

Factors Influencing Teacher Attrition and Job dissatisfaction in a Bilingual Learning Program for Young Learners at a Binational Center in Cali, Colombia

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the factors influencing teacher attrition and job dissatisfaction in a bilingual English program for young learners at a binational center in Cali, Colombia. The study used a mixed-methods approach with a concurrent triangulation design, data were collected through surveys administered to former teachers and focus groups with current teachers and academic-administrative staff. Findings reveal that teacher attrition is primarily associated with work-life imbalance, burnout, and the emotional and physical demands of teaching young learners, particularly under weekend schedules. The study highlights the importance of addressing teacher well-being through structural and contextual changes rather than merely focusing on professional development. Based on these findings, the study proposes recommendations aimed at improving teacher support systems, enhancing job satisfaction, and fostering teacher retention in bilingual educational contexts.

Key Words: Teacher attrition, teacher job satisfaction, teacher well-being, bilingual learning environment and young learners.

RESUMEN

Este estudio explora los factores que influyen en la deserción docente y la insatisfacción laboral en un programa bilingüe de inglés para niños y jóvenes en un centro binacional en Cali, Colombia. Se utilizó un enfoque de métodos mixtos con un diseño de triangulación concurrente, a través de encuestas a docentes que dejaron el programa y grupos focales con docentes activos y personal académico-administrativo. Los resultados muestran que la deserción docente está principalmente relacionada con el desequilibrio entre la vida personal y laboral, el agotamiento y las demandas emocionales y físicas de enseñar a niños, especialmente bajo horarios de fin de semana. Estos hallazgos resaltan la importancia de comprender la deserción docente como un fenómeno complejo, vinculado al bienestar docente y a las condiciones del contexto educativo. Con base en estos resultados el estudio propone acciones enfocadas a fortalecer los sistemas de apoyo de desarrollo profesional brindado a los profesores, a mejorar la satisfacción laboral de los docentes con el objetivo de incrementar la retención docente en contextos de educación bilingüe a niños y jóvenes.

Palabras clave: Deserción docente, satisfacción laboral docente, bienestar docente, ambientes bilingües de aprendizaje y niños y jóvenes.



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INTRODUCTION

Teachers play an essential role in shaping effective learning environments, particularly in bilingual English education for young learners (6–12 years old). As Bates (2019) emphasizes, educators bear the primary responsibility for fostering motivating and inclusive classrooms, even during resource constraints or systemic challenges. Copland, Garton, and Burns (2014), explain that the global expansion of bilingual programs has intensified demands on teachers, who must navigate pedagogical complexities such as implementing communicative language teaching (CLT) or task-based learning (TBLT) in linguistically diverse settings. Research highlights other issues, including insufficient training, large class sizes, and mismatches between policy-driven methodologies and local educational cultures, which hinder effective instruction (Littlewood, 2007, as cited in Copland, Garton, & Burns, 2014). For young learners, these challenges are increased by developmental needs, such as fostering literacy in two languages and managing mixed-ability classrooms (Cameron, 2001, as cited in Copland, Garton, & Burns, 2014). The success of bilingual education in young learners, therefore, depends on teachers' ability to balance pedagogical innovation with contextual adaptability, making their retention and job satisfaction critical to sustaining quality education.

Despite the key role of teachers in education, bilingual environments for young learners face high turnover rates linked to burnout and dissatisfaction. As stated by Massari (2015), studies on teacher attrition often focus broadly on general education contexts, overlooking the unique pressures of bilingual environments, such as balancing dual-language curricula, addressing parental expectations, and managing limited institutional

support. Additionally, factors like inadequate resources, low proficiency confidence, and insufficient professional development highly affect bilingual teachers, who must also mediate cultural and linguistic diversity (Kirkgöz, 2009; Shamim, 2012, as cited in Copland, Garton, & Burns, 2014). Furthermore, job satisfaction research in early bilingual education remains fragmented, with limited exploration of how macro-level policies (e.g., standardized testing) intersect with micro-level stressors (e.g., classroom management). This gap obscures actionable solutions for retaining skilled educators in a field already affected by global teacher shortages.

This study aims to identify the factors influencing teacher attrition and turnover in a bilingual English program for young learners in a Binational Center in Cali, Colombia. Based on the analysis of the findings, it will also look at the key challenges and areas for improvement to propose actions that can be applied by teacher training programs and school leaders to enhance teachers' satisfaction and therefore decrease attrition in the program.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This theoretical framework examines the complex factors contributing to teacher attrition and turnover, particularly within bilingual English learning environments for young learners. It synthesizes insights from key studies including Copland, Burns, and Garton (2014); Mason; Santiago, Santos, and Santiago-Centeno (2022); Massari (2015); Ayar's (2023); UNESCO (2024); and Kamstra (2023). Additionally, it defines key concepts relevant to the study and presents scholarly discussions that highlight critical issues related to teacher attrition and turnover. Therefore, this comprehensive framework is essential for understanding the challenges faced by teachers and for guiding the development of this research.

Concept Framework

Teacher Attrition and Turnover

According to UNESCO (2024), teacher attrition refers to “the departure of personnel from the teaching profession within a given year” (p. 58). The report also states that teachers may leave due to any number of personal, professional and organizational factors, such as retirement, health, family commitments, taking a job in another field, or death, among others.

On the other hand, the same report suggests that attrition should not be confused with teacher turnover. The last one refers to teachers not only leaving the profession but also moving between schools or levels of education. Both teacher attrition and teacher turnover have an important impact on the students, the schools, and the education system.

Ayar's (2023) definition of attrition and turnover coincides with the definition provided by UNESCO (2024). The author agrees that attrition refers to teachers leaving the profession while turnover refers to teachers not only leaving the profession, but deciding to change schools, or changing audiences. Both agree that attrition and turnover have a negative impact on students' learning processes. "No matter the cause, the significant loss of trained professionals is disruptive for schools, students, and education systems" (UNESCO, 2024). In this research we will look into the reasons for both teacher attrition and turnover and propose actions to decrease both.

Teacher Job Satisfaction

Teachers' job satisfaction has been highly discussed in recent decades. According to Garza Rodriguez (2025), job satisfaction for teachers refers to a sense of pleasure in teaching, in other words a positive evaluation of their job. Authors like Crisci et al. (2019) highlight that job satisfaction is affected by internal and external factors. Garza Rodríguez (2025) also describes factors that influence teacher satisfaction and classifies them into several categories. The first category, *teaching*, refers to the work teachers do in students' training and to the value attributed to the profession. The second, *professional growth*, involves teachers' self-realization, self-concept, and self-esteem. The third, *teacher-student relationship*, concerns the bonds created with students through communication and interaction in class. The fourth, *co-workers' relationship*, includes commitment to work, colleagues' motivation, and the organizational climate. The fifth, *socio-working perspective*, reflects teachers' satisfaction with their work and their interactions with others. The sixth, *teachers' success*, relates to teachers' self-efficacy and how effectively they

perform their job. Finally, *school management* involves the processes and activities within the institution that shape teachers' professional experience. This classification of the factors influencing teacher's job satisfaction provides insight on the factors that may cause the teachers to feel the opposite, job dissatisfaction, which will result in teacher attrition or turnover.

Teacher Well-being

This concept is closely related to teacher's job satisfaction and has also been widely studied in the last decades. Viac and Fraser (2020) define teacher well-being as a multidimensional concept that reflects teachers' quality of life and satisfaction with their professional roles. According to Viac and Fraser (2020), teacher well-being encompasses psychological, cognitive, social, and physical dimensions that interact with professional contexts such as workload, autonomy, and institutional support. The authors also explain that teacher well-being is influenced not only by individual traits and emotional balance but also by systemic and environmental factors including school climate, leadership, and policy conditions. It can be concluded from this perspective, that teacher well-being is the result of both personal resilience and structural support systems that enable teachers to perform effectively and maintain motivation throughout their careers which will encourage them to stay in the teaching field.

Mercer and Gregersen (2020) agree with Viac and Fraser (2020) that the view of teacher well-being as a state that not only comes from the teacher's individual responsibility, but also from the institutional support and contextual factors. However,

Mercer and Gregersen (2020) bring to the discussion a very important perspective, the view of language teacher well-being. They argue that language teachers' well-being is shaped by the interpersonal nature of language classrooms, where emotional engagement, empathy, and intercultural sensitivity are central to daily practice. This perspective brings key elements to the discussion and helps understand the complexity of teacher well-being in the world of bilingual education. It can be concluded that it is important to focus on teacher's well-being to provide optimal conditions for teachers to keep on working and reduce teacher attrition.

Teaching Young Learners

Describing the unique challenges that are inherent to teaching young learners will provide important insights in terms of stressors that may cause teacher attrition in the field of language teaching at these specific ages. Taddese et al (2025) describe in their study, young learners aged seven to eleven. They describe these learners as characterized by high levels of curiosity, energy, and a natural capacity to acquire new languages. However, they also mention that these learners have short attention spans and require engaging, varied, and multisensory activities to sustain focus and motivation.

On the other hand, Copland, Garton and Burns (2014) emphasize that effective instruction for these students must accommodate their key developmental characteristics: short attention spans and high levels of physical energy, but that they also highlight that these ideal conditions are often difficult to achieve due to contextual challenges such as large class size, limited teaching resources, insufficient teacher training, and inadequate

language proficiency among teachers. Taddese et al. (2025) emphasize the developmental and pedagogical needs of children as learners, Copland, Garton and Burns (2014) focus more on the institutional and methodological constraints teachers face when trying to address those needs. Both perspectives evidence the importance of age-appropriate pedagogy, but also reveal that without systemic support and specialized teacher preparation, the potential advantages of early English instruction derive on challenges that may influence the decision of young learner teachers to either leave the profession or move to audiences.

In synthesis the concepts presented in this part of the framework are deeply interconnected and provide a comprehensive view that helps understand the phenomenon of teacher attrition and/or turnover in a bilingual learning environment. Teacher attrition and turnover emerge not as isolated events, but as the result of a complex interaction between teachers' job satisfaction, their overall well-being, and the specific demands of teaching young learners. To start with, job satisfaction reflects how teachers evaluate different dimensions of their professional experience, including relationships, growth opportunities, and institutional conditions. On the other hand, teacher well-being broadens this perspective by emphasizing the interplay between personal, emotional, and systemic factors that sustain or hinder teachers' motivation and quality of life. These dimensions become even more critical in the context of teaching young learners, where pedagogical demands, classroom management challenges, and institutional limitations intensify the daily experience of teaching. Therefore, when teachers face low job satisfaction and compromised well-being within demanding teaching conditions, the possibilities of attrition or turnover increases. This integrated understanding allows this study to analyze teacher

departure as a process shaped by multiple, interrelated factors, which will be further examined through the data analysis to identify patterns, convergences, and key areas for intervention.

Previous Studies

Studies on Teacher Attrition and Turnover

A lot has been said about the factors causing teacher attrition and turnover in the last few years. This part of the study will present related research that will contribute to the development of the project. Mason, S. (2017) provides insightful information about the factors that contribute to teachers' attrition. This study highlights the strategic and financial importance of teacher retention, noting that "the most important element of teacher supply for any given year is the retention of teachers from the previous year" (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2005, p. 34) and that the costs of replacing teachers far outweigh the costs of retaining them (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007). This is a powerful reason to research those factors that cause teacher attrition. Mason analyzes ten studies that organized the factors affecting attrition and retention into seven major themes: Teacher preparation, transition to teaching, teacher knowledge and skills, workplace and employment factors, feelings of value and belonging, supportive workplace relationships, and teacher personality traits. The meta-analysis suggests that foreign language teachers often feel inadequately prepared for the realities of the classroom, indicating a need for improved teacher education programs that provide specific classroom management skills. It also states that mentoring programs can ease the transition

into teaching, teachers' confidence and self-efficacy are closely linked to their content and pedagogical knowledge, including language proficiency. The study argues that foreign language teachers face unique challenges, such as limited recognition of their subject's value and inadequate curricular, physical, and emotional space in schools. One key conclusion of this study is that teachers with strong content and pedagogical knowledge, effective classroom management skills for diverse settings, and the ability to navigate workplace dynamics are more likely to stay in the profession. This study reveals important evidence of the need for appropriate training and teacher preparation to avoid teacher attrition.

Similarly, Ayar (2023), in their scoping review of teacher attrition literature from 2000 to 2020, identifies several key reasons or factors behind language teacher turnover. Their analysis indicates "poor teacher identity development and lack of potential opportunities both for teaching career and professional communities, and low self-efficacy besides the problem of classroom management" as prominent reasons for attrition (p. 310). The authors also classify these determinants into personal, social, and institutional factors, recognizing the multifaceted nature of teacher attrition. This categorization indicates that job satisfaction, a crucial element in teacher retention, is influenced not only by institutional elements such as working conditions but also by individual characteristics and experiences. Ayar (2023) also emphasizes that novice teachers are more likely to leave the profession and encourage institutional support mechanisms like mentoring programs to bridge the gap between pre-service training and the realities of in-service teaching (p. 319). Even though the authors recognize that the development of a strong teacher identity

is a significant factor contributing to teacher retention, they conclude that the combination of personal and institutional factors, especially those related to teachers' professional development and well-being in the context of working with young learners are key elements in teacher retention.

The UNESCO (2024) Global Report on Teachers, stresses the crucial role of qualified educators in ensuring quality education, emphasizing the need for appropriate pedagogical training focusing on the chosen level of education (p. 43). The report also points to a correlation between teachers feeling prepared and their decision to stay in the profession, noting that unsupported novice teachers are more likely to leave compared to their experienced colleagues (p. 17). This is particularly relevant for young learner teachers, for whom the initial years can present unique challenges in classroom management and pedagogical practices. The UNESCO report identifies several key factors contributing to teacher attrition globally, including demanding daily classroom realities such as long working hours, large class sizes, and insufficient support, as well as stress coming from work-life imbalance and excessive administrative duties (p. 69). Furthermore, the report points out the negative impact of teacher attrition on students' learning processes by disrupting positive learning environments and hindering the development of crucial classroom interactions. The report also identifies the challenges caused by teacher attrition and turnover. Some of these challenges are: the constant need to recruit and train new teachers places a considerable burden on schools and educational systems, generating significant costs and potentially creating a demotivating atmosphere among the remaining staff. The report indicates that a significant portion of the global demand for teachers by 2030, approximately 58 percent, is projected to be caused by teacher attrition (p. 70),

emphasizing the need to address this issue to reduce teacher shortages and to ensure educational continuity and quality.

Likewise, Santiago, Santos, & Santiago-Centeno (2022) focus on identifying the factors causing teacher turnover to provide a basis for a proposed retention program. The study categorized these factors into personal, institutional, and psychological domains. The authors highlight the critical role of teachers in student success, stating that "the educator is the most influential person in making the students attain progress leading to success, and employing qualified teachers is one of the most critical components for the achievement of the students" (Rice, 2013, cited in Santiago, Santos, & Santiago-Centeno, 2022). It is important to say that the study also emphasizes a humanistic perspective on teacher turnover, acknowledging the importance of valuing teachers as human resources and recognizing their impact on the learning environment, and students' lives. This humanistic view of the teacher aligns with the study's inclusion of psychological factors, and the importance it places on teachers' well-being and job satisfaction as a key factor to increasing teacher retention. An important conclusion we can get from this study is that the teacher is not only an employee, but a valuable human resource that has a great impact on students' lives and success. Therefore, any program seeking to improve teachers' retention should focus on a holistic approach that addresses not only institutional factors but also the personal and psychological needs of educators.

Studies on Teacher Job Satisfaction and Well-being

Teacher job satisfaction and well-being have also been identified as key factors influencing teachers' decisions to remain or to leave the profession. Several studies have explored the relationship between teachers' professional experiences, their sense of well-being, and their levels of commitment to teaching.

Massari (2015) conducted a meta-analysis on the key factors that impact preschool and primary school teachers' job satisfaction. The study categorized these factors into three levels: micro-structural (teacher actions and characteristics), meso-structural (school characteristics, management, professional and individual factors), and macro-structural (educational systems and policies). Massari reviewed a wide range of variables, including behavioral problems of pupils, which have been identified as a major source of stress for teachers (Boyle, Borg, Falzon, & Baglioni, 1995; Chaplain, 1995; Bibou-Nakou, Stogiannidou, & Kiosseoglou, 1999), cited in Massari (2015). The article explores how these factors, from the micro to the macro level, can affect teacher satisfaction. The meta-analysis found that more experienced teachers tend to demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction, suggesting that experience may play a role in developing effective strategies to cope with the challenges of teaching young learners.

Similarly, Santiago, Santos, & Santiago-Centeno (2022) emphasize a humanistic view of teachers and the importance of addressing not only institutional but also personal and psychological dimensions when designing retention programs. Their findings suggest that teachers' well-being and job satisfaction are essential elements in increasing teacher retention and reducing turnover.

Ayar (2023) also contributes to this discussion by identifying factors such as self-efficacy, teacher identity, and professional development opportunities as important elements influencing teachers' decisions to remain in the profession. Their findings suggest that supporting teachers' professional growth and strengthening their sense of belonging within professional communities may positively affect both well-being and retention.

In the same way, UNESCO (2024) identifies work-life imbalance, excessive administrative responsibilities, and insufficient support as significant contributors to teacher dissatisfaction and attrition. The report reinforces the idea that teacher well-being is not solely an individual responsibility but is also influenced by institutional conditions and support systems.

Studies on Teaching Young Learners in Bilingual Contexts

Given the fact that this study focuses on bilingual English learning environments for young learners, it is important to review research that explores the particular realities and challenges faced by teachers working with this population.

Copland, Burns, and Garton (2014) identify several key factors that contribute to the difficulties faced by teachers of young learners (YLS). The authors highlight that these challenges come from a combination of emerging educational policies and the realities of daily classroom practices. The article points specifically to issues such as classroom management (including discipline and student motivation), methodological decisions related to teaching speaking, writing, grammar, and the effective implementation of methodologies like Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). An important finding is the

lack of adequate training for teachers, not only in their own English language proficiency but also in the application of current language teaching methodologies. This lack of professional support can lead to the decrease of teacher confidence and generates a feeling of anxiety, particularly when addressing productive skills like speaking and writing. As Copland, Burns, and Garton (2014) argue, "it is important that teachers are supported in developing skills and confidence in teaching parts of the curriculum they identify as problematic: the productive skills of speaking and writing" (p. 756). The article also emphasizes the "challenge of differentiated learning and teaching in the state sector, which has gone unrecognized in previous studies" (Copland, Burns, & Garton, 2014, p. 757), suggest that despite increased attention to inclusion, YL teachers may not be sufficiently prepared to address this critical aspect of their work. These findings contribute to an understanding of the multifaceted challenges inherent in teaching English to young learners, providing a valuable foundation for investigating the factors that may lead to this specific teacher group attrition.

Kamstra (2023) in the edited volume *Teaching Practices and Equitable Learning in Children's Language Education*, highlights the significant "reality shock" many new teachers experience when they transition from teacher education programs to the actual classroom reality (p. 130). This gap between theoretical preparation and the practical realities, particularly for those teaching young learners, can lead to feelings of being unprepared to handle challenges such as managing big size and diverse classrooms. Furthermore, as Kamstra points out, inadequate training can cause feelings of incompetence in teachers of young learners, potentially leading them to reconsider their choice of age

group or even the profession altogether (p. 131). To address this, Kamstra suggests that teacher education programs should identify factors that contribute to teacher demotivation and dissatisfaction and equip future educators with specific skills, including reflective practices, to bridge the theory-practice divide and confidently navigate the realities of the classroom (p. 134). Additionally, the author emphasizes the importance of inclusive training, arguing that teachers often feel frustrated and demotivated when they lack the skills to effectively support students with diverse needs (p. 136). Finally, Kamstra argues that enhancing teacher education through inclusive and reflective training is crucial for boosting teacher motivation and, by extension, improving teacher retention within the field of young learner language education.

Massari (2015) also contributes to this discussion through findings related to preschool and primary teachers. The study highlights how behavioral problems and the daily demands associated with younger learners can become significant sources of stress, affecting teachers' job satisfaction and professional experience. These findings suggest that teaching young learners requires not only specialized pedagogical knowledge but also adequate institutional support and strategies to manage the unique demands of this educational stage.

In conclusion, the literature examined mentions several interconnected factors influencing teacher attrition and turnover, particularly concerning those working with YLs. The importance of work-life balance is an important element affecting teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the daily realities of the classroom, among them: classroom management, discipline issues, and student diversity, present persistent

challenges that can contribute to teacher attrition. It is important to point out that novice teachers appear to be more affected, often experiencing a “reality shock” due to a gap between their pre-service education and the practical demands of teaching. On the other hand, teachers with greater confidence in their skills and more experience tend to stay longer in the profession. This highlights the crucial role of teacher education programs in adequately preparing educators for the specific challenges of their chosen age group.

Finally, the literature emphasizes that teacher attrition and turnover have significant effects, not only in terms of the financial expense of recruitment and training but, more importantly, on the continuity and quality of the students' educational experiences. Addressing these multifaceted factors through teacher education programs that connect the gap between theory and practice, alongside teacher support mechanisms that prioritize teachers' well-being is crucial for reducing young learner teacher attrition and turnover in bilingual learning environments.

Research Question

Teacher attrition and turnover have become growing concerns in educational settings due to their impact on instructional continuity, student learning, and institutional stability. Understanding the factors that contribute to teacher attrition and turnover in a specific context is essential for developing strategies that support teacher retention and therefore quality education. For this reason, this study seeks to answer the following research question:

What factors contribute to teacher attrition and turnover in a bilingual learning environment for young learners (6-12) at a Binational Center in Cali Colombia?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To analyze the factors influencing teacher attrition and turnover in a bilingual learning environment for young learners (6–12 years old) at a Binational Center in Cali, Colombia, and subsequently propose actionable recommendations for teacher support systems and program policies to improve teacher satisfaction and retention.

Specific Objectives

To categorize the primary challenges and stressors experienced by teachers in the Kids and Teens Program in the bilingual learning environment that may lead to attrition and turnover.

To assess the effectiveness of the current teacher support systems and institutional policies in mitigating the challenges faced by the teachers in the Kids and Teens Program at the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano, Cali.

To formulate recommendations for teacher support systems and program policies aimed at decreasing teacher attrition and turnover in the Kids and Teens Program at the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano, Cali.

METHODS

Research Design

This research project has as a main objective to analyze the factors influencing teacher attrition and turnover in a bilingual learning environment for young learners (6–12 years old) at a Binational Center in Cali, Colombia, and subsequently propose actionable recommendations for teacher training programs and program policies to improve teacher satisfaction and retention. In order to achieve this objective, the research adopts a mix-methods approach using a concurrent triangulation design. The reason for combining quantitative and qualitative data is to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing teacher attrition and dissatisfaction in a bilingual English program for young learners, this method aligns well with the research objective, as it allows for a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions (Hernández Sampieri, Fernández Collado, & Baptista Lucio, 2014, p. 537).

Context

The study was carried out at a binational center located in Cali, Colombia, an institution dedicated exclusively to teaching English as a foreign language. The center offers two academic programs; one designed for adult learners aged 15 and older, and the second one for young learners between the ages of 6 and 15, known as the Kids and Teens Program. This program provides English instruction that supports students' linguistic and cognitive development while fostering intercultural awareness.

The Kids and Teens Program has approximately 2.100 students distributed across different ages and proficiency levels. Classes are held once a week for two and a half hours, offering flexible schedules to fit families' needs. Sessions take place on Fridays from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m., and on Saturdays in three different schedules: 7:45 to 10:15 a.m., 10:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m., and 3:00 to 5:30 p.m. The program is organized into two academic semesters per year, each consisting of 17 sessions. This structure allows students to learn English while balancing their school commitments and other extracurricular activities they are engaged in.

The Kids and Teens Program has approximately 80 teachers who vary in age, academic background, and professional experience. The program experiences a yearly rotation of about 20 to 25 teachers, who must be replaced to maintain program continuity. However, this teacher's attrition and rotation have hindered the growth of the program. Teachers receive ongoing academic and administrative support through several institutional mechanisms. An academic coordinator supervises teachers' work, providing guidance on class planning, student record keeping, and compliance with institutional policies. In addition, an academic advisor supports teachers' professional growth through class observations, post-observation conferences, and individualized action plans with follow-up sessions. Teachers also participate in monthly in-service training meetings that address both pedagogical and administrative topics. New teachers take part in a Learning-Centered orientation course designed to familiarize them with the institution's methodology and policies as they begin to work.

Teachers are evaluated annually based on multiple criteria. The evaluation process includes the follow-up conducted by the academic coordinator and the academic advisor, as

well as the results obtained from student evaluations of teaching performance. Additionally, teachers have the opportunity to provide feedback on the program and institutional resources through an annual survey, where they assess the academic and administrative support received, as well as the quality of the programs, the materials and facilities. At the institutional level, teachers receive various benefits, including lunch tickets for those who work full days on Saturdays, an annual financial bonus equivalent to 30% of the minimum salary, and a transportation allowance for teachers who commute from nearby cities to teach in the Kids and Teens program on Saturdays. The institution also fosters a positive work environment through events and celebrations held throughout the year, such as Teacher's Day, Halloween, and Thanksgiving.

Table 1*Context*

Contextual Aspect	Description
Teacher Evaluation Process	*Annual performance evaluation on multiple criteria *Follow up by academic coordinator and academic advisor *Student evaluation of the teacher included in the process
Teacher participatory mechanisms	*Annual teacher survey *Feedback on academic and administrative support *Evaluation of programs, materials and facilities
Academic Support	*Ongoing guidance by academic coordinator *Pedagogical support by academic advisors
Institutional Benefits	* Lunch tickets for full-day Saturday teachers * Annual bonus equivalent to 30% of the minimum salary * Transportation allowance for Saturday for eligible teachers.
Work Environment	*Celebrations throughout the year like: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Teacher's Day, etc.

Participants

Sampling Strategy

The participants of this study were selected through non-probability purposive sampling, as they were chosen for their direct experience and relevance to the research objectives. The sample is composed of three groups:

Group 1: 12 Teachers who left the Kids and Teens Program. This group provided insightful information and data about the reasons behind teacher attrition. It was composed of twelve teachers who had either left both the program and the institution, or who had transferred from the Kids and Teens Program to other programs within the institution, such as the Adult or Institutional Programs (see Table 2).

Table 2

Teachers Who Left the Kids and Teens Program



Survey teachers who left the program

TEACHER	GENDER	AGE	YEARS IN THE K&T PROGRAM
Teacher 1	Female	52	8
Teacher 2	Female	48	6
Teacher 3	Female	32	3
Teacher 4	Female	32	4
Teacher 5	Female	26	2
Teacher 6	Female	25	4
Teacher 7	Female	24	1
Teacher 8	Female	23	3
Teacher 9	Male	55	8
Teacher 10	Male	38	4
Teacher 11	Male	35	1
Teacher 12	Male	29	3

Group 2- 9 Teachers who are currently working in the Kids and Teens

Program. This group included ten teachers who continue to work in the institution and specifically within the Kids and Teens Program. These teachers have taught in the program between 1 and 17 years. Their participation offered the perspectives of those who have chosen to stay, providing valuable information on the reasons for retention and contributing ideas for potential improvements (see Table 2).

Table 3

Teachers Currently Working in the Kids and Teens Program



Focus group 1-Teachers currently working in the K&T program

TEACHER	GENDER	AGE	YEARS IN THE K&T PROGRAM
Teacher 1	Female	34	7
Teacher 2	Female	32	10
Teacher 3	Female	29	12
Teacher 4	Female	24	1
Teacher 5	Male	40	17
Teacher 6	Male	34	7
Teacher 7	Male	34	5
Teacher 8	Male	32	3
Teacher 9	Male	24	2

Group 3-6 Academic Administrative staff members. This group provided an institutional perspective on teacher retention and support systems. This group is composed of 3 members of the Advisors team, responsible for teacher training, professional development, and the orientation process for new hires. The other 3 participants are part of the Support Teachers teams. This team is in charge of the logistics of the programs and assists teachers with technical issues. This is also the team that covers for the teachers when

they request a substitution. The session lasted approximately two hours and was moderated by the researcher, who facilitated the discussion and guided participants through the different sections of the instrument. For organizational purposes, participants were divided into two groups: advisors and Support Teachers. This combination of these groups of participants allowed the triangulation of the different perspectives about the factors influencing teacher attrition and the possible actions that may help retention.

Instruments

To obtain the necessary results, the research followed a series of steps to achieve both the general objective and the specific objectives.

Step 1: Informed Consent

To inform the participants about the purpose, methods, and objectives of the research, through an informed consent form. This document was delivered to each participant, and before the implementation of the instrument, they were asked to sign it if they agreed to participate. All participants provided their consent. The signed consent forms were scanned and stored in a secure folder for future reference. (Appendix A).

Step 2: Teachers who left the program Survey

For this step a survey with open and close ended questions was designed to: Identify primary challenges and stressors that may lead to attrition and turnover, to assess teachers' perceptions of professional development opportunities, institutional policies, and support

systems provided by the institution to teachers of young learners and to gather demographic and professional background data from participants to contextualize responses.

Closed-ended questions allowed for quantifiable data that was analyzed statistically, while open-ended questions provided richer qualitative insights. ([Appendix B](#)).

Step 3: Focus Group Teachers who are currently working in the program

For this step a focus group was conducted using a questionnaire with open-ended questions. The session lasted approximately two hours and was moderated by the researcher, who guided the discussion and ensured that all participants had the opportunity to contribute. The focus group was carried out with a single group of nine teachers, which allowed for collective interaction and the co-construction of ideas. This instrument helped identify teachers' perceptions on the challenges and stressors that may lead to attrition and turnover, to assess current teachers' perceptions of professional development opportunities, institutional policies, and support systems provided by the institution to teachers of young learners and to gather demographic and professional background data from participants to contextualize responses. This instrument also helped generate collaborative reflections on possible strategies to reduce attrition and enhance teachers' job satisfaction. ([Appendix C](#)).

Step 4: Focus Group Academic Administrative Staff

A questionnaire with open-ended questions was used to recognize administrative academic staff members' perceptions of the challenges and stressors that may cause teacher attrition.

This step contrasted the perception of the teachers and the perception of the group responsible for professional development programs and institutional support systems. This comparison enabled the researcher to gain insights into possible actions to reduce attrition and increase teacher satisfaction. ([Appendix D](#)).

Table 4

Instruments

Instrument	Objective	Date of application	Access
Informed Consent Form	To ensure ethical compliance by informing participants about the purpose, methods, and voluntary nature of the study	October 27th, 2025	Appendix A
Teachers who left the program Survey	To identify primary challenges and stressors influencing attrition and turnover; to assess perceptions of professional development, institutional policies, and support systems; and to collect demographic and professional background information	October 30th to November 6th, 2025	Appendix B
Focus Group Teachers who are currently working in the program	To explore current perceptions of challenges and stressors; to evaluate professional development opportunities and institutional support; and to generate collaborative reflections on retention strategies	November 4th, 2025	Appendix C
Focus Group Academic Administrative Staff	To examine administrative perceptions of factors contributing to teacher	November 10th, 2025	Appendix D

attrition and contrast them
with teachers' perspectives

Data Collection Procedures

This research collected data in two stages:

1. Surveys were administered online/ in person ensuring accessibility to former and current teachers of the institution who have left the Kids and Teens Program.
2. The focus groups were conducted separately with current teachers and academic administrative staff. It was conducted in a semi-structured format, facilitated by the researcher and audio recorded (with consent) and complemented by notes taken during the discussions. Both instruments were applied concurrently to be able to develop the triangulation design proposed.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was collected from the closed-ended questions provided in the survey given to teachers who left the program. This data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency of answer, percentages, etc.). These techniques provided an overview of the most common reasons for teacher attrition in the Kids and Teens Program at a Binational Center in Cali, Colombia. According to Hernández Sampieri, Fernández Collado, and Baptista Lucio (2014, p. 320), descriptive statistics allow the researcher to identify patterns and tendencies.

Qualitative data was collected from the open-ended questions in both the survey and the focus groups. This data was analyzed through thematic analysis, which involves coding,

categorization, and identification of emerging themes. The coding process at this stage was very important because it facilitated a deeper and more organized analysis of the data. This process was conducted through the two stages proposed by Hernández Sampieri, Carlos Fernández Collado, and María del Pilar Baptista Lucio (2014).

The first stage was open coding, through which the researcher identified concepts, examples, and arguments that were common or repetitive across participants' responses. This stage allowed the data to be examined in detail and fragmented into meaningful units in order to recognize patterns and recurring ideas. During the second stage, axial coding, the data was grouped into categories and topics, and relevant examples were highlighted to support the importance and relevance of each category. This stage made it possible to establish relationships among categories and to organize the information in a more structured way.

Hernández Sampieri, Fernández Collado, and Baptista Lucio (2014, pp. 404–406) explain that qualitative data analysis enables the researcher to identify categories and subcategories that reflect participants' perspectives. This analysis granted the exploration of teachers' narratives regarding institutional support, professional development, and the factors influencing their decision to stay or leave, while maintaining coherence with the objectives of the study.

Finally, the integration of the quantitative and qualitative data took place during the interpretation stage. In order to operationalize the concurrent triangulation design, the results from both data sets were first organized into comparative matrices based on the main analytical categories of the study. These matrices allowed the researcher to systematically contrast quantitative trends, such as the frequency of reported reasons for

attrition, with qualitative evidence drawn from the narratives of surveyed participants and focus group discussions. Through this process, points of convergence and divergence across data sources were explicitly identified. Convergences were observed when quantitative patterns were reinforced by similar themes in participants' testimonies, while divergences were identified when qualitative data provided additional information or alternative explanations to the numerical trends. This comparative process allowed the integration of perspectives from former teachers, current teachers, and academic-administrative staff, strengthening the interpretation of the findings. As Hernández Sampieri, Fernández Collado, and Baptista Lucio (2014, p. 557) explain, triangulation contributes to enriching the research findings by enabling the validation and complementarity of evidence obtained through different methods. Through this integrative analysis, the study was able to formulate more grounded conclusions and evidence-based recommendations for institutional policy and teacher retention strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and analysis of the study titled “*Factors Affecting Attrition and Job Dissatisfaction in a Bilingual Learning Program for Young Learners at a Binational Center in Cali, Colombia.*” The purpose of this chapter is to examine the results in relation to the research objective: to analyze the factors influencing teacher attrition and turnover in a bilingual learning environment for young learners (6–12 years old) and to formulate actionable recommendations to strengthen teacher support systems and program policies. To achieve this, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach using a concurrent triangulation design, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected during a similar timeframe, analyzed separately, and later compared and integrated (Hernández Sampieri, Fernández Collado, & Baptista Lucio, 2014). This design allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and strengthens the validity of the interpretation by contrasting multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on personal opinion.

Data were gathered through both quantitative and qualitative instruments. A survey was administered to teachers who had left the program, including closed-ended (quantitative) questions and open-ended responses. In addition, two qualitative focus groups were conducted: one with teachers currently working in the Kids and Teens Program and another with members of the academic-administrative staff. The analysis was conducted in three stages. First, the survey data were examined, beginning with the quantitative responses to identify patterns and trends, followed by a thematic analysis of the open-ended answers. Second, the focus group data were analyzed, first reviewing the

perspectives of current teachers and then those of the academic-administrative staff. Finally, findings from both instruments were compared to identify similarities and differences that informed the conclusions.

The analysis of both data sources was guided by categories aligned with the research objectives. The main analytical categories related to reasons for attrition were personal and professional wellbeing, system and policies, and institutional environment and support systems. Additionally, positive aspects of the program and participants' recommendations were examined in order to build suggestions for improvement. The chapter is therefore organized according to these stages and categories, presenting the survey results, followed by the focus group findings, and concluding with an integrated discussion that connects the evidence to the purpose of improving teacher satisfaction and retention in the bilingual educational context where the research was done.

Analysis of the Survey Given to Teachers Who Left the Program

This survey had two main parts: closed-ended questions that requested teachers to qualify the reasons influencing their decision to leave the program and a set of open-ended questions that asked them to describe their feelings influencing their decision to leave.

Analysis of the Closed-ended Questions

In this part of the survey, former teachers were asked to rate the extent to which specific factors influenced their decision to leave the Kids and Teens Program. Using a five-point Likert scale (1 = No influence; 5 = Decisive influence), participants evaluated

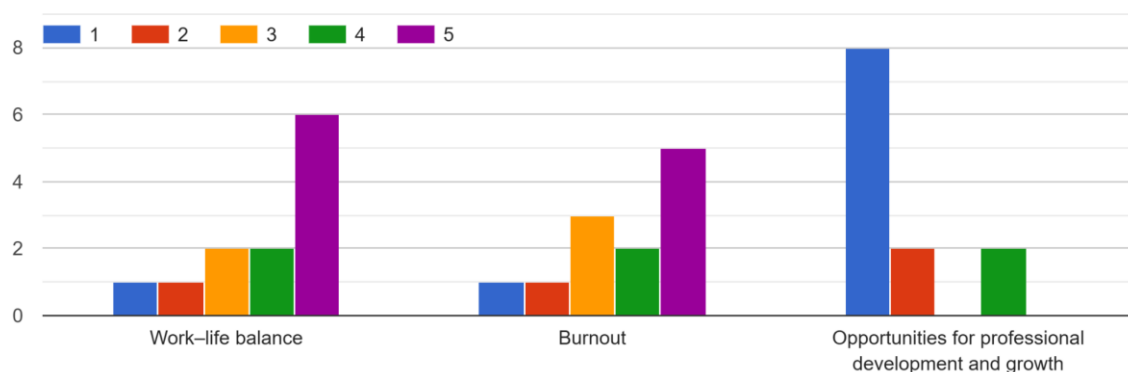
items grouped into three categories: (a) personal and professional well-being (e.g., work-life balance, burnout, opportunities for professional development), (b) system and institutional policies (e.g., work schedules, curriculum design, recognition, autonomy in decision-making), and (c) institutional environment and support systems (e.g., salary and financial support, administrative guidance, student behavior, communication with parents, job stability, and workplace culture). This structure allowed the researcher to quantify the relative weight of different personal, structural, and organizational factors contributing to teacher attrition.

Question 1-Personal and Professional Well-being

Figure 1

Personal and Professional Well-being

a. Personal and professional well being



In this category, 10 out of 12 teachers rated work-life balance as having a high or decisive influence on their decision to leave. Burnout received predominantly high ratings,

with most responses clustered in levels 4 and 5, confirming that emotional and physical exhaustion significantly affected teachers' decisions to leave.

In contrast, opportunities for professional development and growth were largely rated as having little to no influence (83,3 % of the teachers responded predominantly level 1 and 2), which indicates that lack of professional growth was not perceived as a primary reason for leaving. These findings suggest that attrition in the Kids and Teens Program at the Binational Center is more strongly associated with well-being and workload-related stressors than with dissatisfaction regarding career advancement opportunities.

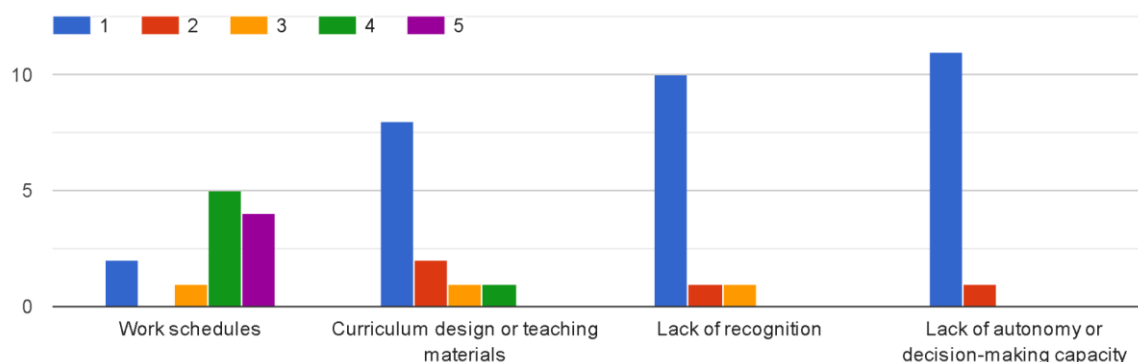
Based on these results, it can be concluded that improving work–life balance conditions and implementing strategies to mitigate burnout may have a greater impact on teacher retention than focusing only on expanding professional development strategies.

Question 2-System and policies

Figure 2

System and Policies

b. System and policies



The results for this category reveal a differentiated pattern of influence among institutional factors. Work schedules emerged as a relatively influential factor in teachers' decisions to leave, with responses concentrated on the higher levels of the scale (75% of the teachers selected ratings 4 and 5). This evidence shows that schedule demands of the program (classes on Friday night and Saturday all day) were perceived as structurally impactful and contributed to work-life imbalance, reinforcing findings from the previous category.

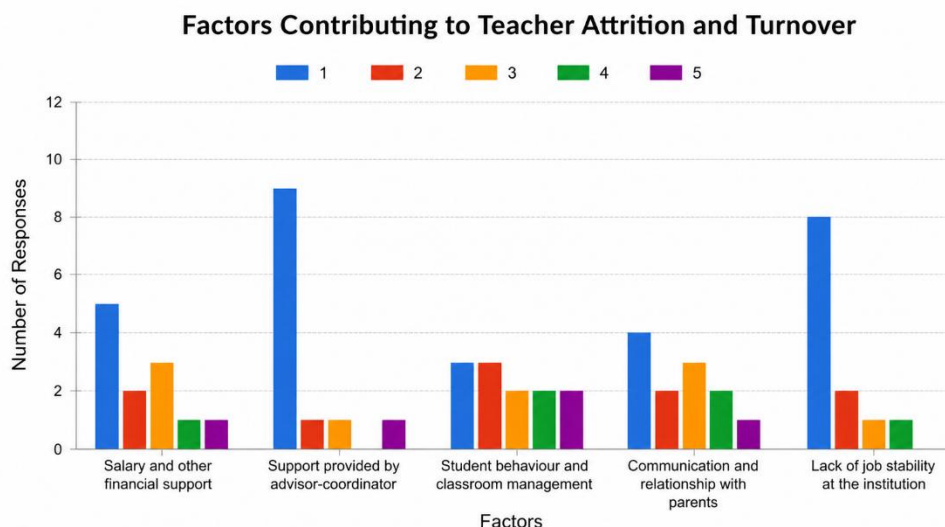
In contrast, 83,3% of teachers rated curriculum design or teaching materials at level 1 and 2, indicating that this factor had little to no influence on teachers' decisions to leave. Similarly, lack of recognition and lack of autonomy or decision-making capacity were largely evaluated as having minimal influence, with most teachers' responses clustered at the lowest point of the scale (80 to 90% graded on scales 1 and 2). These results showed that dissatisfaction with instructional materials or institutional authority structures did not constitute primary reasons for attrition.

The data indicate that within the system and policy dimension, program scheduling demands appear to be the most significant institutional factor associated with teacher turnover or attrition. Other policy-related aspects such as recognition, autonomy, and curriculum design were not perceived as decisive contributors. These results support the argument that time demands, rather than pedagogical or policy dissatisfaction, played a more central role in influencing attrition decisions.

Question 3-Institutional environment and Support Systems

Figure 3

Institutional Environment and Support Systems



The results for the Institutional Environment and Support Systems category indicate in general that these elements did not play a high influence on teachers' decisions to leave the Program.

To start, salary and other financial support (including transportation bonus, lunch ticket, and annual bonus) received a noticeable distribution across low-scale responses (particularly levels 1 and 2, 83,3% of the teachers), with some higher ratings. This suggests that compensation-related factors were not highly influential in attrition decisions.

In addition, 83,3% of the teachers rated the support provided by the advisor and/or coordinator mostly at level 1. This indicates that most teachers did not perceive institutional guidance or leadership support as a factor contributing to their departure. This finding

aligns with previous results highlighting the program's supportive structure as a protective element rather than a risk factor.

On the other hand, student behaviour and classroom management, as well as communication and relationship with parents, showed a more spread pattern, with teachers' opinions distributed across levels 1 to 4. While these aspects were influential for some teachers, they do not appear to have been dominant attrition drivers at this group level. Additionally, lack of job stability at the institution concentrated strongly at level 1, suggesting that employment insecurity was not perceived as a determining factor for leaving. Similarly, the environment and culture among the academic team and supervisors was not evaluated as highly problematic.

Overall, the data in this category of the survey suggest that within the institutional environment dimension, financial compensation was the most salient factor influencing attrition, whereas institutional support, team culture, and leadership were largely perceived positively. These results support the hypothesis that teachers' decisions to leave were influenced more by structural and personal well-being factors than by dissatisfaction with institutional relationships or organizational climate.

To wrap-up the analysis of the closed questions of the survey given to teachers who left the program, a comparative analysis of the three categories was done. This analysis evidences a clear pattern in the factors influencing teacher attrition. Personal and professional well-being was clearly identified as the most influential dimension, specifically work-life balance and burnout, which received the highest concentration of

strong agreement ratings. Within the system and policies category, work schedules were the only factor showing a high influence. These results reveal that teachers leave the program due to an imbalance in work-life related aspects. Instead, curriculum design, recognition, and autonomy were largely perceived as having minimal impact on teachers' decisions to leave. Moreover, in the institutional environment and support systems category, most relational and support related variables, such as advisor/ coordinator support, team culture, and job stability, were predominantly rated as having little influence, with financial compensation appearing as the only moderately influential factor. Overall, these findings suggest that attrition in the Kids and Teens program at the Binational Center was caused primarily by well-being and workload-related stressors rather than dissatisfaction with institutional support, leadership, or organizational climate.

Analysis of the open-ended questions

In the final section of the survey, the open-ended questions invited teachers who had left the Kids and Teens Program to reflect in their own words on the main reasons influencing their decision to leave the institution or the program. Participants were asked to elaborate on their experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to their working conditions, professional well-being, and institutional context, allowing them to comment on aspects they considered most significant beyond the structured response options. This section of the survey was designed to gather detailed insights, perspectives and meanings that could not be completely addressed through closed-ended questionnaires.

The researcher conducted the review of this section using a thematic analysis approach. Following the guidelines for qualitative data analysis proposed by Hernández Sampieri, Fernández Collado, and Baptista Lucio (2014), responses were first read several times to achieve familiarization with the data. As part of the initial coding process, ChatGPT was used as a support tool to process the transcriptions and identify recurring ideas and patterns based on the predefined analytical categories proposed by the study.

Specifically, the AI assisted in highlighting potential themes across participants' responses. However, the interpretative process remained under the control of the researcher. A thorough manual revision was conducted to validate, refine, and reorganize the proposed codes, ensuring that all participants' perspectives were accurately represented. The researcher then confirmed the emerging themes, classified them according to the established categories, calculated their frequency, and selected representative examples to support each theme. This systematic process allowed for the organization, interpretation, and meaningful representation of participants' voices, ensuring coherence in the qualitative analysis.

Teachers were asked to describe the feelings that influenced them to leave the Kids and Teens program. The following chart summarizes the thematic categorization of teachers' responses to the question. Through an inductive thematic analysis, recurring feelings and perceptions expressed by participants were identified, coded, and grouped into broader categories. The frequencies reported represent the number of participants who explicitly referred to each theme in their responses.

Table 5
Open-ended Questions Teachers Who Left the Program

Theme	Description	Frequency of answers	Sample quote from teachers' answers
Emotional and Physical Exhaustion Burnout	Feelings of tiredness, burnout, exhaustion after classes, emotional drain	8 66,6%	Participant 4: "I was feeling mostly tired of the schedule and the management of the students" Participant 1: "Work-life balance and I decided to move on to explore opportunities with a more balanced task and compensation"
Work-Life Imbalance / Schedule demands	Weekend work, Saturday classes, desire for free time and family time	7 58,3%	Participant 3: "I need more free time to enjoy family and life" Participant 9: "I wanted to have my Fridays free"
Challenges in Classroom Management with young learners	Discipline issues, large groups, need for constant attention, demanding classroom dynamics	7 58,3%	Participant 7: "What led me to make the decision to leave the program is mainly related to the students rather than anything else. I feel that children (which were the groups I taught) require much more attention, patience, and classroom management"
Preference for other audiences- Adults	Feeling more comfortable, effective, or fulfilled teaching adults rather than young learners	6 50%	Participant 12: "Although the kids were lovely, working with them was five times more challenging and demanding for me than working with adults".
Dealing with low student motivation / Disconnection	Perceived lack of interest, generational gap,	4 33,3%	Participant 3: "Kids today are less respectful, less interested in studying per se,



	limited student engagement		and I didn't seem to connect/want to connect with them" Participant 7: "In addition, many of the children attend classes because their parents make them go, not because it's their own choice. For that reason, their motivation and interest in the class are often limited, which can be frustrating at times"
Professional self-doubt / Perceived ineffectiveness	Feeling "not good enough," lack of perceived student progress	2 16,6%	Participant 8: " disappointed by feeling that I was not good enough with this program and that my strategies were not being really effective in improving their skills. I was not able to see a lot of progress on them as I do with other programs"

Teachers' responses (Table 5) regarding feelings influencing their decision to leave The Kids and Teens program revealed that emotional and physical exhaustion was the most frequently reported factor (66,6% of the surveyed teachers). Teachers described constantly and in different ways the feelings of tiredness and burnout associated with the specific demands of teaching young learners. Responses highlighted that a single two-hour class with children was more exhausting than other teaching responsibilities they had throughout the week. This is a very important finding revealed by the survey, teachers find teaching young learners physically exhausting. Furthermore, work–life imbalance also emerged as a highly influential theme (58,3% of the surveyed teachers mentioned this factor). Most participants emphasized the demands of the weekend schedules, Friday and Saturday

classes were described as exhausting and they stressed their desire for greater personal and family time as decisive factors. In short, teachers find not only the teaching of young learners exhausting but also the fact their class schedules, which adds to their feeling of tiredness.

On the other hand, answers regarding teaching requirements were also listed as influential factors in program attrition (58,3% of the teachers referred to this factor). Challenges related to classroom management and group size contributed to emotional strain, as teachers described the constant need for discipline, attention management, and student engagement, due to the age of the learners and their characteristics.

Additionally, 50% of the participants (6) reported a perceived mismatch between their teaching preferences and working with young learners, expressing greater professional satisfaction and effectiveness when teaching adults. Feelings of disconnection from students, often attributed to low motivation or generational differences, also influenced attrition decisions.

Collectively, the findings obtained from the open-ended questions of the survey demonstrate that while teachers valued the program and the teaching experience, the emotional demands and physical exhaustion associated with the class schedules played a key role in their decision to leave. It is very important to highlight that according to teachers the challenges associated with teaching young learners played a central role in their decision to leave.

A comparison of the findings from both the closed-ended and open-ended questions reveals a consistent pattern in the factors influencing teacher attrition. The quantitative results highlighted work–life balance, burnout, and demanding work schedules as the most influential factors; the qualitative responses provided deeper insight into how these issues were experienced by teachers. In particular, participants emphasized the emotional demands and physical exhaustion associated with teaching young learners and managing the program’s schedules. Although teachers expressed appreciation for the program and the teaching experience itself, the combined impact of workload, schedule demands, and the challenges inherent to teaching young learners influenced their decision to leave. Overall, the integration of both data sources suggests that teacher attrition in the Kids and Teens program was primarily related to well-being and workload pressures rather than dissatisfaction with the institutional environment or support systems.

Analysis of the Focus Group 1- Teachers Currently Working in the Kids and Teens Program

The focus group conducted with 9 teachers currently working in the Kids and Teens program was analyzed in three main parts. The first part focused on teachers’ perceptions regarding attrition, specifically the challenges and conditions that may lead some teachers to leave the program. The second part examined the factors that have contributed to teachers’ decisions to continue working in the Kids and Teens program and the third part their suggestions for improvement. This analysis allowed for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, as it not only identified potential reasons for attrition but also highlighted strategies and conditions that may support teacher retention. As a result, these findings

informed the researcher's proposals for actions aimed at reducing teacher attrition within the program at the binational center.

Analysis of the questions for session 3: Perceptions of attrition and challenges

The first part of the focus group analysis addressed teachers' perceptions of attrition and the challenges associated with working in the Kids and Teens program. This section was guided by the questions: *"From your perspective, what do you think are the main reasons some teachers decide to leave the Kids and Teens Program? Think of conditions related to teacher well-being, system and policies, and institutional environment and support. If you feel comfortable sharing: Have you personally faced challenges in the program that made you consider leaving? If so, what helped you stay?"* These questions allowed the researcher to explore not only participants' interpretations of why other teachers may have left the program, but also to identify the stressors they themselves experience in their teaching practice. As a result, this section provided insight into both perceived and lived challenges within the program.

Following the guidelines for qualitative data analysis proposed by Hernández Sampieri, Fernández Collado, and Baptista Lucio (2014), the researcher conducted a thematic analysis of the focus group data. This process involved identifying recurrent patterns in participants' responses, grouping them into codes, and organizing these codes into broader analytical categories aligned with the dimensions of teacher well-being, system and policies, and institutional environment and support systems. This methodological

approach allowed the identification of the most frequent themes, as well as the comparison and contrast of participants' perceptions within the predefined categories.

The following tables show the classification of teachers' responses according to the predefined categories.

Table 6

Perception of Attrition and Challenges Focus Group 1

Theme	Frequency of answers	Sample quote from teachers' answers
Emotional and physical exhaustion (burnout)	6 66,7%	Teacher 1: "When I arrive home, as I told you before, I only want to lay down and I don't want to speak with anyone. And my mother starts to speak to me, to talk to me, and I told her like".
High energy demands of teaching kids and teens	5 55,6%	Teacher 4: "And it's because with kids, as they need more motivation, you have to change the tone of your voice constantly. You have to be more energetic, so you feel that all that energy, all that motivation you use you set up with them, and when you arrive home, you are left with nothing". Teacher 9: "Kids demand a lot of energy, sometimes we have to fake it"
Loss of motivation due to student attitudes	5 55,6%	Teacher 6: "Yeah, the attitude sometimes is complicated, but somehow you need to find the answer for that". Teacher 1: "It's like teachers don't want to go to a classroom where

		students have such a big attitude because they are like uh spoiled from their homes, and they do whatever they want, and they react whatever they like, whatever the way they like, how whatever they like to you as a teacher”.
Difficulty balancing personal life (voice, energy, weekends)	4 44,4%	Teacher 4: “I even, the Sunday, when I want to do, for example, a karaoke or something with my friends, I feel that my voice doesn't work well enough for it”.

Table 7

System and Policies Focus Group 1

Theme	Frequency of answers	Sample quote from teachers' answers
Salary not aligned with effort	4 44,4 %	Teacher 2: “Putting up with all those things for almost the same hourly value” Teacher 8: “If they see the reflection of their effort in their payment, quitting will decrease”
Lack of incentives or reward systems	4 44,,4%	Teacher 2: “So, putting up with all of those things, one single day a week, for almost the same hourly value that I have in the other program, adults and all that, or something that I could even do with private classes, because that's what a colleague said, a friend of mine said. I think that's one of the reasons why teachers don't feel motivated”
High workload (planning + emotional labor)	4 44,4%	Teacher 4: Teacher “You have to change what you planned to make it attractive.”

		Teacher 1: “It’s mentally heavy dealing with teens with attitude.”
Need for stronger academic control systems (grading/structure)	3 33,3%	Teacher 2: “Students would change their behavior if there were grades.” Teacher 2: “Some traditional strategies are necessary nowadays.”

Table 8

Institutional Environment and Support Systems Focus group 1

Theme	Frequency of answers	Sample quote from teachers' answers
Student behavior and discipline challenges	6 66,7 %	Teacher 1: “They don’t reply, they are always on the phone.” Teacher 6: “Sometimes their attitude is complicated.”
Impact of technology on students’ attention and motivation	4 44,4 %	Teacher 7: “Technology is giving kids too much power.” Teacher 4: “They want everything instantly, they lose focus.”
Challenges dealing with parents	4 44,4 %	Teacher 5: “Dealing with parents is not an easy thing.” Teacher 2: “Some parents are rude or not involved.”
Limited materials or infrastructure in different sites of the institution	3 33,3%	Teacher 3: “The experience changes depending on the branch.” Teacher 5: “We don’t have the same materials or Wi-Fi.”

The analysis revealed that the factors most strongly associated with attrition are related to personal and professional wellbeing, particularly emotional and physical demands. Emotional exhaustion emerged as the most frequently mentioned theme, reported by 66.7% of participants. Teachers described working with children and teenagers as highly

demanding, requiring sustained energy and emotional engagement. Similarly, the high energy demands of teaching young learners (55.6%) and the loss of motivation due to students' attitudes (55.6%) were identified as significant challenges. Participants noted that dealing with disengaged students and negative attitudes can reduce their motivation to remain in the program. Additionally, 44.4% of teachers highlighted difficulties balancing work and personal life due to the physical, emotional, and scheduling demands associated with the program.

In relation to system and policies (see table 7), teachers identified structural factors linked to workload and compensation as potential contributors to attrition. A recurring theme (44.4%) was the perception that salary does not fully reflect the level of effort required to teach in the program, particularly when compared to other programs offered by the institution. Similarly, 44.4% of participants highlighted the absence of consistent incentive or reward systems as a factor that may reduce teachers' motivation to remain in the program over time. Together, these findings reflect teachers' perception of a gap between the demands of teaching in the Kids and Teens program and the recognition of that effort through salary and incentives.

Regarding the institutional environment and support systems (table 8), teachers identified several contextual challenges that may influence attrition. Student behavior and discipline emerged as the most prominent theme (66.7%), followed by the impact of technology on students' attention and motivation (44.4%) and challenges related to communication and expectations with parents (44.4%). Participants also highlighted inequalities in resources across branches (33.3%), including access to materials, classroom

spaces, and internet connectivity. Together, these factors affect the quality of the teaching experience and may influence teachers' perceptions of the program and their decision to remain in it.

Overall, the findings suggest that teacher attrition in the Kids and Teens program is influenced by the interaction of emotional, pedagogical, and structural factors. Physical and emotional exhaustion emerged as a central element in teachers' experiences, reflecting the sustained energy and engagement required to work with young learners. These demands are often intensified by challenging student attitudes, workload, and schedule requirements, which can gradually affect teachers' motivation and professional satisfaction. Although institutional support was generally perceived as positive, factors such as workload, compensation, and differences across branches contributed to a perceived imbalance between effort and reward.

Analysis of the questions for sessions 2: Perceptions of Positive Aspects & Motivation to Stay

Table 9

Positive Aspects and Motivation to Stay Focus Group 1

POSITIVE FACTORS SUPPORTING RETENTION IN THE K&T PROGRAM		
PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL WELL-BEING	SYSTEM AND POLICIES	INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS
Positive students' attitudes 33,3%	Program stability 22,2%	Learning environment: resources and spaces in some sites 11,1 %
Enjoyable interactions in class 22,2%	Strong institution/program structure 22,2%	Institutional support: psychologist, coordinator, coach 11,1 %
Dynamic Classes 22,2%	Continuity of the program (kids-teens-adults) 22,2%	Qualified staff-teachers 22,2 %
Motivation through teaching techniques 22,2%	Clear policies for minors 11,1%	High student outcomes: English proficiency level 33,3 %

The second part of the focus group analysis explored the positive aspects of the Kids and Teens program (table 9), focusing on the elements that teachers perceive as motivating and rewarding in their professional and personal experience. This section aimed to identify the factors that contribute to teacher retention, based on the perspectives of teachers who have remained in the program over time. Through this analysis, it was possible to better understand not only the reasons why some teachers continue working in the Kids and Teens program, but also which conditions should be maintained and strengthened in order to support teacher retention.

Following the guidelines for qualitative data analysis proposed by Hernández Sampieri, Fernández Collado, and Baptista Lucio (2014), the responses were coded and

grouped into thematic categories. These categories were aligned with the three analytical dimensions of the study: personal and professional wellbeing, system and policies, and institutional environment and support systems. The analysis focused on identifying recurrent themes and patterns in teachers' responses, as well as the meanings they assigned to their experiences within the program.

In relation to personal and professional wellbeing, teachers highlighted the emotional and relational aspects of working with children and teens as one of the most meaningful elements of the program. Students' positive attitudes were the most frequently mentioned factor (33.3%), as participants described them as open and easygoing, which contributed to their enjoyment of teaching. Additionally, 22.2% of teachers emphasized that working with young learners allows them to create dynamic and engaging classes, making learning fun and motivating. These findings suggest that positive relationships with students and engaging learning experiences play an important role in sustaining teachers' commitment to the program.

Regarding system and policies, teachers recognized several structural strengths of the Kids and Teens program. The most frequently mentioned aspects (22.2% each) were the organization and continuity of the program, the opportunity for students to progress through different stages within the same program, and salary as a motivating factor for retention. These elements reflected teachers' appreciation of the program's stability, institutional strength, and compensation. Additionally, 11.1% of participants highlighted the existence of clear policies for working with minors, emphasizing the value of having guidance and a framework for teaching young learners.

In terms of the institutional environment and support systems, teachers identified several elements that contribute positively to their experience. The most significant factor was student learning outcomes (33.3%), as participants expressed satisfaction and pride in seeing students achieve high levels of English proficiency through the program. Additionally, 22.2% of teachers highlighted the quality of the teaching staff, recognizing the experience and methodological strengths of their colleagues. Less frequently, participants mentioned the physical environment (11.1%), including access to large spaces for interactive activities, and the availability of institutional support services such as a psychologist (11.1%). Together, these factors reinforce teachers' sense of purpose, professional satisfaction, and positive perceptions of the program.

To sum up, these findings show that teachers' perceptions of the positive aspects of the Kids and Teens program are distributed across emotional, structural, and institutional dimensions. While some elements are more frequently mentioned than others, all three categories contribute to shaping teachers' overall experience in the program. The data reflect how participants value both the relational aspects of teaching young learners and the organizational and contextual conditions in which their work takes place. Additionally, the recurrence of certain themes, such as students' attitudes, program continuity, and learning outcomes, suggests that these aspects are consistently recognized among teachers as part of their day-to-day experience. This overview of positive factors provided a detailed description of the elements that teachers identified as meaningful within the program and serves as a basis for further analysis in relation to increasing teacher retention.

Analysis of the Questions for Sessions 4: Future Proposals and Improvements

Table 10

Proposal and Improvements Focus Group 1

Category	Theme	Frequency Percentage	Examples
Personal and Professional well-being	Reduce class size	2 22,2%	Teacher 7: “If you have 20 students compared to 14, it is a lot less work.”
	Provide classroom assistants (especial cases)	2 22,2 %	Teacher 8: “Teachers should have an assistant, at least for some classes”
Support System and policies	Improve curriculum design / reduce content load	3 33,3 %	Teacher 7: “The content in the books is a lot. I never cover everything.” Teacher 9: “Too much information per unit.”
	Involve teacher in decision making processes	2 22,2 %	Teacher 8: “It makes no sense to not include teachers when choosing the books”
	Improve teaching materials-resources	4 44,4 %	Teacher 8: “The book is horrible, the topics are not engaging.”
	Training teachers for the specific audience (Young Learners)	2 22,2 %	Teacher 6: “I also think that we should have some kind of workshops, or I don't know, of, I don't know if in-services as well, about giving



			strategies or materials regarding Kids and Teens”
Institutional Environment and support	Maintain students’ engagement with the institution beyond regular courses	4 44,4 %	Teacher 7: “Activities during vacations would help students continue learning.” Teacher 8: “Parents want programs where students don’t stop for two months.”
	Support for students with special needs	2 22,2 %	Teacher 5: “There are kids that have special needs... they need someone next to them.”
	Better salary or reward system	4 44,4 %	Teacher 2: “If they see the reflection of their effort in their payment, quitting will decrease.” “Money, a reward system , I’m pretty sure teachers would reconsider quitting.”

The last part of the focus group analysis focused on the suggestions for improvement and future development of the Kids and Teens program (table 10). For this section, the researcher identified, categorized, and organized the suggestions provided by the participants, as well as calculated the frequency of teachers who mentioned each idea. This process allowed for the identification of the most recurrent proposals across participants. The purpose of this section is to provide relevant data that will allow the researcher to provide recommendations for future improvement of the program, with the objective of contributing to increased teacher retention.

In relation to personal and professional wellbeing, the suggestions focused on improving classroom conditions to reduce teachers' workload and stress. A group of participants (22.2%) suggested reducing class size, while 22.2% proposed the inclusion of classroom assistants, particularly for groups with students who require additional support. These suggestions highlight the connection teachers perceive between classroom dynamics and their own wellbeing, suggesting that adjustments at this level could positively impact their daily experience in the program.

Regarding system and policies, this category concentrated the highest number of suggestions. The most frequently mentioned proposals were improving teaching materials and resources (44.4%) and strengthening salary conditions or reward systems (44.4%). Additionally, 33.3% of participants recommended reducing curriculum content load, while 22.2% suggested greater teacher involvement in decision-making processes and 22.2% highlighted the need for training opportunities focused on teaching young learners. Together, these findings show that teachers are concerned not only with classroom-level issues but also with broader structural and professional conditions that affect their work.

In terms of the institutional environment and support systems, teachers' suggestions focused on strengthening student support and program continuity. While 22.2% highlighted the need for additional support for students with special educational needs, 44.4% proposed maintaining student engagement beyond regular courses through complementary activities or vacation programs. These proposals reflect a concern with both improving students' learning experiences and creating more stable and consistent teaching conditions.

To sum up, these suggestions provided a detailed overview of the areas that teachers identified as needing improvement across the three analytical categories. While some proposals focus on daily classroom conditions, others address broader institutional and systemic factors, such as curriculum design, professional development, and salary compensation. The distribution of these suggestions indicated that teachers perceive the need for improvements at multiple levels of the program. This descriptive analysis offered a clear view of participants' perspectives and served as a foundation for the development of strategies aimed at strengthening the program and supporting teacher retention.

The analysis of the focus group with teachers currently working in the Kids and Teens program provided an overview of their experiences by putting together three key dimensions: perceived reasons for attrition, positive aspects of the program, and suggestions for improvement. Across these three areas, a clear pattern emerged in which teachers recognized both the strengths and the challenges of the program as interconnected elements of their professional experience. In the first place, the relational and dynamic nature of teaching young learners, the sense of achievement derived from students' progress, and the general structure and continuity of the program are identified as meaningful and motivating factors. These elements contributed to teachers' sense of purpose and helped explain why they chose to continue in the program despite the challenges they encountered.

On the other hand, the data also highlighted that the demands associated with teaching in the Kids and Teens program were significant and multifaceted. Factors such as emotional and physical exhaustion, high energy requirements, student behavior, workload,

and perceived imbalances between effort and compensation were recurrently identified as potential reasons for attrition. Importantly, many of the suggestions for improvement directly responded to these challenges, particularly those related to reducing workload (e.g., class size, assistants), improving curriculum and materials, increasing training opportunities, and strengthening compensation or incentive systems. This alignment between perceived challenges and proposed solutions suggested that teachers had a clear understanding of the conditions that could enhance their professional experience and decrease teacher attrition.

To conclude, the findings from this focus group showed that teacher retention in the Kids and Teens program was shaped by a balance between motivating factors and ongoing challenges. Rather than presenting only a positive or negative perception, teachers described their teaching experience as a complex experience in which satisfaction and difficulty coexisted. This highlighted the importance of looking at teacher retention through a holistic approach that considers emotional, pedagogical, and structural dimensions, as well as the value of incorporating teachers' voices in the identification of strategies for improvement.

Analysis of the Focus Group 2- Academic Administrative Staff

The analysis of the focus group conducted with 6 academic administrative staff members, responsible for teacher follow-up and professional development was carried out following the same methodological approach used in the previous focus group. The researcher followed the guidelines for qualitative data analysis proposed by Hernández

Sampieri, Fernández Collado, and Baptista Lucio (2014), the researcher identified recurring themes in participants' responses, grouped them into codes, and organized them into the three analytical categories of personal and professional wellbeing, system and policies, and institutional environment and support systems. Additionally, the frequency of each theme was calculated in order to recognize the most salient patterns across participants' responses. For the purpose of this study, the analysis of this focus group was structured in three stages: first, the examination of participants' perceptions regarding the reasons for teacher attrition; second, the identification of the positive aspects of the Kids and Teens program; and third, the analysis of the recommendations provided for future improvement. This process allowed for a systematic exploration of the institutional perspective on teacher retention within the program.

Table 11

Perception of Attrition and Challenges Focus Group 2

Category	Theme	Frequency Percent age	Examples
Personal and professional well-being	Emotional exhaustion/burn out	4 66,7 %	Staff 2: "They feel exhausted, it is not only physical, it is emotional." Staff 4: "Working with kids requires a lot of energy all the time."
	Difficulty managing young learners	4 66,7 %	Staff 6: "Classroom management becomes a challenge."
	Not identified with the	3 50 %	Staff 4: "Not all teachers are prepared to work with kids."



	audience Feeling forced to teach Kids and Teens		Staff 1: “But but in my personal opinion these teachers don't work with kids and teens because they don't have the touch”
System and policies	Salary not aligned with workload	3 50 %	Staff 1 and 3: “Teachers feel the effort is too much for the payment.”
	High workload Planning Adaptation of materials	4 66,7 %	Staff 1: “They need to adapt materials constantly.” Staff 5: “Planning takes much more time.”
	Schedule Challenges	4 66,7 %	Staff 3 and 6: “Schedules are demanding, especially weekends.” Staff 1: “I guess that many teachers are forced to work during the Saturday. But if you ask them, they would say, thank you”.
Institutional environment and support systems	Lack of specific training for young learners	5 83,3 %	Staff 2: “Many teachers arrive without tools to teach kids.” Staff 3: “They are not trained for this population.”
	Student behavior and dealing with parents	4 66,7 %	Staff 2: “Parents demand results but don’t always support.” Staff 4: “Students’ behavior can be difficult.”

This section of the focus group analysis addressed academic administrative staff’s perceptions regarding the reasons why teachers may leave the Kids and Teens program.

Participants were asked to reflect on the main challenges teachers face, considering aspects

related to personal and professional wellbeing, system and policies, and institutional environment and support systems. This allowed the researcher to explore attrition from an institutional perspective, identifying not only observable patterns but also underlying conditions that may influence teachers' decisions to leave the program.

Regarding personal and professional wellbeing, emotional exhaustion and burnout (66.7%) emerged as one of the most significant factors affecting teachers. Participants indicated that working with young learners requires sustained emotional and physical energy, often leading to exhaustion. Similarly, difficulty managing young learners (66.7%) was identified as a major stressor, particularly in relation to classroom management. Participants also noted that not all teachers felt prepared or suited to work with children and teenagers, suggesting that a mismatch between teacher profiles and the demands of the position may influence teachers' decisions to remain in or leave the program.

In the category of system and policies, participants identified several structural factors associated with teacher dissatisfaction. High workload related to planning and adaptation of materials (66.7%) and schedule challenges (66.7%), particularly weekend work and demanding timetables, were the most frequently mentioned concerns. Additionally, 50% of participants indicated that salary was not aligned with the workload required. These findings suggest that workload, compensation, and scheduling conditions are perceived as important factors influencing teacher attrition.

Finally, within the institutional environment and support systems category, the lack of specific training for teaching young learners emerged as the most prominent theme, with

the highest frequency across all categories (83.3%). Participants reported that insufficient preparation increased stress and reduced teachers' confidence when working with this population. Challenges related to student behavior and dealing with parents (66.7%) were also identified as significant sources of stress, particularly when teachers lacked adequate support and training. These findings suggest that gaps in preparation and institutional support negatively affect teachers' professional experiences and may contribute to attrition.

In conclusion, the analysis of this part of the focus group with academic-administrative staff showed that teacher attrition was influenced by the interaction of emotional stressors, structural working conditions, and lack of institutional support. While personal and professional well-being highlighted the emotional and relational demands of teaching young learners, system and policy factors revealed misalignments in workload and compensation. At the same time, the institutional environment evidenced gaps in training and support systems. Together, these dimensions demonstrated that teacher attrition was not the result of a single factor, but rather a complex combination of interrelated challenges within the educational context.

Table 12

Positive Aspects of the Kids and Teens Program Focus Group 2

Category	Theme	Frequency Percent age	Examples
Personal and professional well-	Opportunity for additional income	3 50%	Staff 1: "They can have like a second income, a part-time job for



being	(part-time/weekend work)		the weekends.”
	Opportunity to gain teaching experience (entry-level) and grow professionally	4 66, 7	Staff 6: “Kids and teens is their first job experience, they can start reaching their professional goals.”
	Personal satisfaction in teaching children and teens	2 33,3 %	Staff 5: “If you like teaching, they can teach with a population that is really important, that is kids.”
System and Policies	Flexible schedule for teachers who work part-time	4 66,7 %	Staff 3: “The classes are on the weekend, they don’t have time during the week but they want to start working.”
	Structured and organized program (pacing, materials, guidance)	3 50 %	Staff 3: “The program is already organized, they don’t have to start from scratch.”
Institutional environment and support systems	Continuous pedagogical support from academic staff	3 50 %	Staff 2: “We offer them support to help them in teaching practice and communication with parents.”
	Positive work environment (less pressure than schools)	2 33,3 %	Staff 6: “They feel it’s not the same pressure it’s a little more relaxed.”
	Motivated student population (engaged learners)	2 33,3 %	Staff 3: “Students come because they want to study, they pay attention.”

Table 12 presented the analysis of the positive aspects of the Kids and Teens Program identified by the academic administrative staff during the focus group. The findings were organized into the three analytical categories: personal and professional well-

being, system and policies, and institutional environment and support systems. Frequencies and percentages were calculated based on the six participants involved in teacher follow-up and professional development processes.

Regarding personal and professional well-being, participants highlighted the program as a valuable opportunity for teachers' professional development and financial stability. The opportunity to gain initial teaching experience emerged as the most frequently mentioned strength (66.7%), as the program was described as an entry point into the profession that supports teachers' growth and development. Additionally, 50% of participants emphasized the possibility of generating additional income through part-time weekend work, particularly for teachers who are still completing their university studies. A smaller proportion (33.3%) noted that the program is especially rewarding for teachers who enjoy working with young learners. Together, these findings suggest that the program supports both teachers' early career trajectories and their personal and financial needs.

In the category of system and policies, the flexible scheduling of weekend classes emerged as a central strength (66,7 %), as it allowed teachers to engage in professional practice without interfering with other commitments. Similarly, the existence of a structured and organized program, including pacing guides, materials, and clear instructional frameworks, was identified as a key supportive element (50%). Participants indicated that this structure reduced uncertainty and prevented teachers from starting "from scratch," which facilitated lesson planning and implementation. Overall, these findings indicated that institutional organization and scheduling policies played an important role in supporting teachers' performance and reducing initial challenges.

Finally, in the category of institutional environment and support systems, participants emphasized the importance of continuous pedagogical support from academic staff (50%), particularly in relation to teaching practices, classroom management, and communication with parents. Additionally, 33.3% highlighted the positive work environment and lower levels of pressure compared to traditional school settings, while another 33.3% identified the motivation of students who voluntarily enroll in English classes as a factor that contributes to teacher satisfaction. These findings evidence that both formal support structures and the overall work climate positively influenced teachers' experiences within the program and increased teacher retention.

Table 13

Suggestions for Improvement Focus Group 2

Category	Theme	Frequency Percentage	Examples
Personal and professional well-being	Strengthening teachers' sense of value and well-being	2 33,3 %	Staff 2: "If I am working here, my benefits are super good, I'm going to stay because I feel valued."
	Teacher community Sense of belonging	2 33,3 %	Staff 3: "I think that is very important that is building a sense of community and support as well."
System and Policies	Financial incentives and benefits to increase motivation and	4 66,7 %	Staff 3: "We can study the possibility of going back to offer something in terms of money because money moves most of the things."

	retention		
	Better salary		
	Better training: Onboarding and ongoing professional development	4 66,7 %	Staff 3 and 5: “We need to have like a more formal training, not letting them start learning while they are teaching.”
Institutional environment and support systems	Creation of a stronger institutional culture focused on children and teens	3 50 %	Staff 2: “The institution doesn’t have the mindset for kids we are not giving that culture.”
	Adaptation of physical spaces for children (child-friendly environment)	3 50 %	Staff 2: “There is not a space... that invites them to enjoy, this place is for you.”
	Consolidation and expansion of pre-service teacher programs	2 33, 3%	Staff 1: “This initiative is a really positive aspect to get teachers in the kids and teens program.”

This section (table 13) presented the analysis of the suggestions for improvement proposed by the academic administrative staff during the focus group. The findings were organized into the three analytical categories: personal and professional well-being, system and policies, and institutional environment and support systems. Frequencies and percentages were calculated based on the six participants involved in teacher follow-up and professional development processes.

For the category of personal and professional well-being, participants emphasized the importance of strengthening teachers’ sense of value and belonging within the

institution. While 33.3% highlighted the need for greater recognition and support, another 33.3% stressed the importance of building a teacher community that fosters connections, belonging, and mutual support. These results indicate that teachers' well-being is closely linked to feeling valued, connected, and supported within the program.

In the category of system and policies, the most prominent suggestions were related to training and compensation. The implementation of more structured initial training processes (66.7%) emerged as a key recommendation, as participants indicated that teachers often begin their practice without sufficient preparation. Similarly, 66.7% emphasized the need to strengthen financial incentives, benefits, and salary to improve teacher motivation and retention. Participants also highlighted the importance of ongoing professional development focused on practical classroom strategies. This evidence implies that stronger training structures and improved financial compensation could enhance teachers' professional experiences and reduce attrition.

Finally, in the category of institutional environment and support systems, participants proposed improvements aimed at strengthening both the institutional culture and physical environment. The need to develop a stronger institutional culture oriented toward children and teens (50%) and to adapt physical spaces to create more child-friendly environments (50%) emerged as the most frequent suggestions. Additionally, 33.3% highlighted the value of consolidating initiatives such as the pre-service teacher program, recognizing its potential to support professional growth, facilitate the hiring process, and provide appropriate preparation before teachers begin working with Kids and Teens groups.

It can be said that according to this group, enhancing both the physical and relational environment could contribute to a more supportive and engaging context for teachers.

Overall, the triangulated analysis demonstrated that teacher attrition in the Kids and Teens Program was not the result of a single factor, but rather the interaction of emotional, structural, and institutional conditions. While the program provided valuable opportunities for professional entry and development, these strengths were counterbalanced by challenges related to workload, insufficient preparation, and limited institutional alignment with the needs of teachers working with young learners. The convergence of findings across all data sources strengthened the validity of the results and highlighted the need for integrated strategies that address teacher well-being, policy structures, and institutional culture simultaneously.

The chapter presented the analysis of the data obtained with the implementation of the 3 instruments: survey to teachers who left the program, focus group with teachers currently working in the kids and teens program and focus group with administrative-academic staff. The results were presented in tables and organized following the 3 categories proposed by the researcher: personal and professional well-being, system and policies and institutional environment and support systems. This organization of the information allowed the examination of the factors influencing teacher attrition in the kids and teens program at a binational center.

The integration of findings from multiple sources enabled a more robust description of the phenomenon under study, as each instrument contributed different but

complementary perspectives. The survey data quantified the prevalence of key factors, while the qualitative data contextualized these findings by illustrating how such factors were experienced and perceived by both teachers and academic staff. This approach allowed for the identification of patterns across data sets without prioritizing one source over another, ensuring a balanced representation of the evidence collected.

CONCLUSIONS

This research project has as a main objective to explore the factors influencing teacher attrition and turnover in the Kids and Teens Program at the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano, Cali, with a particular focus on teachers' lived experiences within a bilingual learning environment. The analysis of the data made it possible to achieve the objectives of the project and to gain a deeper understanding of the complex interaction between professional demands, institutional conditions, and teacher well-being. This chapter presents the main conclusions derived from the findings, organized in relation to the specific objectives of the study, and closes with reflections that highlight key areas for institutional improvement.

The first objective aimed to categorize the primary challenges and stressors experienced by teachers in the program. The findings clearly showed that teacher well-being is at the main cause of the attrition phenomenon. Across all participant groups: former teachers, current teachers, and members of the academic-administrative team, there was a shared recognition that emotional and physical exhaustion played a central role in teachers' decisions to leave. Teachers consistently described feeling overwhelmed by long working days and demanding schedules, particularly those involving weekend teaching (Friday and Saturday), which significantly reduced opportunities for rest and personal life. This finding strongly resonates with the perspective of Viac and Fraser (2020), who argue that teacher well-being encompasses “psychological, cognitive, social, and physical dimensions that interact with professional contexts such as workload, autonomy, and institutional support.” In this study, these dimensions appeared to be in constant tension,

especially due to the intensity of the workload and the limited balance between professional and personal life.

Work-life imbalance emerged as another particularly significant stressor. Teachers expressed that due to the structure of the program they had little time or energy to engage in personal or family activities, which over time diminished their motivation and satisfaction. This imbalance was closely linked to the nature of the workload itself, which is shaped not only by the number of teaching hours but also by the specific demands of working with young learners. As noted by Copland, Garton and Burns (2014), teaching young learners effectively requires adapting to their short attention spans and high levels of physical energy. However, they also emphasize that these ideal teaching conditions are often difficult to achieve due to contextual constraints such as large class sizes, limited resources, and insufficient training. The teachers in this study related these challenges, highlighting how lesson planning, classroom management, and sustaining student engagement significantly increased their workload and contributed to feelings of exhaustion which in the end made them consider leaving the program.

In addition to classroom-related demands, institutional factors also played a crucial role in shaping teachers' experiences. Participants reported that the amount of material that must be covered within limited instructional time created a constant sense of pressure. At the same time, teachers expressed feeling excluded from decisions regarding the selection of materials, which contributed to a perceived disconnect between the curriculum and classroom realities. This factor is mentioned by Copland, Burns, and Garton (2014) This

lack of involvement not only affected their sense of professional autonomy but also impacted their overall job satisfaction and became a reason to leave the program.

Another important conclusion related to the institutional environment and the perceived lack of alignment between effort and compensation. Teachers consistently identified salary and monetary incentives as a significant factor influencing their decision to stay or leave. They expressed that teaching young learners, particularly under the program scheduling conditions, required a level of effort that was not adequately reflected in their compensation. This perception reinforced findings from broader research, UNESCO (2024), that identify demanding working conditions, long hours, and insufficient support as key contributors to teacher attrition. In this context, the issue is not only economic but also symbolic, as compensation is closely tied to teachers' sense of professional recognition.

The relationship with parents emerged as an additional and often underestimated source of stress. Teachers reported that parents' expectations can be demanding and that they do not always feel prepared to manage these interactions effectively. This added another layer of emotional labor to their role, contributing to stress and burnout. Similarly, challenges related to student behavior, motivation, and classroom management were identified as key stressors. As discussed in the literature reviewed by Massari, behavioral issues among students are consistently reported as a major source of teacher stress (Boyle et al. 1995). The participants in this study confirmed this, emphasizing how maintaining student engagement, especially in a context that is different from formal school, can be particularly challenging.

A critical factor underlying many of these challenges is the perceived lack of adequate training. Teachers reported feeling that they did not always have the necessary tools to address the specific demands of teaching young learners or to manage complex classroom and parent-related situations. This affected their sense of self-efficacy, which is a key element in teacher retention. In line with this, Mason (2017) highlights that foreign language teachers often feel inadequately prepared for classroom realities, pointing to the need for more targeted and practice-oriented teacher education programs. In this study, the lack of specialized preparation not only on the teaching of the language but also on the specific needs of young learners, appeared to intensify the challenges teachers faced daily.

The second objective of the study focused on assessing the effectiveness of current teacher support systems and institutional policies. The findings suggested that while teachers valued the support provided by their coordinator and academic advisor, this support was not sufficient to fully address their needs. In particular, there was a clear gap in the availability of training specifically tailored to the Kids and Teens population. Teachers expressed the need for more continuous and focused professional development opportunities that address classroom management, student engagement, and communication with parents. This indicates that existing support systems, although positively perceived, require further development in order to have a meaningful impact on teachers' experiences and retention.

The third objective aimed to formulate recommendations to reduce teacher attrition and turnover. Based on the findings, it becomes evident that any effective strategy must begin with a real and sustained commitment to teacher well-being. Teachers consistently

expressed the need to feel that the institution valued them not only as professionals, but also as individuals with emotional, social, and personal needs. This perspective aligns with the humanistic understanding of teaching, in which the educator is considered the most influential person in making the students attain progress leading to success, Santiago, Santos, & Santiago-Centeno (2022). Taking this view as a departing point, investing in teacher well-being is not simply a supportive measure, but a fundamental condition for ensuring educational quality.

In this sense, it is recommended to design and implement a structured teacher well-being program within the institution. Such program should include, first, the creation of physical and symbolic spaces that allow teachers to rest and decompress during long working days. Additionally, it is important to promote opportunities for meaningful interaction among teachers, fostering a sense of community and professional support. Providing spaces where teachers can not only engage informally, but also share classroom experiences and collaboratively discuss challenges, may significantly enhance their overall professional experience. For instance, the idea of a more functional and welcoming teachers' lounge reflects a deeper institutional commitment to connection, collaboration, and emotional support.

At the same time, addressing work–life imbalance requires a more intentional effort to create opportunities for teachers to reconnect with their personal and family lives, even within the constraints of the program's schedule. In line with this perspective, it is suggested to incorporate designated moments within the academic calendar, such as family days or well-being days, that allow teachers to engage in personal activities and strengthen

their work–life balance. These initiatives, although simple, can contribute to reducing burnout and increasing long-term commitment.

Equally important is the need to review compensation and recognition practices for teachers in the Kids and Teens program. First, the findings suggest the importance of establishing a differentiated salary structure that acknowledges the specific demands of teaching young learners, including the additional time, effort, and emotional investment required. Teachers evaluate compensation not only in economic terms but also in relation to the complexity of their work. Second, the institution could implement a formal recognition program that rewards teacher permanence and commitment to the Kids and Teens program. Recognizing years of service and continuity may encourage retention, strengthen teachers' sense of belonging, and promote greater stability within the program.

Finally, strengthening teacher training emerged as a priority. Developing a more structured and comprehensive onboarding process for teachers entering the Kids and Teens Program can significantly increase their sense of preparedness and self-efficacy. This strategy, combined with ongoing professional development opportunities, would allow teachers to feel more confident in managing classroom dynamics, lesson planning, and interactions with parents. Providing practical tools and continuous pedagogical support not only improves teaching performance but also contributes to teachers' overall well-being by reducing uncertainty and stress associated with the role.

In closing, this study highlights that teacher attrition in the Kids and Teens Program is not the result of a single factor, but rather the outcome of a complex interplay between

workload, institutional conditions, professional preparation, and personal well-being. Understanding these dynamics is essential for designing more responsive and sustainable support systems. More importantly, prioritizing teacher retention and job satisfaction is not only beneficial for teachers themselves but also has a direct impact on the quality of teaching, student achievement, and student retention. As previously discussed, when institutions invest in qualified, supported, and satisfied teachers, they create more stable and effective learning environments. Therefore, placing teacher well-being at the center of institutional decision-making becomes a key strategy not only to reduce attrition, but also to strengthen the overall educational experience and ensure long-term success for both teachers and students.

Limitations of the study and future research directions

This study provided important insights into the factors influencing teacher job dissatisfaction and attrition or turnover within a specific bilingual education context for young learners. However, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations that framed the interpretation of the findings and, at the same time, open spaces and possibilities for future research.

First, one of the main limitations consists in the size and nature of the sample, as participants were drawn from a single institutional context. This condition limits the generalizability of the findings to other bilingual learning environments of educational settings with different characteristics, particularly considering the diversity of bilingual programs across social and educational contexts. As noted by Garza Rodriguez (2025),

teacher attrition is a complex phenomenon shaped by organizational and contextual factors, which suggests that findings derived from a single setting should be interpreted with caution and cannot be generalized. Likewise, the specific focus on teaching English to children aged 6 to 10 restricts the direct transferability of the results to other educational levels, where teaching dynamics, professional demands, and institutional conditions may differ significantly.

Second, the use of self-report instruments, such as the focus groups, involves an approach grounded in participants' subjective perceptions. While these perspectives are essential for understanding teachers' lived experiences, they may also be influenced by emotional, contextual, or social factors at the time of data collection. As Creswell (2013a) cited by Hernández Sampieri, R., Fernández Collado, C., & Baptista Lucio, M. del P. (2014) explains, qualitative data rely heavily on participants' views, which are usually filtered by their experiences, highlighting both the richness and the potential limitations of such data. In addition, the cross-sectional nature of the study does not allow for the observation of changes in job satisfaction and teacher retention over time, which highlights the need for longitudinal approaches to better understand these processes as dynamic and evolving processes. According to Massari (2015) more experienced teachers tend to exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction which reinforces the importance of temporal perspectives of the field of teaching, especially to young learners.

A third limitation identified is the researcher's dual role as both investigator and academic coordinator. This duality represents a factor that may have influenced both data collection and interpretation. However, this role also enabled a deeper understanding of the

institutional context and its internal dynamics, aligning with qualitative perspectives that recognize the researcher as a situated subject within the research process. This implies that subjectivity is not eliminated but rather acknowledged and managed through reflection and methodological rigor. In this study, ethical and methodological strategies were implemented to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

Based on these considerations, several directions for future research are proposed to expand and deepen the findings. First, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies that examine the evolution of teacher satisfaction and its relationship with retention over time, acknowledging that these processes are shaped through continuous interaction with multiple factors. Additionally, comparative studies across different educational contexts (public and private, urban and rural) would be valuable to identify both common patterns and context-specific factors influencing teacher attrition, as suggested by Mercer and Gregersen (2020) who suggest that teacher well-being and job satisfaction come from the teacher's individual responsibility, but also from the institutional support and contextual factors.

Moreover, it is also suggested to further explore teacher well-being from a holistic perspective, incorporating emotional, psychological, and work-life balance dimensions. As Santiago, Santos, & Santiago-Centeno (2022) state, the educator is the most influential person in making the students attain progress leading to success, and employing qualified teachers is one of the most critical components for the achievement of the students. This perspective emphasizes the importance of addressing not only teachers' professional development but also their overall well-being as a key condition for educational quality.

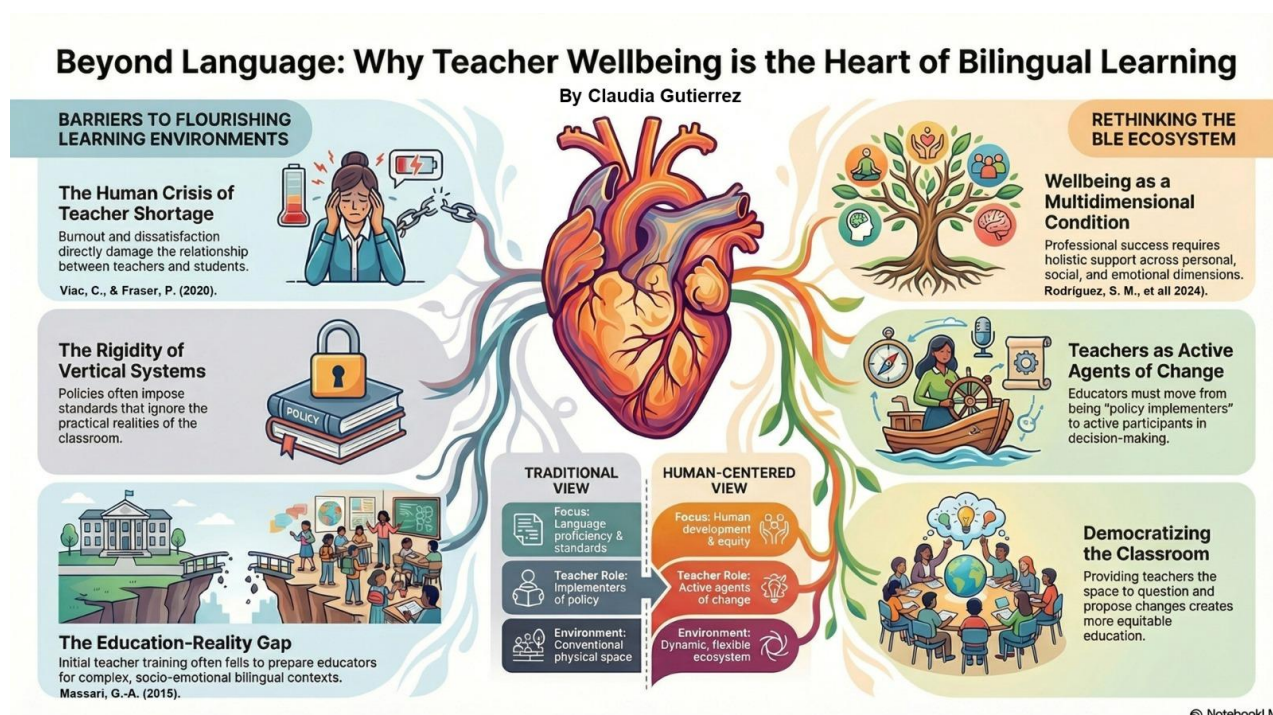
Finally, future research could examine the relationship between teacher satisfaction and stability and students' learning processes in bilingual contexts. In addition, the design and implementation of intervention programs focused on teacher support and well-being are recommended, particularly those aimed at reducing teacher attrition and fostering more sustainable educational environments. The UNESCO (2024) Global Report on Teachers explains that lack of support is one of the main reasons of teacher attrition. Altogether, these research directions contribute to strengthening the field and promoting educational settings that are more equitable, supportive, and responsive to the integral development of both teachers and students.

Reflecting on these limitations allows a better understanding of the scope and boundaries of this study, while also recognizing its potential as a starting point for further research. These aspects highlight the complexity of teacher attrition and teacher job satisfaction, particularly within bilingual contexts. They also open meaningful possibilities for future research that continues to center teachers' experiences, well-being, and professional realities. It is essential to keep building on this work through more contextualized and sustained inquiries that contribute not only to academic knowledge, but also to the creation of more supportive and human-centered educational environments.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO BILINGUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Figure 4

Contributions to Bilingual Learning Environments



Source: Created by NotebookLM as a summary of the chapter.

This research project contributes to the understanding and transformation of bilingual learning environments (BLEs) by placing teacher well-being, teacher retention, and teacher participation as central elements in the construction of meaningful and sustainable educational practices. Throughout the development of this study, bilingual learning environments were no longer understood exclusively as spaces focused on language acquisition and academic standards, but rather as complex human-centered ecosystems shaped by relationships, emotions, institutional conditions, and contextual realities of students and teachers. In this sense, Rodríguez et al. (2024) explains that

learning environments involve a dynamic interaction of elements mediated through biological, social, or physical variables. This perspective allowed the researcher to critically reflect on how educational quality in bilingual contexts cannot be separated from the lived experiences of teachers and students.

The contributions of this project extend to different stakeholders involved in bilingual learning environments, particularly academic leaders and program administrators, teacher education institutions, and teachers themselves. Each of these actors plays a fundamental role in shaping educational experiences and sustaining high-quality, equitable bilingual programs.

Contributions to Academic Leaders and Program Administrators

One of the main contributions of this research is raising awareness among academic leaders and bilingual program administrators regarding the importance of teacher well-being as a determining factor in educational quality and teacher retention. Traditional bilingual programs tend to prioritize language outcomes, standardized goals, and institutional performance indicators. However, the findings of this study demonstrate that these objectives become difficult to achieve when teachers experience burnout, emotional exhaustion, excessive workloads, and lack of institutional support.

Participants in this study expressed that institutional demands, rigid curricular expectations, and administrative pressures frequently generated feelings of stress and dissatisfaction. These findings align with UNESCO (2024), which explain that long working hours, large class sizes, and insufficient teacher support, were significant

contributors to teacher attrition. Similarly, Mercer and Gregersen (2020) argue that teacher well-being is highly influenced by contextual and institutional factors rather than being solely an individual responsibility. Therefore, this project contributes to bilingual learning environments by encouraging academic leaders to recognize teacher well-being as a central component of educational sustainability rather than as a secondary or isolated concern.

A second contribution of this project to educational leadership is the invitation to promoting more democratic and participatory institutional practices. Teachers in this study frequently reported tensions between institutional policies and classroom realities, particularly when they were expected to implement standardized procedures that did not fully respond to students' actual needs. In this regard, Copland, Garton, and Burns (2014) explain that bilingual teachers often experience tensions between policy-driven approaches and the realities of local teaching contexts. Consequently, this project emphasizes the importance of including teachers' voices in decision-making processes and institutional planning.

Another contribution to academic leaders and administrators is the proposal of teacher well-being initiatives within bilingual institutions. The findings suggest that institutional support systems, emotional support spaces, collaborative work environments, and recognition strategies may positively influence teacher satisfaction and retention. By implementing policies centered on teacher well-being, educational leaders may contribute not only to reducing teacher attrition but also to strengthening learning environments and improving students' educational experiences.

Contributions to Institutions Dedicated to Teacher Education

This project also contributes to institutions responsible for teacher education by highlighting the persistent gap between teacher preparation programs and classroom realities within bilingual educational contexts. Participants in the study expressed that their professional preparation often failed to fully equip them for the emotional, social, and pedagogical complexities of teaching young learners in bilingual settings. Teachers reported difficulties managing emotional labor, classroom dynamics, communication with parents, and the demands associated with bilingual education programs.

These findings are supported by Mason (2017), who reported that foreign language teachers frequently feel inadequately prepared for classroom realities, particularly during their first years of professional practice. Similarly, Kamstra (2023) refers to the “reality shock” experienced by novice teachers when moving from teacher education programs into actual classroom settings. According to the author, this gap between theory and practice may contribute to feelings of frustration, inefficiency, and professional dissatisfaction.

Based on these findings, this project contributes to teacher education institutions by emphasizing the need for more reflective, practical, and context-responsive training programs. Teacher education should extend beyond methodological and linguistic preparation to include socio-emotional development, work-life balance strategies, classroom management skills, and opportunities for reflective practice. These strategies for teacher education and training will better equip teachers to respond to the classroom realities and to responsibly make the learning environments equitable, just spaces for their students and themselves.

Furthermore, this project reinforces the importance of preparing teachers as reflective professionals and agents of educational transformation rather than merely as implementers of curricula and institutional policies. In this sense, teacher education institutions are encouraged to foster critical perspectives on bilingual education, equity, inclusion, and teacher well-being as essential dimensions of educational practice.

Contributions to Teachers

One of the most significant contributions of this project lies in the visibility it provides to teachers' experiences, emotions, and professional realities within bilingual learning environments. Throughout the study, teachers shared feelings of emotional exhaustion, stress, work-life imbalance, and lack of professional recognition. By documenting and analyzing these experiences, the research validates teachers' voices and highlights challenges that are often normalized or overlooked within educational institutions.

This project contributes to teachers by positioning teacher well-being as a legitimate and necessary aspect of their professional practice rather than as a personal or secondary concern. Teacher well-being is understood as a multidimensional construct that includes emotional, social, personal, and professional dimensions. This perspective aligns with Freire's understanding of human beings as holistic and socially situated subjects whose lived experiences shape educational processes.

Moreover, the findings reinforce the idea that taking care of teachers directly impacts the quality of bilingual learning environments. Santiago, Santos, and Santiago-

Centeno (2022) argue that the teacher is the most influential person in making the students reach progress leading to success, they explain that employing qualified teachers is one of the most critical components for the achievement of the students. This perspective supports the argument that teacher satisfaction, emotional stability, and professional fulfillment are closely connected to students' learning experiences and educational success.

Another contribution of this project is the promotion of teacher agency and reflective practice. Through the development of this study, teachers are recognized not only as participants within educational systems but also as active agents capable of generating change in their classrooms and institutions. The research encourages teachers to reflect critically on their professional realities, advocate for their well-being, and participate actively in institutional decision-making processes. This agency will directly impact their well-being and their students' success.

Finally, this project contributes to teachers by opening spaces for dialogue about mental health, professional identity, burnout, and work-life balance within bilingual educational contexts. By making these issues visible, the study challenges the normalization of emotional exhaustion in teaching and promotes a more humanistic understanding of the profession.

Another important contribution of this research is the implications for the Colombian educational context. As discussed by López Urbina (2021), since the enactment of the General Education Law of 1994 and the subsequent implementation of national bilingualism policies, educational policies in Colombia have focused on strengthening

bilingual programs to respond to globalization and the demands of the labor market. In many cases, these policies have prioritized the development of a competitive workforce and the achievement of standardized language outcomes over the human dimensions of education. As a result, teachers and students are frequently involved in productivity-oriented educational models that neglect the emotional, social, and contextual realities of learning environments. This research project questions this perspective by emphasizing that education is fundamentally a human activity in which teachers and students constantly interact, negotiate meanings, and build relationships that shape the learning process. The findings of this study demonstrate that educational quality cannot be reduced only to language proficiency indicators or institutional performance indicators, especially when teachers experience emotional exhaustion, dissatisfaction, and lack of institutional support. This project highlights the urgent need for Colombian bilingual education policies to move beyond instrumental approaches to bilingualism and recognize the importance of teacher well-being, teacher preparation, and teacher participation in decision-making processes.

Overall, this research project contributes to bilingual learning environments by promoting a more human-centered, reflective, and sustainable perspective on education. Its contributions extend beyond classroom practices and impact institutional leadership, teacher education programs, and teachers' professional experiences.

The study encourages a change in the view of teaching and learning, from productivity-oriented and standardized models of bilingual education toward approaches that prioritize human development, teacher well-being, inclusion, and educational equity. Ultimately, this research demonstrates that supporting teachers emotionally, professionally,

and institutionally is fundamental for creating meaningful learning experiences and ensuring the sustainability and quality of bilingual educational programs.

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Appendices

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Appendix B: [Survey teachers who left the program](#)

Appendix C: [Focus Group Teachers who are currently working in the program](#)

Appendix D: [Focus Group Academic Administrative Staff](#)