative activities was the students' behavior. During almost every single class, some students started working on the task at hand, but others, the majority from what was observed, talked among themselves, joked around, and/or complained about the work they were expected to complete. It was usually the same group of students who caused disruptions in the class, with only a few exceptions, and often students who were usually well behaved would act out. This was noticed to be the case straightaway and in many occasions is referred to in the field notes.

Throughout my short conversations with the teacher in the classroom as well in the two interviews, Isabella did not mention that she saw a behavior problem, even when she was asked about aspects that may have been affecting factors inside her classroom. Interestingly enough, when students were asked how specific classes could be improved, they mentioned the issue of behavior in all four classes. Some students answered that they could improve their own behavior for the class to be better, while others referred to the behavior of the group in general as an affecting factor for the specific class being evaluated.

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In this classroom, students showed a lack of respect for Isabella and for their classmates. For one class they created a mask and in the next class they had the opportunity to present on the author's chair. Only two students decided to present, and for the second student I wrote: "I couldn't hear [the presentation] because students were speaking too loud" (Field notes, October 21st). Not only on that occasion, but during another class all students had to present in front of the class, many students showed little interest and even disrespect towards their classmates who were presenting. For this specific class, note was taken that "many students are disrespectful to others, interrupting their presentations by laughing and talking to their peers. The teacher rarely steps in to defend the students presenting and to enforce group control" (Field notes, January 18th). If Isabella implemented some group control techniques, students might recognize the English classroom as a learning environment where mutual respect is expected. The focus of the MWWP was not group control; therefore, Isabella would have had to learn group control techniques by another means. Nonetheless, I do suggest later in this work that future MWWP summer institutes could provide a space for the discussion of these issues, for the benefit of teacher participants who might be facing this difficulty.

While many of the students in Isabella's eighth grade section showed little to no interest in learning, there were a handful of students in this classroom who were responsible and always on task. When they had to present, they were ready and even memorized the material to be presented. There was one specific student who was outstanding and for this reason Isabella would usually announce to the whole group when this student was done with the task. Other times she would show this student's work to everyone, especially if it was a drawing or painting. Isabella did not seem to notice that "students ma[de] fun of the 'smart' student who [did] all his work on time and memorize[d] his presentation" (Field notes, January 18th, 2011). After all the

months she has spent with the group, she still seemed to think it would motivate others to see that this student finished first. This was clearly not the case, and on the contrary, the situation with this student could have been categorized as bullying.

Behavior could always be expected to be challenging in this classroom, but some days, unexpected situations happened. To provide an example, on November 2nd, 2011, while Isabella was taking attendance, students got rowdy because one student who arrived late wanted a specific seat that was taken. In order to quickly resolve the situation, Isabella let him have the seat he wanted. The result was that "students who had to move to accommodate the student [were] acting out because they had to move" (Field notes, November 2nd, 2011). As an observer, I did not intervene, but thought the teacher should have dealt with the student's disruptive behavior by calling his attention, not by allowing him to have the seat he wanted. Right after this incident, as Isabella was about to start the class, "a student punch[ed] another because he [could not] find his backpack, which someone else was hiding" (Field notes, November 2nd, 2011). This is just an example of situations that happened in this classroom, which are by no means what we think of when we think of how public education should be, but in this reality it happened quite often.

As shown above, students' behavior and group control was a present issue in this classroom. The combination of their usual unruly behavior and the unexpected situations regarding students' conduct resulted in a significant number of classes being affected, both traditional course lessons and those developed or learned from the MWWP SI 2010.

The organization of class plans

Although how Isabella plans ahead can be praised and admired, it is important to point out that micro planning for the specific classes could be improved. For the following sections when macro planning is mentioned it will be referring to lesson plans for the week and knowing

the specific grammar rule or short story that will be discussed in class. On the other hand, when

micro planning is mentioned, it will be referring to the more specific details of a class, such as

the objectives being implemented in each lesson or unit, and the purpose of specific activities or

requirements for the students.

As stated above, the area that was being neglected by Isabella in her planning was to have

a direct relationship between the activities and the class objectives. For instance, there were

times when an innovative class was obstructed by lack of organization and micro planning.

Many times it was hard for me and the students to understand why a specific activity was being

done. This resulted in students feeling no connection to the class and not understanding its

purpose. This issue comes up in the questionnaire for all four classes evaluated. Some reported

the instructions were not clear, others said they needed more time to finish the whole activity,

and some plainly stated the class needed to be more organized.

An example of insufficient planning for purpose was the calligram class. Students were

asked to create a calligram but no topic was given, nor was this class connected to a previous

class. Students seemed confused with the purpose of the class. Another example of course micro

planning that seemed to be disorganized, at least in terms of time management, was the monster

class. The activity was cut short because time ran out. It was after reading students' comments

in their questionnaires that I noticed how much they were learning with this lesson and how

upset they were that more time was denied to them. In addition, some classes with the potential

to be linked to a story or a grammar task were simply given by themselves. These issues will be

better explained later in this chapter.

Language use
Some activities, though innovative and fun, lacked connection to the teaching and

learning of English because students were allowed to communicate in Spanish, both orally and in

written form. The use of students' first language could be beneficial for the learning of the second language, but in this case the language use hindered lessons because of a lack of purpose for its use. An example of a successful first language inclusion case is described in Moll and Díaz' (1987); however, there is a marked difference between the two cases described by Moll and Diaz and this case. The group observed was allowed to write and speak in Spanish, plus instructions were given in Spanish. In the cases described by Moll and Diaz students were allowed to respond to a reading in Spanish with the purpose of measuring comprehension in English, which was proven to be positive. The Moll and Diaz article used a change in the language of instruction to use students' local knowledge to produce writing, but the product was not in their first language. Students were expected to write in English. In this specific English classroom, what was witnessed is actually what Moll and Diaz highlight as a problem, which is the "'watering down' [of] the curriculum to match perceived or identified weaknesses in the students" (1987, p.301). The weaknesses perceived in this case are that students are not able to write or speak in English.

Most lessons could have been successful in terms of students' practice of English, but were not because students did not feel stimulated to try. Students would say things like: "*Dilo en Español que yo no entiendo Inglés*" (Field notes, October 26th, 2011), which translates to: say it in Spanish because I do not understand English. Isabella usually gave the instructions first in English but then repeated them in Spanish, which resulted in students waiting for the instructions in Spanish. This concurrent translation has been proven to lack effectiveness as students essentially tune out the foreign language because they know they will get the same information in their own language (Crawford, 2004). For this reason I believe students expected Isabella to talk to them in Spanish all the time, and demanded it of her in a very disrespectful manner.

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Furthermore, students often asked which language they were allowed to use, and other times they straightforwardly asked if they could answer their work (write) in Spanish. Sometimes Isabella would answer that they could write it in Spanish and translate it into English afterwards, but other times she told them it was fine if they did their work in Spanish. On one occasion, when Isabella allowed them to use Spanish to later translate, she told them they should know how to write some things in English by now. To this a student answered: "just the basics, like 'hi', 'what', 'how you doing?'" (Field notes, October 21st, 2010). What was heard following the student's comment was laughter, but no more English other than his three phrases were used in the class.

As an observer and an ESL teacher myself, I reflected and asked myself what Isabella was trying to achieve by allowing students to use their first language for everything. Often, on the reflection column of my journal, I would write thoughts like: "I wonder what the purpose of the activity is if the students are allowed to write in Spanish" (Field notes, February 10th, 2011). I concluded that this shows lack of purpose for specific lessons. The macro planning is definitely there. Isabella came prepared with the material for the day, but the target when teaching an English class, which should be for students to learn English, was not the aim in this classroom. This greatly affected the success of new activities introduced in the classroom, such as lessons and practices from the MWWP, because although these had potential for success, the element of a clear goal was not there. Therefore, no success could even be attempted to be measured.

MWWP lessons and practices
NWP & MWWP as teacher-run organizations
As was discussed in Chapter Two, the National Writing Project's (NWP) focus is to have teachers teach other teachers through the means of demonstrations of effective lessons they have taught in their classrooms. It also foments an atmosphere of respect for and recognition of other

teachers and their successful practices. Similarly, the Mayawest Writing Project (MWWP), a site within the NWP, focuses on intense Summer Institutes where a group of teachers from all subjects and levels come together to share and learn. The MWWP is committed to Puerto Rico's teachers and offers many presentations of successful lesson demonstrations in different schools and in open institutes hosted by the MWWP. A characteristic that stands out from the NWP and all sites born from it, including the MWWP, is that they look to reverse the top-down model affecting education.

Personally, I grew interested in the MWWP because it is a teacher-run organization that has the potential to be a strong grassroots organization that empowers educators to reverse the top-down model of Puerto Rico's public educational system. Teacher-run and grassroots organizations have been shown to have great and positive effects on education in different countries. My purpose with this was to discover the positive effects the MWWP might have in a public school English classroom in Puerto Rico.

Some examples of grassroots organizations touching on education and language education are the movement to revitalize Hawaii (Warner, 2001), and the social movement activism supporting quality education in the US (Oaks, Rogers, Blasi, and Lipton, 2008). A grassroots organization called the Kula Kaiapuni is trying to revitalize the Hawaiian language in Hawaii, despite the political history of the country, which has directly affected its language education and language use. This organization created a Hawaiian language immersion school curriculum. Although the MWWP focus is in no way to revitalize a language, they are similar in that they are both bottom-up teachers' organizations created to improve students' literacy. Similarly, Oaks et al.'s (2008) study talks about four grassroots organizations that have been successful in the improvement of the quality of education in the US. These organizations were

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social movements, unlike the MWWP, which was a teachers' organization, but their goals are the same: to improve the quality of education.

Openness of the teacher to incorporate the MWWP into her classroom

Isabella was very open to the introduction of lessons and practices learned in the MWWP SI 2010 into her classroom. After consulting with another specific teacher I learned that for a number of reasons, some teachers were limited to how much of the strategies learned during the summer institute they were able to introduce into their classrooms and fit into the schedule. Although Isabella had her own restrictions, she managed to teach a significant number of the lesson demonstrations presented by the MWWP Summer Institute 2010 participants.

How a teacher interprets the MWWP lessons and practices

According to Isabella, she incorporated activities and lessons from demonstrations about three times a week. She expressed that these activities were beneficial for the standardized tests because students would practice writing. During the interview, Isabella stated that a slight improvement in students' behavior could be perceived when MWWP lessons took place, as well as interest on the part of the students.

Isabella certainly was open to trying different activities, and was even willing to pay for the materials needed in order for the activity to take place. Relying on my visits and observations, I can support her claims that students' behavior somewhat improved, and that students showed more interest in the class. This shows that the MWWP activities indeed had a positive effect on the students. The activities were attractive to them, and they were enthusiastic to work on it. That said, teachers must not rely solely on the activity, but keep in mind the type of group and the group's unique personality, as well as the task being tackled with the activity, or the lesson the activity is being merged with. I must point out that many times this improvement on their attitude did not last long. Students were often confused because of unclear instructions,

and a lack of relation between the class activity and previous classes. If an activity seems without purpose, which many times was the case in this specific classroom, the students will soon become disinterested in it.

In addition, although the students did practice more writing, the assignments seemed disconnected from the English class because students were allowed to write in the language of their preference, for many that language being Spanish. While the MWWP is an organization for teachers of all subjects, each teacher must feel the responsibility to adapt the teacher demonstration activities to fit the needs and requirements of the subject being taught. It is understandable that it might be difficult to get students motivated to work. It is because of this that I am under the impression that Isabella was trying to make students feel as comfortable as possible in order to get students to produce at least some writing. While an element of frustration is to be expected, Isabella's allowance of students to complete their work in Spanish potentially hindered their learning.

How students interpret the MWWP lessons and practices

The eighth grade students who participated in this study voiced their opinions through the second questionnaire that they were given. One of the questionnaires aimed at better understanding how students felt about the different types of lessons they were exposed to during the observation period. Four noticeably different classes were selected and students were asked the following questions: Did you learn from this class? Was the class fun? Did you enjoy the class? Would you like to have more classes similar to this one? From the four classes, one was an unaltered lesson presented during the MWWP SI 2011, two were lessons that merged traditional aspects of lessons with practices characteristic of the MWWP, such as the author's chair and journaling. The fourth lesson used in the questionnaire was chosen to represent a typical lesson, where traditional ways of implementing writing were used that had little influence

from the MWWP. Regarding the first lesson that was used to exemplify the various lessons implemented from the MWWP, "the monster class" was selected because I felt the teacher was the most true to how the demonstration was presented in the SI that we both attended.

The first class evaluated by students was a lesson from the MWWP, which I named "the monsters class." In this class students had to write descriptions of a monster, and later draw a monster using their peers' written descriptions of different monster. Out of the four classes evaluated in the questionnaire, this one was ranked the highest for the question asking if the class was fun, with 86% of students answering it was "a lot of fun." Although 45% said they "learned some things," and only 50% said they "learned a lot", their answers to the open ended questions suggest that the students recognized they were learning with this lesson. From the seven who answered the question about what they learned, six mentioned that they learned how to describe, this was evidenced when they wrote comments like: "*si das descripciones correctas, otros pueden entender*" (translated to "if one gives correct descriptions, others will be able to understand"). Thus using students' answers, it can be interpreted that this lesson was a success in the sense that it was meaningful and got the students to focus on their writing. Students recognized they learned and considered the class to be fun. When it came to the question about areas for improvement, the two areas that the students mentioned were that their peers' behavior could have been improved and there was not enough time to finish the activity.

The second class that was evaluated by students was a class that merged a typical lesson with two MWWP practices; the personal journal and the author's chair. For this class students had to answer a series of questions in their journal about what they wanted to be when they grew up and then they were instructed to present it to the whole class. Although only 18% answered the class was "no fun" to "little fun," the answers to the open ended questions were quite blunt

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regarding how little they enjoyed the lesson. Students answered that what they liked least and stated that what could be improved was that they were forced to answer questions and that the class was boring. One answer that was rather striking was that: "*toda la clase fue una perdida de tiempo*" (which translates to "the whole class was a waste of time"). No other class evaluation received an answer like this, which suggests that this class was one of their least favorites. In addition to finding the class boring, students despised presenting their answers in the author's chair. This came up many times in their open ended questions section for this class evaluation.

I will move on to discuss students' evaluation of the fourth class. The fourth class' task, similarly to the second one, was for students to write their new year's resolutions in their notebooks and present them in the author's chair. Interestingly, although nine answered along the lines of not liking to present in front of the class, six answered that that was what they enjoyed the most, in contrast to the second class evaluated about their future profession, of which none answered they enjoyed presenting. They also answered that they enjoyed listening to their peers and their resolutions.

Out of the three classes that had MWWP elements, one was greatly successful, one was reasonably successful, and one was not successful. The monsters class was the most successful and only seemed to miss the mark in terms of time management, where students reported they needed more time. For the second class, the MWWP practices that were implemented in the section were done in a manner in which the essence of the practices was absent. For instance, the author's chair should be a voluntary activity which provides a safe space for students to share their own writing, but in the class where the author's chair was used, students were required to share. Similarly, the use of the journals is designed to be an emancipatory experience for students, yet in this class the forced sharing opened the writing to critique, which it was not

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designed to do. Thus the compulsory nature of the author's chair and the requirement to use

student journals to answer questions ran counter to the essence of their use in the MWWP. While

Isabella believed she was incorporating the MWWP strategies into this class, the reality is that

both the author's chair and the personal journal were altered and their original rationale was

changed. These changes to the MWWP practices were not successful.

Implementation of MWWP lessons and practices

MWWP Summer Institutes' participants are expected to adapt the various demonstrations

given in SI to their own grade level and content area. For example, for an activity originally

intended to utilize a song's lyrics, another teacher might find it appropriate for his/her class to

implement a similar class structure but substitute the song lyrics for poetry. Regardless of how

the teacher modifies the lesson, the connection must make sense to the group, grade, and material

being covered. It is important for the new lessons to be relevant to the students and to the

material being covered at the moment or new material to be introduced. From my personal

experience in the MWWP SI 2010, I recall this being a clearly stated and reiterated premise for

all teacher demonstrations. However, in the classroom observed I did not find the ideal

implementation encouraged by the MWWP. It was evident in the data collected that although

lessons and practices from the MWWP were being implemented in the classroom, their

implementation left a lot to be desired. The primary areas that needed improvement were in

making connections to the other aspects being studied in the class, the purpose and instructions

for lessons, and the time allotted for each activity.

Unclear objectives

In the classroom observed, the MWWP classes did not seem to be related in any way to

the material being covered or to new material being introduced. They were certainly different

and enjoyable lessons for the students, but little connection was made between the activity and

the previous classes, or between the activity and specific English skills. When MWWP activities were used in the classroom, students responded with excitement at first, but soon were confused by the instructions, or lack of them, and became disinterested and put off by the class.

Based on my own experience and participation in the MWWP SI 2010, I can state that the demonstrations of the lessons were very clear on both instructions and the purpose(s) of the activity. When these same activities were implemented in the classroom, I noticed a struggle to implement the lessons with the same clarity of instruction and purpose which was modeled in the SI. For instance, the teacher who presented the demonstration on calligrams in the SI had the group of teachers read a short story and listen to a song. Participants had an open discussion on how the short story's themes linked with the song's themes. It was after the discussion that the teacher explained what we were expected to do for our calligram. With the use of the theme discussed, which was fresh in our minds, and because of the open discussion, we had many ideas to draw from to create a calligram. It was easy for us to do the work because the instructions and theme were clear and specific.

Unfortunately, the clear directions and purpose described above was not the manner in which the same activity was introduced to the eighth grade class. Students knew what a calligram was, but they had no idea why they were being asked to create one. In the field notes for November 9th, it was recorded that they seemed confused with the instructions, and that Isabella seemed confused as well. She showed them a second example of a calligram, which did little for the students because they already knew what a calligram was. They were simply confused because the activity was not connected to a previous class, a specific theme, or a task. Students were asking what they should do their calligrams about. As soon as Isabella noticed the problem, she suggested that students write and draw about their goals. In the end the students did

whatever they wanted; some drew candy, others animals, and others drew artifacts that represented their hobbies and favorite sports.

It would have been an interesting experiment for Isabella to try to mix MWWP lessons with regular lessons. For example, she could have selected a short story read in class, pulled out themes from the story, and used that specific topic for the calligram. Or she could have expanded the MWWP lesson demonstration by adding a topic before moving on to creating the calligram, like the teacher who presented the activity did. To do this, Isabella could have used a popular song, a fun theme like hobbies, games, seasons of the year, or differences or similarities between two things, just to mention some examples. To make it more serious and meaningful, Isabella could have talked about social issues, maybe even bring a news article to class for them to read and respond to, in the form of a calligram, which involves both writing and drawing.

Unawareness of students' positive reaction

The monster class, as mentioned previously, was a success because of students' engagement, though a more direct link could have been made to adjectives. However, when the class ended early, instead of allowing more time the next class to finish the activity, Isabella strictly continued her week's schedule. Some groups did not finish, and not all were able to showcase their drawing and compare it to the original, which in my case, was what I most enjoyed about the activity when we did it during the MWWP SI 2010.

Engaging activities like the monster lesson, which was successful in getting students to write without them even realizing they were working, are the ones that should be taken advantage of. After such a great lesson that students actually enjoyed, students still felt dissatisfied with their English class; this was clearly reported in their evaluation of this lesson. If students are enthusiastic about the lesson, it might be a reasonable practice to allow them time to finish in the following class. Isabella's schedule was already being altered by the changes in the

school's calendar, which many times served little purpose for the students. Therefore, changes in her own weekly schedule with the objective of continuing effective lessons might have positive results for students and be worth the disturbance in the schedule. It was the case sometimes that a lesson students did not enjoy was continued the following day to be finished, or given as homework. If the same is not done with innovative and fun activities, they will just be seen as fun sprinkles thrown here and there.

Personal journal and author's chair

In addition to lesson demonstrations, Isabella incorporated two practices characteristic of the NWP and the MWWP: the personal journal and the author's chair. A personal journal is an additional notebook students have (and all participants of SIs) for their creative or special pieces. Similarly, the author's chair is a safe space where students can share their writing whenever they feel comfortable enough to do so. These two practices reflect the essence of the MWWP, which promotes creativity and freedom when writing, as well as a comfortable learning environment where all are free to share meaningful pieces of writing.

Isabella's disposition and her innovative instincts were clearly noticeable in her decision to introduce practices from the NWP and MWWP into her classrooms. I commend her for this, but must point out that she was unsuccessful in making a distinction between personal writing and in-class work, as well as the difference between voluntarily sharing and required oral presentations. On occasion, students were expected to answer questions in their personal journal as the task of the day. Furthermore, sometimes all students were required to present their writing or answers to questions in the author's chair. I consider that this took away from the special nature of both practices, and as a result, the journal and the author's chair seemed to become similar, if not equivalent, to the tasks students considered tedious. The NWP and MWWP promote a love for writing and recognition of one's own abilities. It was the case that in the

summer institute, it took time for some teachers to come out of their shells; for some days, while for others weeks. If this happened to self-motivated teachers committed to learning and improving in their practices, it is to be expected with students for whom to be in school is mandatory and who suffer the pressure of being graded.

Outcome

As a consequence of poor micro planning, especially relating to the purpose of lessons and use of specific practices, students did not benefit as much as the lessons had potential to achieve. Given that the lessons were limited by means of connection with previous knowledge and they lacked purpose and connection to the class, they did not serve as a strong support to build on future knowledge, not because of the lessons themselves, but because of the way in which they were employed. It seems the MWWP SI 2010 lessons were used as a fun, add-on activity for the class, but not as a complement to the ESL class.

Throughout my data it was obvious that two factors resulted in students' dissatisfaction with the MWWP activities and special practices. The first one was Isabella's apparent unawareness of students' positive reactions to lessons. Students undoubtedly considered some lessons fun, but when denied extra time on a lesson they were genuinely enjoying, they became discouraged. The second one was the lack of distinction between special practices and in-class common ones, such as the personal journal and author's chair. Although it was true that when the author's chair was optional, only a few students volunteered if given more time, other students might have come out of their shells, which is what happened during the summer institute with some teacher participants. For the author's chair, writers only share what they are most proud of and feel comfortable with, but for an oral report all students are expected to speak in front of the class for a grade or points. Similarly, the journal is a notebook for students to be creative and

open, while the class notebook is for class assignments. These essential distinctions were not made.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter the data collected was outlined, first discussing the school and classroom environment, including the types of lessons taught (typical lessons and MWWP lessons), then discussing the answers from the teacher interview, and lastly discussing the results and answers from the students' questionnaires. The data evidently show a less than perfect classroom dynamic, even when MWWP lessons where included, and a marked distinction between the MWWP SI 2010's ambiance and the one in this classroom. It is reasonable to guess/assume why it worked differently for the MWWP SI 2010; that was a group of self-motivated teachers who decided to further their abilities by participating in a program like this. On the contrary, the average English classroom in a public school is not an ideal setting. The essence of the NWP and the MWWP is to induce change in these challenging settings to improve teaching and to stimulate meaningful learning. In this specific classroom, the genuine good-natured attempt was obvious with the inclusion of new lessons and activities, but when executed, felt short of hitting the mark.

There are many reasons why the implementation of MWWP lessons were not as effective as expected. It is important to consider that Isabella, as well as many public system teachers in Puerto Rico, struggle to meet expectations , follow standards of excellence , answer to supervisors, and to teach for standardize tests. These are issues that do not come up during the MWWP summer institutes since it is not the focus of the program. Despite the fact that the MWWP's purpose is to improve the teaching of writing, these issues could be addressed to avoid having the hard and genuine work that is being done by this project from being hindered by unconsidered factors.

I admire Isabella for being open to introducing new activities. It is a quality many teachers should have; to be aware of the classroom realities and be willing to act with the purpose of making a change. Isabella is one step ahead of many. She just has to improve her technique when introducing new materials, and this can be done by reflecting on her own teaching. Unfortunately, the essence of the MWWP was not completely grasped by her and her classroom; at least this was the case for the eighth grade group used for this case study. Based on my observations and interviews, if she were to reflect on her own teaching practices and consider re-designing and re-planning, the change she can produce in her classrooms in both the students' motivation and attitudes will be much more evident.

Chapter 6: Conclusions, Limitations and Implications

This case study serves to inform and benefit educators and the MWWP administration and participants. In this study it was examined how, in what way and how often Isabella incorporated lessons and activities learned in the MWWP SI 2010 into her curriculum. This was done with the purpose of discovering the benefits resulting from the implementation of the MWWP lessons and activities. As well, another purpose of this study was to discover how Isabella and her students interpreted the inclusion of MWWP lesson and practices.

The data collected by means of observations, interviews with the teacher and questionnaires to the students reflected a need to focus on other areas not necessarily dealing with the lessons and their direct result. As it came up in the data collected, attention was given to the external factors and factors inside the classroom that were hindering the teaching and learning processes.

Findings based on research questions

1. **How is the teacher incorporating lessons and/or materials created in the MWWP into her curriculum?**
Isabella did incorporate lesson demonstrations presented during the MWWP SI, as well as common aspects of lessons used in both the NWP and the MWWP. On some occasions the teacher would teach a lesson almost exactly as it was presented by another teacher participant in the SI. In addition to this, she incorporated into her regular classes' practices like the scribe, which is a student who retells what happened in the previous class, the author's chair, which is used as an open space for those who wish to share their writing, and the personal journal, which use should be for creative and personal pieces of writing.

As noted in the previous chapter, although Isabella incorporated a lot from the MWWP, she fell short on grasping the true essence of the project and bringing it into her classroom.

Because of weak micro planning, the lessons lacked purpose, which many times resulted in students feeling disinterested in the lesson. Likewise, the teacher seemed to misunderstand the purpose of the author's chair and personal journal and in the attempt to incorporate MWWP with her regular lessons, she instead ended up depriving the MWWP practices of positive results and at the same time depriving students from experiencing both these practices as they were intended to be experienced.

2. **How does she perceive the MWWP approaches as working to improve the teaching of language in an eighth grade English classroom in northwestern Puerto Rico?**

Isabella plans all her classes ahead of time, and this was the case with the MWWP lessons. During her planning period she would estimate the positive results the inclusion of MWWP practices and lessons would cause. During the interview dealing with the MWWP, I was under the impression that she would plan with the expectation of a positive result, but not reflect on the class once it was taught to verify if indeed that was the case.

In her opinion, the students' reaction to the MWWP lessons and practices were positive in terms of their behavior, which I observed to a certain extent. In addition, she believed that the lessons would be helpful for the students when they took the standardized test because they were practicing writing. As stated before, when it comes to learning, Isabella solely focused on the results she expected when planning the class, and not the real results. Her only feedback after the lessons was concerning students' behavior.

3. **How do students perceive the MWWP approaches used in the classroom?**

It is important to clarify that students did not know they were evaluating MWWP lessons, or that in a way they were comparing typical lessons with MWWP lessons. The fact that

Isabella participated in the Summer Institute and that she was incorporating lessons from the MWWP was not revealed to the students.

Students' answers were a testimony that they enjoyed the MWWP lessons. Their enjoyment of MWWP practices introduced in the classroom was less. From the four classes they evaluated, just one was a replica of a lesson demonstration. The other two that contained MWWP elements were classes in which the personal journal and author's chair was used. Students did not enjoy answering questions in their journals and did not enjoy the pressure of having to present what they wrote in the author's chair. They did, on the other hand, greatly enjoy writing with a peer and stated that they were having fun and learning how to describe.

Principal findings

The main findings in this research deal with all the factors, external and in the classroom, which affect the teaching and learning processes in a language classroom. As well, it was found that misinterpretation of lesson demonstrations and MWWP practices and misunderstanding of students' reactions resulted in ineffective implementation of the MWWP activities and lessons, and compliance with unfavorable results.

The one element of introducing MWWP lessons and practices to the classroom was bombarded with numerous hindering factors coming from the school's administration, students' attitude and behavior, and teacher practices and customs. It was difficult to clearly evaluate and assert if a lesson or practice was beneficial in itself because there were always other factors influencing the lessons and practices. Among the factors impairing the MWWP lessons were school activities and interlocking schedule, a shared classroom, students' disruptive behavior, students' resistance against English, teacher's misinterpretation of MWWP practiced, weak micro planning, Isabella's lack of re-planning, and the allowed use of the language of preference.

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Pedagogical implications

      For educators
      The case study findings indicate that it is essential for any educator decided on introducing new strategies and practices into their classroom with the purpose of improving teaching and learning, to be aware of all the factors that might affect their teaching and students' learning process. Educators must strategize against negative factors that might result detrimental for lessons and avoid allowing to be affected by them.

      For the Mayawest Writing Project
      The MWWP is already an organization causing positive and effective results in many teachers' practices and classrooms. The project provides teachers with lesson-based tools on improving writing and literacy. This study has called attention to factors that can harm the work the MWWP is doing and affect the effectiveness of the project's help. This study serves to inform the MWWP administration about some adversities the teachers face when attempting to introduce what was learned during the Summer Institute into their classroom. The MWWP could take this information and address these issues during Summer Institutes, open institutes, and presentations in schools. If the project expands from providing lesson-based tools, to provide additional tools pertaining to classroom management, class planning, and dealing with administrative issues, the already positive impact on the teachers' community could be much greater.

Limitations
      For this study limitations were faced because of my own time restrains as well as because of unexpected events. These limitations affected the study before and during the data collection process. During the time previous to the data collection process, the IRB in the UPRM campus was undergoing administrative changes, which caused delay in the starting date of the data collection. Another limitation was that the data collected was limited to one teacher and one

group because of my own time constrains. In addition, during the data collection process events like the teacher being moved to another school cut my observations short.

Drawback in the methodological process
All three of my data collection methods (observations, interviews, and questionnaires) were affected by an unplanned alteration. In the middle of my second set of observations, Isabella, the teacher I had been observing for months was suddenly transferred to a different school. A new teacher was going to take her place, and she would be able to stay only for a few more days. As abruptly as the news came, I had to stop my observations. As well, Isabella's new schedule made everything more difficult for her, and it was difficult to find a time to do the interviews. One interview was done in the middle of the spring 2011 semester and the other during the beginning of summer 2011. The classroom and students were not fresh in Isabella's memory because at the time of the interviews she was working in a different school and teaching different students.

This surprise drastically limited the access I had to the students, and for this reason I decided to omit the piloting of the questionnaires. In the attempt to still administer the questionnaires, I went to the school with my IRB approval and signed consent forms in the hopes that the new teacher would be so kind as to let me administer the questionnaires. She allowed me to administer both questionnaires that same day, and so I did. In the students' answers, it is stated by them that some things they do not recall since time has passed, reaffirming that questionnaires were affected as well by the sudden change.

Regarding the observations, I wish I would have spent more time in the classroom for the students to feel more comfortable with me. I wish the dynamic had been different in the classroom between the students and me, and believe with more time this could have been achieved.

Limited number of MWWP participants observed

Due to time constraints and few resources, I was only able to observe one teacher, in one school in western PR. There were many participants in the MWWP SI 2010, from various subjects and various grade levels. It would have been beneficial for my study to have worked with more participants from the MWWP and had seen their experiences and results when implementing lessons from the MWWP. Isabella's experience was different even among her different groups; therefore it is supposable that other teachers' experiences would have served to shed new light on my study. In addition, with having worked with just one teacher and one group, I could only arrive to conclusion about that specific case, whereas if I had had the opportunity to observe more, I could have made generalizations across larger populations.

In addition to the limitation of having observed one teacher, I was limited in the number of student groups she taught that I was able to observe. Isabella was the English teacher for different groups of different junior high school level students. During the interview she explained how other groups reacted differently than the group observed, to the same lessons. My study could have benefited from additional observations of the same lessons, as well as from different students' perspectives and opinions about the lessons evaluated in questionnaire #2 (see appendix G).

Reserved focal participant

Isabella, the teacher participant, welcomed me into her classroom with no restrictions and she ensured that I was informed about everything that was happening in her classroom. In contrast to that, at the time of the interviews she was reserved and seemed cautious about the information she shared. The possible reasons for this are many; the questions asked might have made her feel uncomfortable, she might have felt pressured to provide a useful answer, or the information might have not been fresh in her memory since the interviews were done some time

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after she had stopped working at the school where the study took place. For whatever reason she held back, her reservation at the time of interviews limited their depth.

Start of data collection delayed (by IRB)

Originally, the classroom observations were scheduled to begin as soon as the fall 2010 semester started. I made sure to request the permission from the IRB early enough to ensure I would be able to start collecting data on time. Unfortunately, the IRB office in the UPRM was undergoing changes in directorial positions. One initial person reviewed my application and provided feedback on it, but when the directorial positions changed, my application had to be re-sent and reviewed once more by a different person. There was a time period between the changes, where I was unable to reach any personal of the IRB. Once I located a contact person, the process started to move along once again, but not after long that person was moved to another office, unrelated to the IRB. Eventually, when my application was revised by the new director, I still faced inconveniences because the director was unfamiliar with details of my application because it was the two previous people who were more informed regarding my application and study's proposal. All this delayed the starting date for collecting my data and was a limitation as to how many observation I did.

Suggestions for future research

Teachers' organizations can be powerful tools for the improvement of language education in Puerto Rico. Research done on this topic will serve to inform educators, teacher-run and grassroots organizations, and policy makers. My research covers just a small portion, therefore leaving room for others to expand and improve on the topic of teacher-run and grassroots organization to better education. For those interested in expanding on this topic I have a few suggestions. First, if MWWP is to be used, to use more than one focal teacher. The

different teachers could be from different grade levels and subjects. For instance, my own research would have made more of an impact if I had used a Spanish teacher as well. Another suggestion is to use the other NWP site in Puerto Rico located in the metropolitan area of the island, San Juan to do a similar study with. Lastly, if other teachers' organizations with different focuses for education were studied it should result in very interesting research.

Concluding remarks

The goal of this study was to discover the benefits in a single classroom coming as a result of a teacher's participation in a teachers' organization. The study focused on observing classroom dynamics and on learning how the focal teacher and the students perceived specific lessons from the teachers' organization, MWWP. Benefits were indeed noticed, as well as areas that needed to be addressed and strengthened for the improvement of language education. The results found might serve to inform educators, the MWWP, and other teacher-run organizations and grassroots movements focused on education. In the end, this study looks to highlight the importance that a teacher's organization can have on improving education. Such organizations are important not only for Puerto Rico's educational future, but for any context that is battling increased top-down policies that work to take agency and creativity out of the hands of teachers.

Appendices

Appendix A: Teacher's interview consent form

Permiso – Entrevista

Yo, _____, doy mi consentimiento a Nataly Rodríguez, estudiante graduada de la UPR recinto de Mayagüez, actualmente matriculada en el programa MAEE en Educación del Inglés, a utilizar la información provista por mí, por medio de entrevistas, para su tesis de maestría, "Teacher Grassroots Organizations to Improve Language Instruction in Puerto Rico". El objetivo de la investigación siendo descubrir los beneficios que pueden surgir en el aprendizaje de lenguaje de los estudiantes, luego de yo haber sido participante del *Mayawest Writing Project Summer Institute 2010*.

Los resultados de esta investigación pueden ser publicados en canales locales, regionales, nacionales, e internacionales, incluyendo conferencias y asambleas profesionales, así también como en revistas, periódicos, libros, entre otros posibles documentos impresos y electrónicos.

Entiendo que la participación es completamente voluntaria y no se recibirá ningún tipo de compensación por la contribución. Estoy al tanto también de que nada negativo ocurrirá si en cualquier momento se decide cesar la participación en esta investigación.

Entiendo que al firmar y fechar este permiso, autorizo a Nataly Rodríguez a utilizar la información provista por mí, a través de entrevistas, como parte de una investigación que probablemente resultará en publicación.

Entiendo que se me asignará un seudónimo como método de protección de mi identidad y para confidencialidad de la investigación. En adición, el nombre y localización específica de la escuela donde enseño no será revelado. Todas las anotaciones y grabaciones serán guardados en área segura, y destruidos eventualmente.

_____   _____
Firma   Fecha

_____
Nombre en letra de molde

_____
Nataly Rodriguez (investigadora)

Appendix B: Students' questionnaire parent's consent form

<div align="center">Permiso – Encuesta</div>

Yo, _____, padre, madre o encargado de
_____, estudiante menor de edad, doy mi consentimiento a
Nataly Rodríguez, estudiante graduada de la UPR recinto de Mayagüez, actualmente matriculada
en el programa MAEE en Educación del Inglés, a utilizar la información provista por mi hijo(a)
por medio de encuestas para su tesis de maestría, "Teacher Grassroots Organizations to Improve
Language Instruction in Puerto Rico." El objetivo de la investigación siendo descubrir los
beneficios que pueden surgir en el aprendizaje de lenguaje de los estudiantes, luego que la
maestra fuese participante del *Mayawest Writing Project Summer Institute 2010.*
Los resultados de esta investigación pueden ser publicados en canales locales, regionales,
nacionales, e internacionales, incluyendo conferencias y asambleas profesionales, así también
como en revistas, periódicos, libros, entre otros posibles documentos impresos y electrónicos.
Entiendo que la participación es completamente voluntaria y no se recibirá ningún tipo de
compensación por la contribución. Estoy al tanto también de que nada negativo ocurrirá si en
cualquier momento se decide cesar la participación en esta investigación.
Entiendo que al firmar y fechar este permiso, autorizo a Nataly Rodríguez a utilizar la
información provista por mi hijo(a), a través de encuestas, como parte de una investigación que
probablemente resultará en publicación.
Entiendo que información personal, como nombres y apellidos, no serán preguntadas, y por lo
tanto, no serán utilizados, como método de protección de la identidad del menor de edad y para
confidencialidad de la investigación. En adición, el nombre y localización específica de la
escuela donde estudia el menor, no será revelado. Todos los papeles de encuestas serán
guardados en área segura, y destruidos eventualmente.

_____   _____
Firma de padre, madre o encargado   Fecha

_____
Nombre en letra de molde

_____
Nataly Rodriguez (investigadora)

Appendix C: Students' questionnaire consent

<div align="center">Permiso del menor de edad – Encuesta</div>

Tu padre, madre, o encargado me ha dado el permiso de pedirte que contestes unas encuestas en el salón de clases. La encuesta se dará rápido después de tu clase de inglés, dos entrevistas en total. Las encuestas serán sobre tu opinión de las actividad que se han dado en la clase y tu uso de idioma. No te voy a pedir que escribas nada personal, como tu edad, nombre y apellidos, ni nombre de tu escuela.

No tienes obligación de decir que sí, y puedes dejar de participar cuando quieras.

Tu participación me ayudaría mucho en mi proyecto de tesis que se titula "Teacher Grassroots Organizations to Improve Language Instruction in Puerto Rico"

¿Quieres ser parte de esta investigación? Sí_____   No_____

_____
Nombre en letra de molde

_____   _____
Firma   Fecha

_____   _____
Firma de padre, madre o encargado   Fecha

_____   _____
Nataly Rodríguez (investigadora)   Fecha

Appendix D: Teacher Interview #1

Teacher Interview #1: ABOUT THE TEACHER

Outline/ Questions

1. Tell me about you

2. Have you ever lived in Puerto Rico? Have you lived in the states?

3. Tell me about your family. Do they live close to you, with you, far from you?

4. Where did you study elementary school, intermediate school, high school, and
   university?

5. You are currently undergoing graduate studies. When do you plan to be done with these?

6. What are some goals you wish to reach?

7. What are your plans for the future?

8. Do you live near the school where you currently work?

9. About the school you currently work at, what are your likes and dislikes?

    a. Could you mention three areas you believe your school is doing an exceptional
       job?

    b. Could you mention three areas you believe need improvement in this school?

10. Have you always taught in the public school system?

11. Do you notice attitudes in students (positive or negative) towards the English language or
    class?

    a. If so, why do you think this is?

12. What problems do you face when teaching?

13. Do you enjoy your profession?

Appendix E: Teacher Interview #2

Teacher Interview #2: ABOUT THE MWWP

Outline/ Questions

1. How did you first know about the MWWP?

2. How did you first grow interested in the MWWP SI?

3. Can you tell me about your experience in the MWWP SI?

4. How do you incorporate MWWP strategies and activities in the classroom? How often?

5. Have you noticed a difference in students' *attitudes* when MWWP strategies are implemented? Can you give an example?

6. Have you noticed a difference in students' *behavior* when MWWP strategies are implemented? Can you give an example?

7. Have you noticed a difference in students' *learning* when MWWP strategies are implemented? Can you give an example?

8. Are there any benefits in introducing these activities into the classroom? Can you mention a few?

9. Do you think the MWWP SI impacted your teaching in any way? If yes, how so? If not, why do you think?

10. Before the MWWP, how did you plan your classes and materials to be used?

    a. Do you follow the DE *curriculum framework*?

11. Do different groups react differently to the same activities? If so, please explain how so and why you think this is.

12. Do you notice a change of attitude in students when the MWWP are used?

    a. If so, are these changes positive or negative?

b. If so, do these changed occur with certain activities or with all?

13. Is there a specific MWWP activity you think worked best for the students? If so, which and why do you think?

14. Are there other factors that might negatively affect the effectiveness of the MWWP activities introduced in the class? Mention. Explain.

15. Is there anything that limits how much of the MWWP you introduce in your classes?

Appendix F: Students' Questionnaire #1

Questionnaire #1: ABOUT THE STUDENTS' LANGUAGE USE

I. Lee las preguntas y marca la cajita que más se acerque a tu contestación. De la derecha a la izquierda, las cajitas significan lo siguiente: (1)nunca, (2)a veces, (3)casi siempre, (4)siempre. Si tienes algo que comentar o añadir, puedes usar la última columna.

	nunca	A veces	Casi siempre	siempre	Comentarios
1. ¿Ves televisión en español?					
2. ¿Ves televisión en inglés?					
3. Cuando ves películas en español, ¿le pones subtítulos?					
4. Cuando ves películas en inglés, ¿le pones subtítulos?					
5. ¿Lees en español?					
6. ¿lees en inglés?					
7. ¿Tienes oportunidades de hablar inglés fuera de la escuela?					
8. ¿Hablas inglés en tu clase de inglés?					

II. Provee una corta respuesta a las siguientes preguntas.

1. ¿Eres bilingüe? _____

2. ¿Qué es lo más que te gusta del inglés? _____

3. ¿Qué es lo menos que te gusta del inglés?_____

4. ¿Qué es lo más que te gusta del español? _____

5. ¿Qué es lo menos que te gusta del español? _____

6. ¿Para qué crees que te sirve aprender dos idiomas?_____

   _____

7. ¿Para qué crees que te sirve aprender inglés? _____

   _____

Appendix G: Students' Questionnaire #2: STUDENTS' EVALUATION OF CLASSES

Lee las preguntas y marca la cajita que más se acerque a tu contestación. De la derecha a la izquierda, las cajitas significan lo siguiente: (1)nada, (2)un poco, (3)algo, (4)bastante. Si tienes algo que comentar o añadir, puedes usar la última columna. Provee una corta respuesta para las preguntas del 5-9.

Clase #1: La clase en que en grupo escribiste las descripciones de un monstruo, y luego otro grupo intentaba dibujar el monstruo con tus descripciones.	Nada	Un poco	Algo	Bastante	Comentarios
1. ¿Aprendiste en esa clase?					
2. ¿Fue divertida la clase?					
3. ¿Te gusto la clase?					
4. ¿Te gustaría más clases como esa?					

5. ¿Qué fue lo más que te gustó de la clase?

_____

6. ¿Qué fue lo menos que te gusto de la clase?

_____

7. ¿Qué dos cosas mejorarías de la clase?
(1) _____ (2)_____
8. ¿Qué aprendiste en la clase?

_____

9. ¿Te gustaría tener clases como esta más a menudo?

_____

Clase #2: La clase en que se habló de la profesión que te gustaría ser, y contestaste algunas preguntas sobre el tema en tu "journal."	Nada	Un poco	Algo	Bastante	Comentarios
1. ¿Aprendiste en esa clase?					
2. ¿Fue divertida la clase?					
3. ¿Te gusto la clase?					
4. ¿Te gustaría más clases como esa?					

5. ¿Qué fue lo más que te gustó de la clase?

_____

6. ¿Qué fue lo menos que te gusto de la clase?

_____

7. ¿Qué dos cosas mejorarías de la clase?

(2) _____ (2)_____

8. ¿Qué aprendiste en la clase de hoy?

    _____

9. ¿Te gustaría tener clases como esta más a menudo?

    _____

Clase #3: La clase en que leyeron el cuento de la niña que fue curada y luego se convirtió en baloncelista. Luego de leer la historia hablaron sobre ella en el salón.	Nada	Un poco	Algo	Bastante	Comentarios
1. ¿Aprendiste en esa clase?					
2. ¿Fue divertida la clase?					
3. ¿Te gusto la clase?					
4. ¿Te gustaría más clases como esa?					

5. ¿Qué fue lo más que te gustó de la clase?

    _____

6. ¿Qué fue lo menos que te gusto de la clase?

    _____

7. ¿Qué dos cosas mejorarías de la clase?
    (3) _____ (2)_____

8. ¿Qué aprendiste en la clase de hoy?

    _____

9. ¿Te gustaría tener clases como esta más a menudo?

    _____

Clase #4: *Descripción de la clase con MWWP estrategia*

Clase #4: Cuando escriben algo y lo presentan y leen en la silla del autor. Por ejemplo, cuando escribieron sus resoluciones para el nuevo año y lo presentaron al frente.	Nada	Un poco	Algo	Bastante	Comentarios
1. ¿Aprendiste en esa clase?					
2. ¿Fue divertida la clase?					
3. ¿Te gusto la clase?					
4. ¿Te gustaría más clases como esa?					

5. ¿Qué fue lo más que te gustó de la clase?

    _____

6. ¿Qué fue lo menos que te gusto de la clase?

   _____

7. ¿Qué dos cosas mejorarías de la clase?

   (4) _____ (2)_____

8. ¿Qué aprendiste en la clase de hoy?

   _____

9. ¿Te gustaría tener clases como esta más a menudo?

   _____

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