

ABSTRACT

Case study methodology was employed to investigate a bilingual education teacher's prior experiences, beliefs, and teaching practice. The findings indicate that personal sociocultural experiences, educational theory and teacher preparation experiences, and professional experiences influence this teacher's beliefs.

The use of an epistemological framework to explore this bilingual education teacher's beliefs allows us to understand her teacher behavior. This bilingual teacher's practices are grounded in specific epistemological beliefs about bilingual children's cognition. Specifically, the study reveals that this bilingual teacher had incremental beliefs about knowledge acquisition. She also believes that language, culture, and thought interact in the construction of knowledge. Although this bilingual teacher views her primary role to be a facilitator of knowledge, she has a mixed orientation towards the epistemological stances of certainty, source, and speed, and structure. We also note the impact of opportunities and constraints on this bilingual teacher's beliefs and practices.

Lastly the study demonstrates that an epistemological framework helps us develop greater understanding of the relationship between teacher beliefs and practices. Moreover, we note that we can not simply investigate effective teacher behavior in isolation. Implications and recommendations are provided.