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Journal

Journal of Latinos and Education, 23(2)

ISSN

1534-8431

Authors

Aguirre-Munoz, Zenaida

Esat, Gulden

Smith, Bradley

et al.

Publication Date

2024-03-14

DOI

10.1080/15348431.2023.2189120

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To cite this article: Zenaida Aguirre-Muñoz, Gulden Esat, Bradley Smith & Nayoung Choi (2024) Effects of Teaching Efficacy, Advocacy, and Knowledge on Coping and Well-Being of Dual Language Immersion Teachers, Journal of Latinos and Education, 23:2, 876-891, DOI: [10.1080/15348431.2023.2189120](https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2023.2189120)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2023.2189120>



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Effects of Teaching Efficacy, Advocacy, and Knowledge on Coping and Well-Being of Dual Language Immersion Teachers

Zenaida Aguirre-Muñoz ^a, Gulden Esat ^b, Bradley Smith ^c, and Nayoung Choi^c

^aCognitive and Information Sciences, University of California; ^bPsychology & Philosophy, Sam Houston State University;

^cPsychological, Health, and Learning Sciences, University of Houston

ABSTRACT

In the United States, there is a nationwide shortage of bilingual teachers, but limited research on factors that contribute to their burnout and attrition. This exploratory multiple case study aimed to identify stressors unique to Spanish-English bilingual teachers and how they cope with these stressors. Interviews with two dual language immersion teachers over the course of four months revealed multiple, significant stressors including instructional demands unique to the students they serve, workplace bullying, and lack of administrative support. Although teachers adopted palliative coping strategies, their high sense of teaching efficacy and advocacy for their students were major mitigating factors to burnout. In addition to teaching efficacy, competence in pedagogy and workplace engagement were mitigating factors to well-being. Teachers avoided burnout because of their high eudaimonic well-being (the subjective experiences associated with living a life of virtue in pursuit of human excellence) coupled with direct cognitive and behavioral coping strategies leading to an increase in job-related well-being and retention. That is, their coping strategies moderated the impact of a district culture that was perceived as negative.

KEYWORDS

Stress and coping; burnout; resilience; well-being; dual language immersion teachers; elementary school

The bilingual teachers here, we are all on anti-depressants . . . that can't be normal!

The opening quote was expressed by an elementary schoolteacher and reflected her perception that bilingual teachers are exceptionally stressed after a meeting where many declared they were contemplating transferring to other schools. Remarkably, none of the teachers left during this academic year. The intensity of this response stimulated an exploratory case study into the protective factors mitigating attrition. Attrition is approaching 50% in high-need areas where language diversity is climbing. There is a significant flow of teachers from poverty schools to more affluent schools and minority teachers have higher turnover rates (R. M. Ingersoll & May, 2011). Data for bilingual teachers are lacking but the turnover rate of teachers serving English learners (ELs: students whose first language is not English and are not proficient in English) is at least 22% in schools with over 55% minority students (R. Ingersoll et al., 2017). One of the most consistently reported reasons for attrition is poor work-related well-being and high stress leading to job dissatisfaction (Sass et al., 2011). Further, the link between teacher resilience, teacher well-being, and engagement have been trending topics of research in the last decade (e.g., Bermejo-Toro et al., 2016); however, most studies have not focused on bilingual teachers in their samples. This exploratory case study addresses this research gap and examines two bilingual teachers' work-related stressors, their reactions to these stressors, coping strategies, and the outcomes during a period of severe workforce stress.

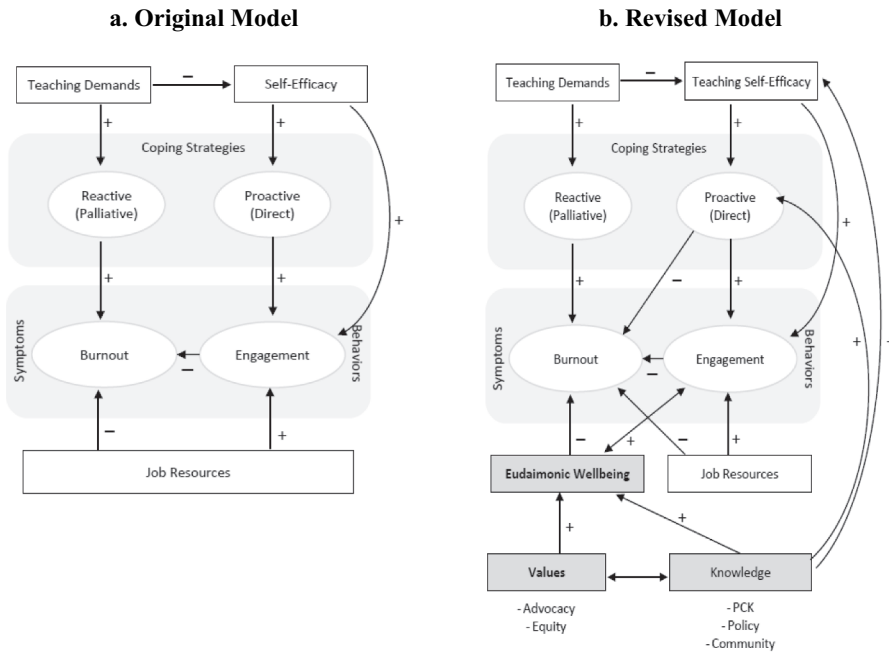


Figure 1. Bermejo-Toro et al. (2016), model of bilingual teacher well-being (a) and revised model integrating the current study findings. A is adapted from the final model reported in Bermejo-Toro et al. (2016); +/- symbols represent negative/positive relationships found by Bermejo-Toro et al. (2016); Shaded boxes in B represent the findings from this study.

Theoretical framework & literature review

This study was informed by the Bermejo-Toro et al. (2016) teacher well-being model (Figure 1a) addressing complex processes involved in bilingual teacher burnout and engagement. The model highlights interactions between context (teaching demands, resources) and psychosocial factors (self-efficacy, coping strategies) and their differential impacts on burnout and engagement. The model was found to predict teaching demands negatively affect self-efficacy in different stressful situations. Further, both teaching demands and self-efficacy influence teacher well-being (operationalized as engagement and burnout) and their effects are mediated by coping strategies (either reactive or proactive). Reactive coping increases burnout symptoms whereas self-efficacy leads to proactive coping leading to higher rates of engagement. Likewise, job resources (including school administration support, colleague support, and feedback) differentially impact burnout and engagement. A more recent study (Mérída-López et al., 2020), also found evidence of the mediating effect of engagement on burnout, specifically intentions to leave the profession. This more recent study also found that social support from colleagues and supervisors (job resources) was positively associated with work engagement. Further, Han et al. (2020) found that teacher efficacy mediates well-being which is consistent with the Bermejo-Toro et al. (2016) model. Thus, this model is helpful for examining bilingual teacher coping and well-being in the context of severe workforce stress.

Unique stressors (demands) for bilingual teachers

Bilingual teachers experience numerous stressors, several related to teaching in high poverty schools (Jiménez-Castellanos & García, 2017) including high academic challenges (Murphy, 2014), pressure to improve test scores (von der Embse et al., 2015), isolation from the mainstream (Amos, 2016), and tension between accountability policies and prioritization of English proficiency over biliteracy growth (Babino & Stewart, 2018). Bilingual teachers might also experience stress related to their peers perhaps

because they are often from more diverse ethnic, racial, or socioeconomic backgrounds. In states where bilingual teachers are concentrated such as Texas and California, the rates of harassment and bullying are 38% and 42% percent, respectively, compared to 27% of educators nationwide (Badass Teachers Association, 2017). Teachers who are not part of the mainstream or culture-defining group are also prone to microaggressions (Amos, 2013) or even more severe forms of social aggressions such as harassment and mobbing (perceived terrorizing at the workplace by colleagues or principals: van Dick & Wagner, 2001). Bilingual teachers and teacher candidates in mono-ethnic teaching settings experience high levels of microaggressions (are hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights regardless of intent to insult) (Amos, 2013).

Yet other stressors for bilingual teachers include a higher than typical need for parental contact and involvement (Weinstein & Trickett, 2016). Minority immigrant parents are less likely than White, native-born parents to participate in activities at their children's school (Turney & Kao, 2009) due to poverty related challenges, such as job inflexibility, as well as factors related to their immigrant background such as unfamiliarity of the US educational system. As a result, bilingual teachers may exert more effort to remove barriers to increase parent engagement with the school. Finally, bilingual teachers have elevated paperwork and translation demands attached to this position. A workload issue unique to bilingual teachers, TWDI teachers in particular, is the lack of sufficient curricular materials in the partner language (Amanti, 2019; Armanti, 2019). When such materials are not available, TWDI teachers expend a great deal of time and effort to creating their own materials (Lemberger, 1997). This invisible work bilingual teachers are compelled to do arguably impacts teaching performance and decisions to stay or leave the field (Armanti, 2019). Given these stressors unique to bilingual teachers, it is important to study and understand factors that may mitigate against burnout among bilingual teachers.

Psychosocial mitigating factors against burnout

Burnout can be prevented at physical, medical, psychological, and social levels. At the physical level, many teachers cope through exercise, yoga, and other physical activities that effectively manage stress (Cockburn, 1996). Some teachers seek assistance from doctors and cope with stress through medication: in fact, 12% reported taking anti-depressant medication (NASUWT, 2018). The following section focuses on psychological and social factors that are known to reduce the negative impact of stress or increase subjective well-being.

Teacher efficacy (perceptions about their ability to influence student performance: Bergman et al., 1977) predicts a multitude of important variables such as student achievement and motivation (Lazarides et al., 2018); teachers' adoption of innovations (Aguirre-Muñoz & Pando, 2017); teacher absenteeism (Imants & Van Zoelen, 1995), as well as teacher stress and burnout (Wang et al., 2015). Teachers who doubt their ability to improve student performance are likely to experience burnout and have a substantially elevated risk of leaving the profession (Brockmeyer & Edelstein, 1997). When administrative support is poor or insufficient the impact of job stressors is amplified and hinder achievement growth (Sass et al., 2011), which compounds teachers' stress. Administrative support can be expressed through formal and informal supervision, allocation of resources, scheduling, work assignments, implementation of promotion procedures and compensation policies (Dinham & Scott, 1998). Teachers who perceive greater administrative support are more likely to believe they could make a positive impact on their students' education (Sass et al., 2011). In contrast, teacher attrition is higher with higher levels of dissatisfaction with administrators (R. M. Ingersoll et al., 2018).

Coping strategies (teacher resilience) can aim to solve the problem or reduce the emotional discomfort, also known as direct or palliative coping, respectively (Fortes-ferreira et al., 2006). The use of "direct" coping strategies contributes to greater levels of everyday resilience or "buoyancy" (Martin & Marsh, 2008). Higher levels of buoyancy are positively correlated with greater levels of engagement and well-being (Parker & Martin, 2009). "Palliative" strategies, on the other hand, can ease pressures in the short term but do not directly deal with the sources of these pressures. Denying,

minimizing, or self-medicating are geared toward relieving short-term emotional discomfort without addressing the causes (Fortes-ferreira et al., 2006). Consequently, palliative strategies can lead to reduced well-being overtime (de Vibe et al., 2018), lower job engagement, and more significant burnout (Parker et al., 2012). Findings from research on teachers suggest that direct coping strategies, such as planning and content mastery, tend to predict better workplace outcomes and less stress than do palliative coping strategies such as self-handicapping and failure avoidance (Martin & Marsh, 2008). Moreover, teachers who utilize direct coping strategies can lower their degrees of burnout than teachers who ignore or avoid problematic situations (van Dick & Wagner, 2001).

Workplace engagement as a well-being indicator

Workplace engagement is the emotional and cognitive commitment of employees in their organizational role (Saks, 2006). Teacher engagement was found to be a positive predictor of work satisfaction (Perera et al., 2018). A particularly important aspect of engagement is workplace participation because it is associated with high levels of satisfaction, positive career aspirations, and extra or non-core role participation (Saks, 2006). In the context of the school setting, teachers with higher levels of well-being volunteer to lead after-school activities, participate in professional conferences, and take leadership positions (Parker & Martin, 2009).

Informed by this research base, the purpose of this study was to examine stress and burnout of two Latina teachers who teach in a dual language immersion program. The research questions addressed are as follows:

- (1) What are the specific stressors reported by two bilingual teachers, Nancy and Angie, in a two-way dual immersion program during a highly stressful program change?
- (2) How do Nancy and Angie react to these stressors? Is there evidence of direct and/or palliative coping strategies?
- (3) How do Nancy and Angie's self-efficacy and educational experience mitigate the impact of stress?

Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative exploratory case study design (Yin, 2014) to explore the stressors and well-being of bilingual teachers during a highly stressful policy change. The data in this study were taken from semi-structured, face-to-face interviews of two bilingual teachers conducted over the course of four months and field notes during campus and district meetings with teachers and parents.

Teacher selection

The teachers were two bilingual teachers working at one Two-Way Dual Immersion (TWDI) school in the Texas Panhandle. The study was limited to bilingual teachers at a TWDI school because the scarce research on stress and coping of teachers of ELs has not focused on bilingual teachers in TWDI schools. These teachers were also selected due to a new district mandate that uniquely affected bilingual teachers at this school. Thus, examining a context in which a potential professional stressor unique to TWDI teachers was recently introduced was expected to shed light on sources of teacher behaviors that could be linked to teachers perceptions of and response to stress. The teachers were recruited from a study aimed at raising teacher effectiveness in meeting the linguistic needs of ELs in science and math instruction. Teacher qualification for the current study was based on three inclusion criteria: (1) an active teaching license with a bilingual certification, (2) at least five years teaching experience, and (3) currently teaching in a Spanish-English dual immersion classroom.

Context of the study

State context

Since 1973, Texas has continually provided bilingual instructional options that included dual language immersion (Senate Bill 121, 1973) in public schools with twenty or more children identified with “limited English proficiency.” State policy requires bilingual education programs to address the affective, linguistic, and cognitive needs of EBs and names the four allowable bilingual program models that may be delivered in public schools (early exit, late exit, two-way dual language, and one-way dual language). Texas state policy also states the primary goals of dual language programs are to promote biliteracy and bilingualism (Texas Administrative Code, 2012). Although a significant number of schools in Texas provide some form of traditional bilingual instruction (e.g., early or late exit programs), TWDI programs have been offered to EBs across the state for decades (Kennedy, 2019). Indeed, TWDI programs have become so popular in the state, many districts use such program offerings to attract English-dominant students (Pimentel et al., 2008). Although the legislative code clearly identifies these programs as key to addressing EBs learning needs, there is evidence that their needs are not fully addressed in schools that cater to English-dominant students (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017). While this is a concerning trend in Texas and beyond, the school where the teachers in this study teach is predominantly poor, Latinx, and the students in the DLI program that start in the program are predominantly Spanish dominant. Among the TWDI teachers, the needs of EBs are at the forefront of decision making.

District context

Although the city is mid-sized, it is surrounded by cotton and sorghum fields, creating a rural atmosphere within its boundaries. The district has 32 elementary schools, five of which serve ELs. With 18.2% of the population identified as ELs, this district has improved its services to ELs by providing some form of language education services (i.e., Dual Language, or Sheltered Content Instruction) to nearly all of the identified students (98%). Although gains have been made in services to ELs, district personnel recognized the achievement of ELs lack consistency, particularly if they were enrolled in English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) instructional programs (personal communication, October 10, 2019). EL enrollment in the five elementary schools that served ELs ranged from 7% to 51% on the campuses that offered EL services. Teacher bilingual certification ranged from 8% to 58%. For the most part, these schools met the State mandated teacher to student ratio of 20:1. The ratio ranged from 3:12 to 12:20 with most of the schools well below the 20-student threshold. The available programming for ELs produced vastly different results (STAAR: Based Monitoring Analysis System Report, 2016). Students in pull-out programs performed at about the same level as students who did not receive any services (about 50% passing the State content assessments). Although students in sheltered and TWDI instructional contexts performed better (62.6% and 67.6% passing State content assessments for sheltered and TWDI respectively), their performance levels were not optimal. However, this was not the case for Harlow Elementary (92% passing State content assessments). Nevertheless, the district set a new policy that would fundamentally change the school’s TWDI program; a 90–10 model. While this model rests on starting with 10% English, the new policy required schools to increase English instruction to at least 50%, beginning in pre-kindergarten and reach 90% by the end of third grade. The decision to change the TWDI program from the 90–10 model to a 50–50 model was a source of high stress for teachers that could have led to high attrition at that school.

School context

Harlow Elementary [pseudonym] is a mid-sized campus with an enrollment of about 500 students at the time of the study; with ethnicity percentages of 92% Hispanic; 5% African-American, and 2.5% White. In terms of socio-economic status, 85% were identified as economically disadvantaged, and 70% as “at risk” by the district. Thirty-five percent of the students were classified as ELs. The percentage of students receiving special education was unusually high in kindergarten and first grade (16.3% and 13.1%

respectively) compared to the state average of 8.6%. However, the overall building percentage for K to 5 was 6.1%, showing the disproportional concentration of ELs in the early grades. The average class size was 15 students. During this academic year, Harlow had considerable success in terms of student achievement; receiving State Distinction Designations in Language Arts, Science, Top 25% in Student Progress, Top 25% in Closing Performance Gaps, and Postsecondary Readiness. Of the teachers, 75% identified as Hispanic. Five of the 14 dual language teachers (36%) held a master's degree, compared to four of the 31 regular and compensatory education teachers with a master's degree (13%). Harlow is home to the oldest TWDI program in the district. In grades pre-k to second, teachers are self-contained. Starting in third grade, instruction is compartmentalized into separate core content areas with individual teachers responsible for teaching two to three core content areas.

Description of the teachers

Nancy

At the time of the study, Nancy (pseudonym) was 42 years old, was born in south Texas and spoke Spanish and English fluently. She held a Multidisciplinary Bachelor's degree in Bilingual Education and a Multidisciplinary Science and Mathematics Graduate Certificate, a master's degree in Bilingual Education, and was certified to teach in Early Childhood to Sixth grade bilingual and mainstream programs. Nancy had five years of teaching experience in first and second grades, all at Harlow Elementary. Nancy was a candid advocate for bilingual students and their families. She reported having decided to teach in the TWDI program because she believed it to be the best option for bilingual students. She reported that she loves working with parents to develop their children's potential. She taught 23 second grade students; one was receiving special education services, two had been diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactive disorder, and two were in the process for placement in special education services. One student was new to the US and had never received any formal education. Although she repeatedly mentioned that she loved teaching, she stated that this class was "really challenging [her] patience, developing expertise, and sanity." She described the students comprising this class as academically lower than any other class she has had in the past.

Angie

Angie was a 48-year-old single mother of two adult children. Angie was born and raised in a small town in the Texas Panhandle. She reported feeling a strong connection to her students since she also was a bilingual student as a child. She received her Bachelor's in Education in her mid 30's. She said that witnessing the lack of adequate services to ELs gave her the gumption to continue her education in educational leadership. However, after completing the graduate degree in administration, she believed the duties of a principal made it more difficult to achieve her goal of supporting ELs. Consequently, she did not pursue an administrative position and decided to further improve her teaching skills by pursuing a master's degree in Bilingual Education. Angie had been teaching for ten years, with the last three years at Harlow. In seven of these years, she taught in a traditional early-exit bilingual program. She started her teaching career in fifth grade and had been teaching third grade for seven years. Angie reported that she loves teaching math and science to her two classes with sizes of 19 and 18. Across the two classrooms; four students were receiving special education services, three had been diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactive disorder, and one was in the process for consideration of special education. She evaluated these students as about the same level of academics as others she has had in the past.

Interviews

We utilized a semi-structured interview approach with questions derived from known sources of teacher stress. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim and conducted in a manner that allowed for natural conversations leading to additional unplanned follow-up questions for clarification or elaboration. The interviews (45 to 60-minute in length) were conducted primarily in

English; though they often included code-switching, particularly when teachers reference specific content they taught in Spanish. The first interview collected preliminary data on the teacher's personal history and educational experiences. The subsequent interviews were scheduled and conducted within four to six weeks of each other. The interview questions focused on teacher's perceptions of their working environment; challenges they face when planning and delivering lessons; and interactions with colleagues, the principal, and other support staff, as well as professional development providers. In addition, data from the previous interviews were reviewed and further discussed to clarify, elaborate, and negotiate meaning making between the teacher and the researcher.

Data analysis

Initial themes from transcripts were defined based on themes from the research literature. Using ATLAS.ti software, transcriptions of teacher interviews were coded in an iterative fashion and were synthesized to find relevant patterns and themes. This involved identifying interesting features of the data and sorting the themes into meaningful groups. Key themes were gleaned from interviews through an ongoing constant comparison process of analyzing data and simultaneously making comparisons to synthesize emerging categories into themes (Erlandson et al., 1993). Refinement of themes continued until coherence was achieved, and identifiable distinctions between themes were evident. The researchers conducted a detailed analysis for each theme and identified the story that each theme told. In addition, sub-themes were identified which were useful in giving structure to particularly large and complex themes and also for demonstrating the organization of meaning within the data. Once the researchers had a set of fully worked out themes, the final analysis and summary of the data began.

Credibility

To increase the credibility of the data collected, a relationship of trust and support with the teachers was developed before the interviews were conducted. This sense of trust was accomplished through continued engagement, peer debriefing, and member checking. The teachers were visited on numerous occasions over the course of the academic year. Visits consisted of reflective conversations about their experiences, providing the researcher with a deeper understanding of the teacher's stressors and coping strategies. Sustaining meaningful engagement was instrumental in giving the researcher a better insight into understanding the daily events in the way teachers experienced them. Also, two peer reviewers, blind to the study questions, were utilized to provide feedback on the analysis in a non-biased manner as well as recommendations. Teachers were given opportunities for member checking to confirm analyses or make suggestions. During follow-up interviews, teachers were asked to provide feedback on the initial interpretations of their comments as represented in the drafts of the analysis. Audio recordings, transcripts, and related documents were used for referential adequacy.

Findings

The data yielded three major themes and nine subthemes (Table 1). Major themes correspond to (i) stressors, (ii) reactions to stress, and (iii) mitigating factors. Each of these themes consisted of three to four subthemes organized by each research question.

What are the major stressors experienced by Nancy and Angie?

Double differentiation

Instructional differentiation was the most frequently mentioned stressor. Both teachers expressed the difficulty in differentiating lessons to the broad range of language and academic skills of the students in their classrooms. Nancy shared her frustration after conducting an end of unit assessment in the following:

Table 1. Two-way dual language bilingual teachers’ reported stressors, reactions, and mitigating factors.

Theme	Subtheme	Example
Stressors	(1) Differentiation	<i>... I have such a wide range of ability [in my classroom] ...</i>
	(2) Advocacy	<i>... these students deserve to have a program that works, this program has proven its impact on students ... we need to block this decision ...</i>
	(3) Mobbing/Micro-aggressions /Workplace bullying	<i>I don't understand why he doesn't allow me to do more ... to take a leadership role in the things I am good at. He puts Ms. Y in charge of math when I have consistently had the highest scores in math, ... even though they started lower than others.</i>
	(4) Lack of administrative support	<i>... they are actively excluding me ... sometimes I feel targeted ...</i>
Reactions	(1) Frustrations	<i>... I don't know what else to do ...</i>
	(2) Palliative coping	<i>I am losing sleep and drinking more ...</i>
	(3) Direct coping	<i>... I can't do the easy thing any more. I need to try to do what is best for these students. ...</i>
Mitigating Factors	1. Self-efficacy	<i>I am grateful to the program because I know I can move them up ... even though they are so low ... I can get them on grade level.</i>
	2. PCK [†]	<i>... I need to focus my instruction more on their literacy level but in a way that develops their language skill, like how we were taught in the program ...</i>
	3. Engagement	<i>So, I made sure all of my parents knew about the meeting to discuss the impending change. I spoke to all of them and tried to make them understand they had a right to ask questions and an explanation of the decision.</i>

[†]PCK = Pedagogical Content Knowledge.

Their reading proficiency went down this six-weeks ... I don't know what else to do. They are not getting it. I have such a wide range of abilities. I need to make even smaller groups now because what I am doing is not working.

Likewise, Angie shared that once she realized her new student (recently emigrated from Mexico) did not know how to read, she planned activities that embedded literacy development for her and a few others who were below grade level. Her frustration centered on the lack of differentiated content-area materials in the home language. She stated,

Not only do I spend hours looking for or translating content-related texts for my students, I have to then differentiate that for Sonya [pseudonym] who doesn't read and [those] who read at first grade level.

Both teachers expressed the stress related to simultaneously differentiate for different ability levels or content-specific prior knowledge and language development backgrounds. Yet, they also expressed a responsibility to move toward greater levels of differentiation to meet their student's language and content learning needs, as in Angie's remarks:

You know, before this program I would have approached this situation a lot different, and it would have taken less time planning for it, but I can't do the easy thing anymore. I need to try to do what is best for these students ...

It seems that part of their frustration is related to the invisible work they do as TWDI teachers; "additional linguistic labor [TWDI] teachers do as a routine part of their job" (Armanti, 2019, p. 469) but is largely unseen by administrators.

Advocacy

Both teachers stated that their role as advocates for their students added to their job stress. When she realized how much time she spent advocating for her students, Nancy paused, rubbed her forehead with the tips of her fingers as one might when suffering from a headache, and said,

Nothing is more maddening than having to fight for my students' best interests with school support staff ... now that we have gotten these performance distinctions, it seems to be getting worse.

This revelation was unexpected, since advocacy is generally regarded as a positive teacher role consistent with the concept of workplace engagement (Bradley Levine, 2018). Yet, teachers galvanized to advocate for their students in the wake of the districts' decision to make fundamental changes to the

TWDI programming. It was during this time when many teachers expressed their desire to leave the school and had many very emotional exchanges. Nancy was at the forefront of the pushback against the district's decision. She recognized the added stress when she said, "I know all this extra work takes away from the time I should be outside getting exercise . . ." Yet, Nancy's need to advocate for her students compelled her to sacrifice her physical health because she strongly believed ". . . these students deserve to have a program that works, this program has proven its impact on students . . . we need to block this decision . . ."

Angie's advocacy stance was influenced by what she perceived was a power imbalance between the district and the families directly impacted by the policy change, as well as a potential violation of state laws designed to promote the educational rights of families.

The parents should have been told, informed about the decision well in advance. They have a right to move to a school they believe fits what they want for their children. My parents are upset they were not consulted and now there is no time to move them to another school.

Nancy was aware State law prohibits districts from making programmatic decisions without informing parents of students. With some resentment in her voice, she added, "So I made sure all of my parents knew about the meeting to discuss the impending change. I spoke to all of them and tried to make them understand they had a right to ask questions and an explanation of the decision." This is an example of what Dubetz and de Jong (2011) referred to as "advocacy work beyond the classroom, with colleagues, families, and communities" (p. 251). By taking steps to galvanize her students' parents, Nancy exercised her agency and sought to help the parents do the same. By doing so, Nancy assumed an activist role to advocate for her students and their families' rights to sound educational programs (Dubetz & de Jong, 2011).

Both teachers commented that disenfranchisement from the district and school principal contributed to their stress related to advocacy. In addition to concern about a lack of appropriate parent involvement in the selection of a new bilingual program model by district administration, there were major concerns about the lack of teacher involvement in the decision making and communication around the new curriculum. When asked why this disconnect caused her distress, Nancy indicated that advocacy was a stressor mainstream teachers do not experience; the role of child and family advocate should not have been left for TWDI teachers to assume alone. She was unequivocal about this judgment, "we are one school, both bilingual and mainstream teachers should be speaking up too . . . the principal should be the loudest voice against this action." Angie echoed the distress this situation caused, "the mainstream teachers should have spoken up with us . . . it would show they shared the responsibility in questioning the decision." Thus, both Nancy and Angie believed advocacy is more intensely assumed as a role of the bilingual teacher.

Mobbing/micro-aggressions/workplace bullying

Nancy openly verbalized her perceptions of the mobbing, bullying, and micro aggressions at a personal level. Both teachers perceived the policy change as a mobbing experience for TWDI teachers which, as discussed below, is also intertwined with problems with administrative support. For Nancy, two individuals at the school were the subjects of these discussions: the principal and counselor. Repeated exclusion from leadership positions by the principal was a major source of this type of psychological stressor for Nancy. With tears in her eyes, she recounted the following experiences of exclusionary bullying,

I don't understand why he [the principal] doesn't allow me to do more . . . to take a leadership role in the things I am good at. He puts Ms. Y in charge of math when I have consistently had the highest scores in math, when I have repeatedly shown my students' score above others in science even though they started lower than others.

Nancy's descriptions of her interaction with the principal were often full of feelings of being verbally bullied or victimized through micro-aggressions:

He comes in here and criticizes the most meaningless things. He doesn't like all the stuff I have on my walls. . . . I use anchor charts and it's going to be messy. I don't like using worksheets for everything; that is not me. These kids learn better when they can manipulate and move around. I've seen what the inquiry approach does to student interest and persistence.

In one heated interaction with a counselor and a couple of mainstream teachers, Nancy expressed her objection to what she perceives as discriminating treatment she experiences as mobbing:

I notice that different teachers are treated differently. . . . Ms. A, she comes in late very frequently, yet she has never been told anything or reprimanded. . . . they assume I've done something without any evidence, I work really, really hard not to give them reason to let me go, when I leave, it will be on my terms.

For Nancy, the latest district policy decision was perceived as a form of mobbing. When describing a recent curriculum meeting, Nancy said, "we are ignored" and "if we attempt to be heard, we are perceived as aggressive." Angie had similar comments, centering on "exclusion of bilingual teachers in critical school decisions." For Angie, exclusion of bilingual teacher in the decision-making process was perceived as "being ignored and a gross lack of respect as professionals." From their perspective, identification as bilingual teachers of color made them targets of microaggressions and mobbing. Despite having above-average preparation to teach in TWDI programs, their professional knowledge was repeatedly disregarded.

Perceived lack of administrative support

Both teachers expressed frustration that the principal was not well informed about TWDI programs and thus could not be an effective advocate for them as bilingual teachers of a TWDI program. Toward this concern, Angie reflects, "these decisions don't make any sense. They don't support the development of students' language development." They believed his lack of deep understanding of the program goals and implementation demands made it easier for the district administration to set policy that would undermine the longevity of the program. The teachers expressed frustration about the lack of support from the principal. The principal behaved in a way they regarded as bullying including exclusion from making critical program decisions and lack of regard for the teachers, students, and the demonstrated program success.

How do Nancy and Angie react to the stressors?

Frustration/distress

The most common general reaction expressed by Nancy and Angie was frustration signaling distress. (Selye, 1976). The sources of the distressing frustrations they expressed included, (i) the degree of variability in ability and language proficiency in first and second language represented in their classroom; (ii) the continuous advocacy roles they took on; and (iii) the lack of regard school and district administrators have for including bilingual teachers in making programmatic decisions that impact TWDI programs. Nancy expressed a sense of frustration over the additional differentiation of TWDI in stating, "I don't know what else to do." Nancy referenced the stress of advocacy she was compelled to do on a regular basis and said "I know all this extra work takes away from the time I should be outside getting exercise . . .," which was articulated frustration. Angie also reflected, "these decisions don't make any sense. They don't support the development of students' language development." There was also frustration about the lack of support from the principal coupled with his lack of understanding of the program which, in turn, made it easier to set policy undermining program success.

Taken together, these distressing frustrations threaten the teachers' self-efficacy and educational outcome expectations. The frustrations of double differentiation created, at least for Nancy, a sense of helplessness. Teachers were also frustrated that their advocacy efforts were time-consuming and possibly not helpful, and they thought it was taking away from other valued activities and contributing to a sense of lack of impact. Also, there is a strong theme of a disregard of the teachers' expertise (both

hold master's degrees in bilingual education) by district and school administration. Yet, both continued providing greater levels of differentiation and student advocacy as well as engaged in activism as they organized to inform parents of their rights in educational programming. What factors motivated them to do so?

Coping strategies

Angie reported avoiding dealing with emotional discomfort through palliative strategies. She expressed her efforts to support her high needs students coming at the expense of her well-being when she added “. . . but I am losing sleep and find myself drinking over it, a lot,” while she was communicating her desire to provide meaningful learning opportunities. Even under extreme pressures Nancy experienced from perceived mobbing, she provides the following explanation for staying at the school. “I believe in dual language.” Her connection to the students' plight compels her to continue her advocacy, “these kids need someone who will fight for them . . . I can't leave just yet.” Thus, advocacy was a source of professional stress but also an active coping mechanism that helped sustain her eudaimonic well-being, a state which predicts vitality (Nix et al., 1999). The eudaimonic conception of well-being represents living in accordance with the deeply held values (Waterman, 1993), which might be the primary resource for the teachers to sustain their commitment to teaching in a TWDI program and their advocacy activities.

Despite their expressed frustration of their perceptions of mistreatment, both teachers valued their work with students and families. It was this sentiment that appeared to give them the gumption to persist in this stressful environment. Nancy states, “. . . I have to continually use all of my strategies so that they can get it. I need to get it right.” Angie echoed this sentiment, though her sentiment was more muted. It was this sense of value that led them both to seek advanced training in working with poor, EBs. Angie added, “I knew there are more effective ways of teaching, so I enrolled in the program.” Both provided long descriptions of how they use knowledge and strategies they acquired through the graduate program to address student-learning challenges. This is consistent with high self-efficacy and workplace engagement, both of which are protective factors against burnout. Indeed, both teachers expressed high confidence in being able to increase content and language learning after enrolling in the graduate program. More surprising was their conclusion that they would have left the bilingual program had they not increased their confidence to “do right by students” despite the “BS that goes on here” referring to people, policies, and forces that make it hard for them to maintain their well-being. Thus, they both valued the advocacy work and the TWDI program impacts.

How do self-efficacy and educational experience mitigate the impact of stress?

Teaching self-efficacy

Nancy and Angie made frequent comments consistent with high teaching self-efficacy including statements of confidence in their skills to meet the language and content demands of their students. Nancy reflected positively on her skills in literacy and mathematics, “I am grateful to the program, because I know I can move them up . . . even though they are so low . . . I can get them on grade level.” Nancy's confidence led her to use data in different ways that further enhanced her teaching self-efficacy, as well as her students' self-efficacy: “I use the individual and class data to make individual and class goals every six weeks. We celebrate when anyone reaches a goal, and I often remark on their progress toward the goal. I tell them I can get them there, and say [to them] ‘will they work with me to get there?’ They can't tell me another program model will get me better results or anyone else here.” This confidence was also evident in how Nancy described her instructional experiences in all content areas.

Angie was most confident in her math instruction, and less so in science. Her teaching self-efficacy also appeared to amplify her active coping strategies as in taking on more difficult topics during math and science. She avoided these topics before because she was not confident in “being able to provide content explanations that students could understand.” Her success with increasingly challenging topics lead to greater teaching self-efficacy and confidence in trying what she perceived as more

complex topics. Angie said, “I feel much more confident in going deeper with science in ways that help them get the bigger picture . . . the big ideas in science like what we learned in [the Master’s program].”

Confidence in pedagogical content knowledge

Both teachers expressed some optimism in terms of being able to identify student needs and respond to misconceptions with school leadership. Nancy explained this in the following:

I don’t know if I, this group is so different from all my other classes or it’s because I know more now and am monitoring differently but I can see these kids have a lot of gaps and they take much longer to grasp concepts. . . . I have to continually use all of my strategies so that they can get it. . . . Their writing shows they are making connections and developing their knowledge of genre and academic language in both languages.

In this remark, Nancy references a knowledge base she has gained that she did not possess previously. This growing pedagogical content knowledge is also evident when she describes an interaction with a district administrator:

She . . . calls me out for not having enough writing in the writing journals. She didn’t even read it. If she had, she would have realized that my kids are doing much more with written language than the other schools. . . . Now I have more strategies and knowledge about language to be able to improve their writing in all content areas.

Angie recognized the tradeoff in the quality of instruction and in meeting the demands of the district policy when she described how she had become so “overwhelmed by administrative tasks such as lesson planning and reports” that she had little time to reflect on their purpose.

It’s amazing how they think that we are providing good instruction by just giving us more worksheets . . . what is the purpose of these worksheets? They don’t get that it’s the interactions with our students and the interactions within themselves that makes them learn. *No saben* [they don’t know] what good instruction looks or sounds like . . . I just want to yell, IT’S NOT THE WORKSHEET!

In this excerpt, Angie also reveals her understanding of the importance of extended oral discussion in stabilizing deep conceptual learning and language development. This knowledge gave her the confidence to push back on policies that impede student learning.

Engagement

Nancy and Angie were intensely engaged in their advocacy role for their students. The mediating role of engagement on preventing burnout takes place when the teachers perceive a sense of teaching self-efficacy and utilize direct coping strategies such as engaging in student advocacy (Bermejo-Toro et al., 2016). Thus, the teachers were both feeling stress and experiencing high well-being, a state of eustress (good stress) as opposed to distress (Selye, 1976). Nancy’s explanation for staying tapped into advocacy as direct coping. “My husband tells me I should go to teach at a regular [mainstream] school . . . [but] I believe in dual language . . . these kids need someone who will fight for them . . . I can’t leave just yet.” Thus, advocacy was a source of professional stress but also a motivator for her. In this way, advocacy was both a stressor and a direct coping strategy for extreme workforce stress.

Conclusion and implications

This study provides close-up detail to the struggles of Spanish-English TWDI teachers in southern US, to help flesh out the problem of teacher burnout from a unique perspective. Work-related stressors of two well-trained teachers and the psychosocial resources they relied on to help them cope with such stressors during a period of heightened professional stress were explored. Consistent with past research, the critical roles of protective factors such as teaching self-efficacy (e.g., Yu et al., 2015) and engagement (Klassen et al., 2012) were evident. The teachers were resilient in the face of severe occupational stress. The primary stressors were: (i) increased need to differentiate the lessons to match the varying language and skill levels of the students simultaneously (double differentiation), (ii) intense pull they felt toward advocating for their students, (iii) workplace bullying, which they

interpreted as being related to their bilingual status, and (iv) lack of administrative support. The teachers mostly reacted to these stressors with frustration but sometimes they adopted palliative coping such as drinking, which can be counterproductive. However, they both engaged in direct cognitive and behavioral coping strategies that kept them from leaving the school, following a policy mandate perceived as a direct assault on the TWDI program. Their high sense of teaching efficacy, competence in pedagogical content knowledge, and workplace engagement in the form of advocacy were mitigating factors to burnout.

The reported stressors interacted with teacher characteristics in ways that motivated them to take direct action coping strategies, namely participating in professional development to increase their knowledge, and advocating for the program, students, and their families. These teachers' confidence in their performance as teachers, knowledge of effective bilingual instruction, and confidence that state regulations supported their teaching and advocacy practices further motivated them to utilize their self-directed curriculum modification and advocacy as adaptive coping strategies directed at garnering the support of families and community leaders. It was also clear that both teachers were acting from a value-based mind-set when they felt the responsibility of advocating for their students. These teachers seemed to have high life-satisfaction from the value of their work. It might be that the fulfillment of values increased their eudaimonic well-being which alleviated burnout. In other words, these TWDI teachers sought more than pleasurable experiences. Using a hedonic well-being frame (increasing pleasure and avoiding discomfort) does not account for the high negative emotions and low positive emotions experienced at work. We believe the teachers in this study avoided burnout to a large extent because of their high eudaimonic well-being. Their increased pedagogical content knowledge coupled with their value for advocacy amplified their eudaimonic well-being which, in turn, reduced burnout and reinforced their engagement activities including galvanizing parents to react to the district policy they deemed harmful for the long term outcomes of their students.

Thus, the results warrant adding to the Bermejo-Toro (2016) model of teacher wellbeing as mediator to burnout and engagement (Figure 1b). The decision to seek professional development reflects the teachers' values which, in turn, promotes eudaimonic well-being and contributes to their continued engagement. Further, the teachers' decision to amplify their advocacy role promoted their eudaimonic well-being and resulted in an increased level of workplace buoyancy and engagement. Illustrating that eudaimonic well-being is incompatible with burnout, consistent research showing its positive relationship with mental and physical aliveness, and vigor or vitality (Nix et al., 1999; Ryan & Frederick, 1997) as well as resilience (Schaefer et al., 2013). Ultimately, these teachers' efforts contributed to the district recanting their policy decision. The teachers had successfully prolonged the life of their cherished TWDI program, which provided a boost in teachers' sense of control, value, and commitment to providing quality education for EBs. The coping strategies they employed coupled with a successful outcome likely brought about teachers' decisions to stay at the school.

In addition to the conflict over the teachers' curriculum decisions relative to district positions, a second unique stressor for bilingual teachers was the specification of differentiation as a workload stressor. The current literature only focuses on workload in the general sense (e.g., Sass et al., 2011) and does not distinguish the nature of workloads pertaining to bilingual teachers, except a few qualitative studies (e.g., Amos, 2016). This is an important topic for further study, and something that should come to the attention of those who hire, manage, and evaluate bilingual educators. If administrators could be alerted to the unique difficulties these teachers are experiencing and recognize the additional invisible linguistic work TWDI teachers accomplish, they might provide better support for bilingual teachers.

More broadly, the results of this study also point to the possibility of incongruence between teacher and school administrator values. Value congruence refers to the degree to which teachers feel they share the prevailing norms and values as school and district administration (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). This value congruence is positively related to teachers' feelings of belongingness and job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Teacher interview data suggests they interpreted the district's decision to drastically alter the program model as not sharing the same values with the school and

district administration. Future studies should examine the degree to which teachers' values related to bilingualism enables them to resist policies that favor native speaking English students over ELs. Past studies have shown that solely being aware of the impact of supremacy of English on teacher practices does not always lead to engaging in practices that consistently subvert or resist the status quo (e.g., Babino & Stewart, 2018; Palmer, 2011; Zúñiga, 2016). This work, however, has not examined this issue from a their eudaimonic well-being perspective. In Texas, there is a strong push from the state to increase TWDI programs, but if these programs increasingly favor non-ELs, teacher well-being might suffer and negatively impact teacher retention in TWDI programs.

Thus, there is additional work that needs to be done to identify data-informed best practices for helping bilingual educators succeed and stay in the profession. Future research should identify educational and professional experience that promote high teacher self-efficacy specific to bilingual education and how to communicate this expertise effectively with administrators. Also, studies should focus on eudaimonic well-being and align workplace practices and engagement with the values and sense of purpose that contribute to high eudaimonic well-being. Paying attention to hedonic well-being (i.e., positive and negative affect) may be a misplaced target. In this study, teachers were experiencing high negative emotions; however, they had high eudaimonic well-being, high self-efficacy, and workplace engagement, which reduced burnout. Future studies should examine likely interactions between these protective factors to better understand and prevent burnout among two-way dual immersion teachers.

Finally, in light of the extreme stress all teachers have recently experienced during and following the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing teacher stress is exceedingly important. A recent study (Diliberti et al., 2021) confirms that stress is a primary reason for attrition prior to and following the onset of the pandemic. However, they found that teachers left their positions at higher rates due to the burdens of the pandemic (8% before the pandemic to 25% during the pandemic). The patterns in stress-driven attrition mirrored those prior to the pandemic but a particularly concerning finding relevant to this study was that 55% of those who left teaching were from teachers in the south. Thus, Texas bilingual teachers may be particularly at risk of leaving the profession if targeted supports are not studied and provided to this vulnerable group.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

ORCID

Zenaida Aguirre-Muñoz  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7656-8784>

Gulden Esat  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9353-8616>

Bradley Smith  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3362-383X>

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