

**Context** – I interviewed the teacher in the Newcomer Program at [redacted] Elementary School. The program serves 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students who are new to this country within the last year. All students and their families in the program are Spanish speaking who have immigrated to this community for work related opportunities.

| <b>Annotations – Color coding</b> |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Green                             | – There's a need for teachers who speak Spanish            |
| Blue                              | – Honoring first language and home culture                 |
| Red                               | – Classroom instructional practices                        |
| Purple                            | – Survival for later when students go to regular classroom |
| Turquoise                         | – District level support or lack of support                |
| Yellow                            | – Teachers who don't "get it"                              |

K – Kim (the interviewer)

A – Anne (the teacher)

K: Tell me about your educational background beyond high school.

A: Um, I went to London actually, um I went to junior college for 2 years and then I transferred to the University of [redacted] and I was there for a little over a year. Then came back and was sort of up in the air and ended up getting by bachelors degree from [redacted]. From the furthest possible place from my parents to the closest possible.

K: And then...

A: They live in [redacted] which is where [redacted] is based, so um, when I was at my major was actually Communications and it was really interesting because that was sort of a "catch all" there and I was able to study a lot of child development and a lot of learning theory and I got some opportunities to work in situations with kids where they were doing um research with the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) with one of the originators from Russia of that theory. So I, it was really really good and um, and then after I did that I went into social work.

K: What was the person's name? I'm just curious.

A: It's one of those names that's really hard to pronounce, it's uh, Chitankma\_\_, I think or something like that.

K: Wow, okay.



A: Yeah, he was really interesting.

K: So did he knew Vygotsky or know of him or knew of his work?

Anne: Yeah, he did work with Vygotsky in Russia. A lot of those people are like the secondary people, there's another guy that I got to take a class with who had worked with Howard Gardner on the theories of multiple intelligence and was one of his underlinks. It was just great because I got to do that and I got to do classes in children's literature, and I had taken all these things and then I had this weird generic degree and I didn't know what to do and I went into social work for a few years and I just felt like, my mom was a teacher and I felt like everything I had done pointed in that direction. I wasn't sure I wanted to take on the huge responsibility of, not that social work is any different, I don't know what I was thinking then, but I went back to school to get my credential, after having worked 3 or 4 years as a social worker. I think that gave me a really different perspective than some teachers because I've worked on the other side of the coin and I worked with kids in a shelter program for battered women, so really had to work with a lot of "at risk" youth. I went to \_\_\_\_\_ right when they were first beginning their credential program and it was really, really excellent. I'm really glad I had that opportunity, um; they actually have people that take a leave of absence from their jobs for a year or two and actually come teach in a college. I'd have to say that my education really continued when I first started teaching in \_\_\_\_\_ and had a really difficult district to work for but a really excellent teacher training program there and I was able to take week long classes in reading and math that were 40 hours plus and we were paid to do that.

K: For professional development, once you got you job.

A: Yeah.

K: So what made you want to focus on a bilingual credential?

A: I didn't actually focus on a bilingual credential, I was really wimpy about that, I didn't feel like my Spanish was good enough because I hadn't studied it in the university, I had always tried to speak it, I'd travel in countries, I had worked, and I loved the language, I loved speaking the language but I was very unsure. I should have just done it because it would have been really easy then. Um I got pushed into bilingual ed, I came to work in \_\_\_\_\_ I spoke a lot of Spanish, I wanted to work in school where there were a lot of Spanish speakers because I knew that even if I didn't teach bilingual ed, I had enough Spanish that I could communicate with parents and with kids and in \_\_\_\_\_ I got time, it was after they passed the law saying there isn't going to be anymore Spanish in classrooms, if you spoke 2 words in Spanish to a newcomer you could be written up. I mean it was like the Spanish thought police. I couldn't work in that environment, and um so I moved up here and I came to work in \_\_\_\_\_ and I didn't think I would be a bilingual teacher, I just thought I would be a teacher in a school with a lot of bilingual kids. And I actually had a principal who chased me down and said we want you to be



here and we want you to take a bilingual 4<sup>th</sup> grade and the head of the bilingual program interviewed me in Spanish and said that you know enough and you will be fine. You know plenty.

K: So are you saying that you don't have a bilingual credential?

A: I don't have a bilingual credential from \_\_\_\_\_, what I did was after having taught bilingual ed for many years, I took the BCLAD exam and then, yeah, so that's how I have my certification for bilingual. My credential was a CLAD credential all the way through. That's what they do now with everybody, that part I had already done; I just needed the bilingual certification. I did it later, so. Yeah, it was weird I kinda fell into it. Yeah...

K: So, how about coming here to the Newcomer program, um, what was that process for you?

A: Well, honestly, a lot of it was personal because I loved the school I worked at in \_\_\_\_\_ it was a fantastic place to be, um but the district was toxic almost, I mean just really unsupportive in a lot of ways. Even though I said they have great teacher training, which they do, but just don't support teachers there, it's just not like it is here in Napa, and I also was commuting from \_\_\_\_\_ and it was taking me an hour and a half minimum each way and my husband and I were talking about having a family and he said I don't want to have a family if you're driving 3 hours to work everyday. The other problem was that in the district, in the area I was, there was like 17 toxic chemical producing things and he said (can't understand tape) and it's not okay. And so for personal reasons I was looking at a lot of different places. I applied over here and I was kinda trying to leave my options open and um, I had no idea there was a Newcomer Program here. And when I first came, after I filled out my application I just came up here and I met the head of the English Learner Services, she said you know we have this program. And at first I thought I don't know, but then the more I thought about it, it was what I had been doing, I'd been coaching at this previous district, I was really instrumental in getting a lot of ELD things happening school wide at that school, and I really was interested and wanting to do ELD. I just thought, ya know, yeah I really fit. I mean I don't know how many other people out there could really take on that position and feel like they can do it and I felt like I can really fit into that position. I had enough Spanish, I had the right set of knowledge, and it was sort of serendipitous, it just happened to be that there was an opening and I was looking.

K: And it was at this site?

A: And it was at this site, so then I came and here I am.

K: Here you are. How many years?

A: This is the third. So fast.



**Survival for when students go to the regular classroom (highlighted in purple)**

a lot of what they need is language for everyday survival and it's really easy to do that kind of language when you're in an environment where they ARE trying to survive

they only have the one year here with me and it's short and so on one hand they need to be developing their oral language, it's so critical, but on the other hand I want to give them strategies that will serve them well when they go back into a mainstream classroom and they're expected to do work that is often way above their language level so intermixed with a lot of the ELD materials

to scaffold their learning for themselves because when they are back into the regular classroom, I don't know how much help they're going to get so I'm really conscience of that piece

I want them to be as successful as possible down the road as much as possible too. They need a lot of survival skills not for the community but for school. So I think there's a lot of my ELD instruction that has that in mind.

I worry when they leave that won't continue and that's the difficulty of having them go all over the district [when they leave the Newcomer Program]

I know that they are all going back to the mainstream environment next year and so I wanted them to have a taste of it when they still had some support and a chance to feel successful so that when it came at them in a big way that they will be okay. It's easy for them to shut down

**District level support or lack of support (highlighted in turquoise)**

if you spoke 2 words in Spanish to a newcomer you could be written up. I mean it was like the Spanish thought police. I couldn't work in that environment [prior district]

um but the district was toxic almost, I mean just really unsupportive in a lot of ways. [prior district]

particularly from the district level that they are just thrilled to help me anyway they can and that they are phenomenally supportive and for me coming from where I did [current district]

and the district level stuff was not so great, some of it was [prior district]