Mark Nigolian:
Does the conceptualization of academic language matter as we have several across ELP Standards in the US) in giving students or is it just important to give students access to academic language in any way?

The use of scaffolding when teaching academic language across the curriculum is important to increase students’ comprehension as well as production. Additionally, utilizing linguistically diverse students’ home language repertoire such as cognates facilitates language learning and acquisition. Reinforcement of academic language across the curriculum supports student learning retention by using common teaching strategies such as writing and journaling that span all subject areas. (RI)

There has been lots of debate in the academic literature about what constitutes ‘academic language’ and whether that is even a legitimate concept. My view is that it is a legitimate and important concept. However, for teaching purposes, it is not necessary to have a precise and detailed specification of what constitutes academic language (linguists are still arguing about this). We know enough of what is important to focus on expanding students’ grasp of language and awareness of how academic language works across the curriculum. For example, in English, many of the low frequency words that occur in texts and textbooks derive from Latin and Greek sources whereas the everyday language we use in face-to-face interpersonal situations derive from Anglo-Saxon sources. Very different kinds of grammatical constructions and discourse conventions also characterize the language of schooling compared to everyday language. A Google search will turn up all kinds of useful resources about how to expand students language awareness and reinforce language across the curriculum. A particularly useful strategy is Lily Wong Fillmore’s ‘juicy sentences’ approach. (JC)

Michael Genzuk:
Can you elaborate on this collaboration with the families and community?
School leadership orientated towards empowerment of a school community builds collaborative-inclusive relationships with families and community.
Family collaborative relationships are built through home visits, parent-teacher conferences, parent workshops related to areas they have identified as important (leadership development, understanding the school system, or specific programs at the school). Building collaborative relationships with families has a fundamental purpose of providing students a solid foundation of support, understanding and empathy between the home and school.
School leadership orientated towards empowerment of a school community builds collaborative relationships with community organizations and businesses that share common goals with the school’s mission. Like the Columbia Park Boys and Girls Club where students attended after school programs for homework support, snacks, recreation, etc. Another example is a partnership that Sanchez School developed with the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank to establish a parent managed weekly food pantry. 80 families received quality food each week through this partnership.

At times school leadership forms family and community alliances to address a specific issue. Like in 2008 parents from Sanchez School mobilized an alliance with the Board of Education, Board of Supervisors, PTA and the Teachers’ Union to fight against major budget cuts ($40 million) that would have caused laying off 535 teachers. This was avoided through the use of the city of San Francisco’s Rainy Day Fund being transferred to the school district budget. (RI)

Martha Quadros:
Could you speak to how you were able to build a sense of shared leadership as well as school wide instructional practices?

That is amazing that you attended Sanchez School! When was the last year you attended Sanchez?
We slowly built a school culture of shared leadership and with a focus on common instructional practices such as GLAD and TRIBES by establishing a leadership team with a teacher leader from each grade level from preschool to fifth grade participating. Teachers leaders received professional development regarding their roles on the Leadership Team and the cycle of inquiry process. The School Leadership Team met twice per month for one hour to establish the focus and agenda for the collaborative cycle of inquiry meeting that each grade level had on a weekly basis for two hours. This would establish a school wide consistency and area for focus based on input from the teachers. The grade level teacher leader was responsible to facilitate the grade level meeting. I would attend the grade level meeting to support the grade level teacher leader and contribute as necessary. Three times per year an entire faculty meeting was devoted to the Leadership Team sharing student learning progress in language arts for each academic pathway from preschool through fifth with a focus on successes and areas for greater inquiry connected to students’ language development. This ongoing process created a school culture of shared leadership along with how we conducted faculty meetings and the School Site Council meetings. (RI)

Susan Moore:
What did translanguaging look like across the curriculum as you recognized the rich asset of the student’s home language?

There was a great deal of professional development for instructional teams (teachers & paraprofessionals) related to the use of scaffolding when teaching academic language across the curriculum. Many of the paraprofessionals were bilingual which enhanced their abilities to utilize students’ home language repertoire in the learning process. The entire bilingual instructional pathway had certificated bilingual teachers. Additionally, having common approaches for teaching language such as GLAD facilitated ongoing professional development during grade level meetings (weekly) when teachers were engaged in the collaborative inquiry process to monitor instructional effectiveness and student learning progress toward grade level standards. Classroom teachers understood the important role they had for using in class instructional modeling to support paraprofessionals’ capacity to deliver evidence-based instruction. Debriefing to reflect on their shared experiences was also very helpful when possible. Many translanguaging teachable moments occurred spontaneously and needed to be identified and then naturally and thoughtfully included in the teaching learning process building on students’ learning assets. (RI)

Darin Lovelace:
As you implemented an inquiry-driven instructional approach at Sanchez School, how did you incorporate this process in the mathematics instruction? How did you evaluate curricula or use particular pedagogical principles? And how did the students report experiences mathematics instruction in this way?

Given that over 60% were emerging multilingual students at Sanchez School, through our shared leadership process we determined that the school-wide inquiry process from preschool through fifth grade should focus on language learning in Spanish and/or English depending on each student's academic pathway. All faculty received extensive professional development (GLAD) related to teaching language across subject areas which supported the development of students' higher order thinking skills. Additionally, teachers had grade level planning time for developing interdisciplinary learning projects that included math and science. Students
maintained math and science journals to develop key vocabulary and concepts in order to increase access to the core curriculum. Students’ academic language was indirectly assessed by how well they were learning grade level standards in math and science. According to an analysis of Sanchez students’ standardized test scores, their grade level standard mastery exceeded the level of students from schools with similar demographics in science and math. Please refer to the last paragraph of page 151 in Transforming Sanchez School, where this is explained for science learning levels. For mathematics, the API score was a composite of language arts, math and science. However, we did receive math breakdowns for students in 2-5 grades which indicated an overall positive trajectory in learning math grade level standards as well. (RI)