


2009

Dual Language Education in the Elementary Grades: What Are Some Constraints or Limitations of Dual Language in Kindergarten through Fifth Grade.

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DUAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN THE ELEMENTARY GRADES: What are some constraints or limitations of dual language in kindergarten through fifth grade.

A Project Report

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

Master Teacher

by Anna Alvarez

August, 2009

ABSTRACT

DUAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN THE ELEMENTARY GRADES: What are some constraints or limitations of dual language in kindergarten through fifth grade.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the dual language model of bilingual education available to students at Pioneer Elementary in Sunnyside, Washington. There are a variety of bilingual education, Spanish and English, programs currently used throughout the United States. The effectiveness of student's academic success is based on the bilingual education program they participate in, which has been a long-standing debated topic. Recently new and innovative bilingual education programs such as dual-language models have been introduced and implemented into many classrooms. There is significant scholarly debate regarding the efficacy of dual language education programs. It is possible that the debate is centered on the fact that when implementing bilingual programs the strengths and weaknesses of the models are exposed, as in all facets of education. This study explored one school's consistency and fidelity to the dual-language model used at Pioneer Elementary and some consequences that resulted from the implementation of the program.

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CHAPTER I:

Introduction

Overview of the Study

Dual Language programs in K-12 schools are beginning to proliferate in the United States in regions heavily populated by English Language Learners (ELLs). In 2003 there were nearly 300 dual language sites listed nationally (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2003), and new models are being implemented so quickly that the number of programs of this type is likely to increase in years to come.

Currently dual-language classrooms are designed to simultaneously teach English, the dominant language, and a second language. The two languages are used as the basis for academic instruction. In a typical dual language classroom roughly one half of the students will speak one language, and the other half speaks the other language (Gamez, 2005). There are some students that may come to the classroom already speaking both of the languages of instruction. In dual-language classrooms students are exposed to both languages daily. Instruction is usually delivered half the time in the dominant language, and half the time in the second language being learned. Accordingly, there are variations within dual-language programs. Some classrooms have, two teachers that share the instruction, each handling only one language. In other dual language classrooms each teacher will provide instruction in both languages to their students. Proponents of dual-language claim the benefit of academic instruction in two languages is the opportunity for students to become bilingual and biliterate starting in the early grades, which increases the probability of bilingualism.

History and Background

Current trends in migration to the United States indicate a predominance of immigrants arriving from Spanish speaking countries; however, many other language groups are evident in urban areas. In fact, the number of English language learners has steadily increased in recent decades, nearly doubling between 1992 and 2002 (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Until recently, students lacking skills in English have been served most often in “pullout” models which separated the non-English speaker from the mainstream classroom. In those settings, and in English as a second language (ESL), a bilingual instructor works with the students on Basic English fluency in small groups and individually in a classroom that is separate from the regular classroom. The ESL instructor will work with each student until he or she has the ability to comprehend instruction in English and the ESL instructor determines that the student is capable of learning in the mainstream classroom. Once the student is mainstreamed into the regular classroom the “pullout” instruction ceases and the student is left on his or her own. Many schools throughout the United States still use the pullout model as the primary bilingual education program (Thomas & Collier, 1997).

Extensive research published by Thomas and Collier (1997) has provided evidence for the effectiveness of dual-language programs in contrast to pullout programs. These researchers studied language acquisition models and collected data on academic achievement scores for 700,000 students in grades K-12 from 1982-1997. The results indicated that the “dual-language” model is the strongest of the

bilingual education models for insuring continued academic achievement gains for ELL students.

There are many bilingual education models and programs currently being implemented throughout the United States. Dual-language education appears to be the most promising; however, it is important for educators to understand how it can be effectively implemented in classroom practice. Before any school district decides to implement any bilingual education program all of the pros and cons should be extensively examined and the school administrators should verbalize their expectations of the program and instructors. Likewise, the measures for success should be defined.

On the other hand, research has arisen from opponents of dual language to show the ineffectiveness of the dual language programs. Opponents argue that using the native language delays the acquisition of English and that it is more efficient to place students in an all English program where they can receive language support (Baker, 1998). Complaints from teachers and administrators about the difficulty of adhering to the dual-language model have prompted the public to question if the program is achieving its intended results.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the dual-language bilingual education program being used at Pioneer elementary and to determine the outcome on student acquisition of the Spanish language when implementing a program and not following the program model with absolute fidelity.

Rationale

The United States is a country that has a vast amount of immigrants from several countries that speak languages other than English. The immigrants come to the United States expecting to enrich the life of their family. The children of the immigrants are then enrolled into the public education system and educators are hard pressed to determine what are the best strategies to teach students who do not speak the language of instruction, English. Researchers have attempted to provide solutions to the dilemma and provide teaching strategies in the type of instruction that is best for English language learners. Some researchers have even shown that highly bilingual students can reach higher levels of academic and cognitive functioning than do monolingual students or students with poor bilingual skills (Lindholm-Leary, 2005). For example, various bilingual education programs have been developed and implemented in classrooms throughout the United States, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. This study focuses on the problems that occur when only parts of a dual-language education model are implemented.

Limitations of the Study

The research will include information of related literature that details the ineffectiveness of a dual-language program when it is not implemented with absolute fidelity. The research will focus only on the dual-language program currently being used at Pioneer Elementary in Sunnyside, Washington.

Definitions

ELLs: Most commonly used current term for “English Language Learners”. Refers to non-native English speakers who are learning English in school. Most recently this has in some cases been abbreviated to “EL” to indicate “English Learners”. This terminology was adopted because many new immigrants may not be learning English as a second language, but as a third or fourth language (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

ESL: The term “ESL” which means, “English as a second language” and ESOL, “English for Speakers of Other Languages” are often used to refer to the acquisition of English as a non-native language (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

LEP: “Limited English Proficiency”, denotes a limited English proficient student. Those who are beginners to intermediate in their acquisition of English. LEP is the term most often used by federal legislation and in other official documents (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

Additive bilingual program: An additive bilingual program is a program that adds a new language at no cost to students’ first language. A bilingual environment that has full support of school administrators, teachers, and parents (Thomas & Collier, 2003).

Summary

Dual-language education has become a program that districts with large number of immigrant students adopt as a solution to a language barrier that is not allowing ELL’s to learn. Most research on dual-language is positive and sounds very

promising. It is important for a school to adopt a program and follow all of the requirements that the program calls for. Failing to do so will result in disappointment with the program.

CHAPTER II:

Review of Related Literature

The literature reviewed for this project will be listed topographically: history of dual-language education in the United States, description of bilingual education programs, history and problems of the dual-language program implemented at Pioneer.

Bilingual Education in the United States can be dated back to the 1950's. In 1958 after the Soviets launched the first earth satellite, curriculum reform resulted in improving instruction in math, science, and foreign language (Escamilla, 1989). Prior to the launching of Sputnik the attitude towards any language other than English was one of hostility. The restriction of language prior to the 1950's had two intentions. The first intention was to deprive minorities of their individual rights, and the second was for people to perceive the United States as an exclusively Anglo community (Nieto, 2009).

In 1968 Congress passed the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 also known as Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The congressional Act is considered the most important law as it legally recognized the rights of minorities in the United States. The law did not require school districts to provide bilingual education programs, but it did encourage them to experiment with new approaches to teaching non-English speaking students by providing them with funds for the programs (Crawford, 2004). Title VII was the first program federally approved to provide minorities with an opportunity to have a part of their instruction given to them in their native language as a method to transition them into a mainstream

classroom, which is known as “transitional bilingual education (DelValle, 2003). In 1994 the Improving America’s Schools Act made the purpose of Bilingual education explicit and clear: this act stated that the purpose was “developing bilingual skills and multicultural understanding” (Crawford, 2004, p.19). Bilingual education became a resource rather than a hindrance and it was seen as a method to improve the nation’s competitiveness in a global economy. The result of the act was the promotion of other types of bilingual education programs, specifically “two-way” bilingual programs, which were viewed as additive bilingual education.

Due to the immigration trends in the United States bilingual education programs became a necessity. Immigrants from various different countries continue to move into the United States at an outstanding rate. Fix and Passel (2003) estimate that during the 1990’s the number of immigrants that entered the country exceeded that of any previous decade in the U.S. history, and the population of English language learners increased by 52 percent in the 1990’s. It is also projected that by the year 2050 Latinos will make up 25 percent of the total population in the country (Suarez-Orozco & Paez, 2002).

Immigrant families bring their children with them to their new home and these children are then enrolled in the school system. Children of immigrant parents typically enter American schools speaking only their native language. Educators are then left trying to figure out which strategies or bilingual education programs are the most successful in teaching English to non-English speakers.

In order to close the achievement gap of ELL’s numerous bilingual education programs have been developed by entrepreneurs. One program that has been hailed

as very promising and become widely implemented across the United States is the dual-language program, which is considered a two-way bilingual program. Two-way bilingual programs are those in which ELL's and native English speaking students are instructed academically through two languages (Lindholm-Leary, 2005). Two-way bilingual education programs include four crucial features that are key to the success of the program. The first feature is instruction and class work must take place in two languages with the non-English language being used for at least 50 percent of the time. Secondly, the day must include a portion of time during which students and teachers use only one language, with no translation allowed. Third, Both ELL's and Native English speakers must do course work in both languages. Finally, ELL's and native English speakers need to be together for most content instruction (Lindholm-Leary, 2005).

There are two common two-way or dual-language programs currently used in the United States the 90:10 model and the 50:50 model. In the 90:10 model the second language is used 90 percent of the time during the early grades, and the percentage gradually increases the amount of instruction that is done in English, until fifth grade when 50 percent of the day is instructed in English, and 50 percent in the non-English language (Gamez, 2005; Lindholm-Leary, 2005). The 50:50 model divides the instructional time devoted to each language evenly. There are variations to the 50:50 model, however there are some features that are key to a successful program that an instructor is expected not to deviate from. Reading instruction is done in both languages while initially students learn to read in their primary language and then add the second language. Time devoted to each language must be evenly

divided, while math is always taught in English, science and social studies are taught in the non-English language, most commonly Spanish. The language for other activities should alternate daily and students should always work in each language an equal amount of time (Estrada et al, 2009). According to Estrada, a bilingual education researcher, two-way immersion education has become a form of education that holds great promises in helping develop high levels of academic achievement for minorities in the United States.

The most common form of two-way bilingual program is the dual-language program. This program has emerged in many schools around Washington State, but not all schools are using the exact same form of dual-language. There are many different dual-language programs, but they all share certain characteristics, for example “a central goal is that all students become proficient in using two languages for communication and learning” (Gamez, 2005, p.2). Regardless of what dual-language program a school is using, the goals of the program are the same. One of the commonalities between programs is that they include native English speakers, and speakers of another language (Gamez, 2005).

There is a variation of languages included in dual language programs, but around the Yakima Valley area the language implemented into dual language programs is Spanish. According to Steven Krashen (1997), a well known author and proponent of bilingual education, the best bilingual education programs include the following characteristics: English as a second language instruction, sheltered subject matter teaching, and instruction in their first language. The 50-50 model of dual language, if implemented correctly meets the three characteristics of a good bilingual

education program. This will help students meet the ultimate goal of dual-language, which is the development by all students of full conversational and academic proficiency in both languages (Gamez, 2005).

There is an enormous amount of research to support teaching ELL students in their native language as a bridge to learning English (Lindholm-Leary, 2005). This researcher agrees that the dual-language programs sound very promising and the results are desirable. There are schools that are not implementing the program the way it was designed, and that does not assist students in meeting the central goal of proficiency in two languages. When schools do not correctly implement the dual language program they are doing a disservice to their students, which is the problem currently occurring at Pioneer Elementary.

Dual-language programs are viewed as being more inclusive of different populations and, therefore, as promoting the values of bilingualism and diversity within our society (Torres et al 2005). At Pioneer Elementary in Sunnyside the 50:50 model, which is one of the forms of dual language programs was implemented in the 2002-2003 school year. The administrators and staff were excited to add a program that they believed would promote success for “both language-majority and language-minority students” (Gamez, 2005, p.1). Sunnyside has many Spanish-speaking immigrant families who have moved to the city and enrolled into the schools in search of better educational opportunities for their children. The influx of monolingual Spanish students in the Sunnyside school district prompted administrators to look for a program that would benefit these students. After researching various dual-language programs and the many benefits they provide,

Pioneer's administration decided on the 50:50 model of dual-language as a good fit for their elementary. "In the 50:50 model, students learn in each language about half the time throughout the program" (Gamez, 2005, p.3). The model had already been implemented and successful in many schools in Texas and throughout the United States. The implementation of the program at Pioneer was received with excitement and hope. Initially teachers were trained and they received resources and support from the administration. Parents were lining up to sign up their child to be a part of the dual-language program. State testing requirements such as the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), and federal requirements from the No Child Left Behind Act are believed to be causal factors in the administration's loss of fidelity to the requirements of the dual-language model. Pioneer is now in its seventh year with their version of the dual language program and the excitement for the program has dwindled and almost disappeared.

One of the basic principles of dual language programs is for students to receive six years of bilingual instruction. The reason for the six years is that, according to de Jong (2004), a minimum of four years of instruction in the second language is required for academic language proficiency. By the time students reach fifth grade they should be in their sixth year of receiving instruction in two languages. A significant problem at Pioneer is that students move in and out of the schools and the district. The school is required to fill that students spot with a student that has not been in the dual-language program. In the case of this researcher students have been put into the dual-language program in fifth grade, which is the final year of the program in the Sunnyside School District. What that means for teachers is that they

have to refine their strategies to teach both students who have been in the program their entire school years, and the ones that were added to the program to keep the classroom at the numbers needed. Another factor that must be taken in to consideration is that the amount of time devoted to both languages is supposed to be equal in order for the students to fulfill the expectation of academic proficiency in both languages. At Pioneer standardized testing takes precedent over following dual-language program guidelines. In fifth grade students are required to take standardized tests in science, math, and reading. Currently it appears that the administrators of Pioneer have focused attention and resources in preparing students for the tests. According to the dual-language model, instruction in science should always be in Spanish. However, at Pioneer the language students receive science instruction is determined by how successful a student will be in the Washington state standardized test for science. If a student is English dominant, he/she will receive science instruction in English and if he/she is Spanish dominant he/she will receive instruction in Spanish, which is not the method that should be used in determining what language a student will receive science instruction.

In a 2004 study, Kim Potowski, observed a dual-language school and noted that “the non academic classes of music, gym, and computer were taught in English, which, several teachers complained, eroded the percentage of Spanish instruction that students were supposed to receive each day” (Potowski, 2004, p. 79). Interactions at Pioneer in the hallway, playground, lunchroom, and other non-academic areas are typically in English, which increases the percentage of English being spoken to be higher than Spanish. The dual-language model adopted by Pioneer requires for 50

percent of the day's academic instruction to be in English, and 50 percent in Spanish. In situations outside of the classroom and the teachers control it is difficult to require students to speak the language of the day, but inside the classroom in order for dual-language to be successful the teacher must stay faithful to speaking only the language of the day, and the language of instruction.

Changing the amount of time devoted to each language initially only affected fifth grade teachers and students. In the 2008-2009 school year the administrators at Pioneer decided that splitting students for science based on their dominant language would begin in first grade. A third year first grade teacher at Pioneer was very disappointed when she heard the news. In a personal interview the teacher noted, "I believe it is important for dual-language students to receive as much Spanish instruction during their primary years as possible. Hearing the language when they are young helps them acquire the language" (personal communication, February 19, 2009). The teacher stated her dissatisfaction with the dual-language program at Pioneer. She did not believe that the administration was implementing the program the way it was designed. A parent of a former dual-language student was extremely disappointed with the implementation of the program at Pioneer; this parent's disappointment prompted her to remove her son from dual-language and place him in a regular fifth grade classroom. "My son had been in the dual-language program since kindergarten and every year I was noticing that Pioneer kept making changes to the program. One year they even had a dual-language teacher who didn't speak any Spanish, which made no sense, that is why I decided to pull my son out of dual-language" (personal communication, March 13, 2009).

One other possible reason for the disappearance of excitement towards dual-language education at Pioneer is the lack of qualified teachers. According to Peña, a bilingual education researcher, the lack of knowledge and professional development of the teachers, hired to implement bilingual education programs, has been a problem in American schools. Too often a teacher with no special certification will be placed in a bilingual classroom if there is a need. Placing unqualified teachers does not follow the dual-language program guidelines. "Effective programs must be well implemented and provided with adequate administrative, faculty, and resource support" (Gamez, 2005, p. 3). This is this researcher's second year teaching in the dual-language program and in two years of teaching there has not been a partner teacher who speaks Spanish or who received appropriate training or clearly understands the purpose and mission of the program. The administration at Pioneer hires teachers and then does not provide the proper training and support required for success. According to Torres et al (2005), less than half of the teachers in her research had volunteered to teach in the dual-language program they were involved with; the same has occurred to the researchers last two partner teachers. The partner teachers did not apply to work in the dual-language program; they interviewed for a non-dual language position, however they were then asked to teach in a dual-language classroom, and as often happens a candidate will accept a teaching position because of necessity. Too often teachers are hired without being informed of the program they are hired to teach, and that leads to teachers who are ill prepared to instruct the program they are teaching: "teachers do not know the basic tenants of dual-language programming and are making decisions about medium of instruction in

ignorance of what they ought to be doing under the dual-language label” (Torres et al, 2005, p.467). After hiring staff for the dual-language teaching positions, the administration at Pioneer does not provide new teachers with professional development or training in the area they were hired to teach. The researcher’s partner teacher for the 2008-2009 school year was hired three weeks before the beginning of the school year. The partner teacher reported she had no idea what teaching in a dual-language classroom consisted of. According to Peña (2002), if the program a school implements is going to work they need to “provide better professional development for the teachers that are working in these positions” (p.12).

Dual-language programs that are implemented following the guidelines can be successful at meeting the common goals. According to Torres et al (2005), there are three goals that commonly show up when referring to dual-language programs. The first goal is for students to reach a high level of academic achievement in both languages. The second goal is for students to develop bilingualism and biliteracy as they move through the grade levels, and the third goal is for dual-language programs to promote positive cross-cultural attitudes to combat racism.

Many schools label their bilingual education program dual-language without staying true to the goals of dual-language. “Good bilingual programs have brought students to the 50th percentile on standardized test of English reading by grade five” (Krashen, 1997, p.4). Schools need to continue to provide good bilingual education programs, but when choosing a program to implement the staff and administration must stay true to the program requirements and goals. School districts that implement and provide dual-language/bilingual education programs will need to remain truthful

to the model they choose to implement. By adhering to the model the likelihood of student's academic success and language acquisition ability will increase. In turn the student's success increases his his/her competitiveness for the future. However, the first step in increasing student success is for dual-language programs to have the necessary resources, training, and staff with administrative support, which will lead to the participants of dual-language achieving the goal of full bilingualism by the end of their fifth grade year.

Chapter III:

Procedures of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the dual-language bilingual education program being used at Pioneer elementary and to determine the outcome on student acquisition of the Spanish language when implementing a program and not following the program model with absolute fidelity.

The information required for the study of the dual-language program at Pioneer is made up of three main components: reviewing literature, surveying parents of dual-language students, and collecting Spanish fluency data of dual-language students. The information collected in the surveys, and the fluency data will help the administration and the teachers involved in the program at Pioneer decide if the current dual-language program is meeting the goal of bilingualism by the end of a student's fifth grade year, and also decide what kind of revisions need to be made if the program is not helping students meet the goals of dual-language.

Prior to collecting information a letter of cooperation from the principal at Pioneer was submitted to the Human Subjects Review Committee along with a request for exemption form. Pioneer's principal was in agreement with the project and agreed to allow the study to proceed.

The participants of the project were fifth grade dual-language students at Pioneer Elementary in Sunnyside. The participants ranged in age from ten to twelve years and were all currently enrolled in Pioneer's dual-language program. Some of the students were in their sixth year of participation in the program, while some were in their first year, and others had been added to the program later in their

elementary school years. All of the students participating in the program had parents who for a variety of reasons chose to have their child enrolled in dual-language. The majority of the students have parents who are monolingual Spanish speakers and have Spanish as the primary language spoken at home.

One of the components of all dual-language programs is to have “active parent-school partnerships (Thomas & Collier, 2002, p.62)”. Parents of students in dual-language programs are supposed to be informed and have a close relationship with the school. Surveying parents can help determine if the parents are aware of their child’s participation in Pioneer’s dual-language program, and the level of parent satisfaction with the program. The survey that was given to parents of dual-language students also helped collect data about how satisfied the parents of dual-language students are with their child’s oral and written acquisition of their second language, Spanish. The survey also included questions that would help collect other pertinent information to provide the researcher with enough data to help the administration at Pioneer in their revamping of their dual-language program.

The dual-language parent survey information was voluntary; parents were not required to provide the researcher with the information requested. In March the parent-teacher conferences were held at Pioneer. At that time, this researcher informed the parents of the survey that would be sent home with their child before the end of the school year. Parents were asked to fill out the survey and they were informed that the data would be used for the researcher’s Masters project as well as for improving the existing dual-language program at Pioneer. Parents were also

asked to be completely open and honest with their comments when filling out the survey and their honesty would help improve Pioneer's dual-language program.

One of the questions on the parent survey collected data to determine how many of the 54 fifth-graders have received the full six years of bilingual instruction, and how many students were added to the program to keep the numbers in the classroom at capacity. According to Thomas and Collier (2002) a minimum of six years of bilingual instruction is required for students to acquire academic skills in their second language. Many of the students at Pioneer are added to the dual-language program during varied years, which does not allow students to receive their full six years of bilingual instruction. The survey, as well as the fluency data, helped the researcher determine exactly how many students had received the full six years of bilingual instruction, and at what point in their elementary years the others had been added to the program. Parents also had an opportunity to write down any additional comments or concerns about their personal experience with Pioneer's dual-language program and their level of satisfaction with their child's second language oral and written acquisition.

Another question on the survey asked parents if they knew the requirements of the dual-language program. Keeping parents informed is one of the key components of a successful dual language program (Thomas & Collier, 2002). It is important for parents to be actively involved in their child's education and knowing the requirements of the program can help in their child's success.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) occurs in situations where context is reduced and higher order thinking skills are required (Baker, 2001).

Sunnyside school district's demographics, updated on August of 2008, were 86.3% Hispanic (OSPI, 2009). Many of the students who attend Pioneer come from monolingual Spanish households, where Spanish is spoken in social settings and family gatherings. Conversational Spanish is what many of the students who attend Pioneer have acquired from home. In order to be successful in an academic setting, students need to acquire CALP in their second language.

For this study, a student's reading fluency and comprehension was measured using three reading selections. Students were given three different third grade Spanish reading selections. They were given one minute per reading selection to read as much of the story as they could. Although the students are fifth graders, the Spanish reading fluency stories from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), only have stories for kindergarten through third grade reading levels. At the end of each timed one minute fluency read students were given an additional minute to retell all the details they can remember from the story. Their results were then compared to the expected results of a student who is meeting the benchmark. To be considered at benchmark, students need to read a total of 146 words per minute and retell 50%, of the words they read. Since the story was third grade readability, the expectation was for students to surpass the fifth grade reading fluency and retell benchmark.

The process followed for collecting fluency data is one that the school has been doing for a number of years. Every year all Pioneer students are tested in fluency and retell using DIBELS, which is a booklet with grade level stories. The booklet is used as a tool to monitor the progress of student's fluency and retell from

the beginning of the school year to the end. Students are typically monitored twice a month and their progress is tracked on their booklet for evidence of growth. The same types of booklets are used with dual-language students to measure their Spanish language acquisition. Three of the stories in the Spanish booklet were used for this study. DIBELS booklets help measure reading fluency and retell; fluently reading a passage can help students understand the information they read. Before a student began reading a fluency selection they were asked how many years they had been in the dual-language program. The number of years students had been in the program as well as their first dual-language teacher was then written on the first of the three reading selections as a second method of collecting data on the number of years a student had been in the program. The expectation is for students to fluently read the third grade passage and give proof of comprehension by retelling the story. The score the student receives is the number of words read in one minute, minus the number of errors made over the number of words retold in one minute. Each student was given three different reading passages with one minute to read and one minute to retell as much as they can remember. The median number of words per minute and the median retell became the students data reported.

The survey information and the fluency data collected from the study was then examined to help determine if the implementation of the program at Pioneer is keeping students from fulfilling the program goals, specifically the goal of full bilingualism by the end of a students fifth grade year.

This study will be used by administrators at Pioneer as a tool to assist in seeking solutions to the problems that have arisen due to not implementing the dual-

language program the way it was designed. Determining the effects of changing time devoted to each language and students not receiving a model in which 50% of their day is in English and 50% of their day is in Spanish, will help the administration begin to look for a solution to the dilemma at Pioneer.

Chapter IV:

Results of the Study

Fifty-four parent surveys were sent out before the end of the 2008-2009 school year, and 39 of those surveys were returned to the researcher completed. Nine of the thirty-nine students who returned surveys claimed that this was their first year in the dual language program. Seven students were in their second or third year in the program, 8 students were in their fourth or fifth year in the program, and 15 claimed to have been in the program since Kindergarten. Thirty-three of the surveys collected reported that the reason they placed their son or daughter in the dual-language program was to acquire a second language. Five parents reported that the reason they placed their child in the program was because it was recommended during registration, additionally one of those parents wrote that because when registering her child she specified that Spanish was the language spoken at home, the secretaries recommended for her child to be in the dual-language program.

Another one of the questions on the survey asked if parents knew the requirements for implementation of a dual language program. Eighteen of the 39 parents said that they did not know what requirements were needed in a dual language program. Two of the parents included that they had no idea that any kind of requirements were even necessary. The majority of the parents were uninformed and unaware that Pioneer needed to follow some guidelines to implement the dual-language program successfully.

The majority of the Spanish surveys came back with satisfactory results for their child's second language acquisition. Of the thirty-nine surveys returned to this

researcher eleven of them were from English speaking parents, and the two parents who expressed extreme dissatisfaction with the program were from English speaking households. Parents were asked if they were satisfied with their child's acquisition of the Spanish language. Many of the parents' comments in the survey gave insight to how the parents felt about the program. One of the parents wrote down the following comments:

As a parent I would volunteer in my child's classroom from kinder on. I noticed in kinder Spanish was spoken more frequently. On Spanish day Spanish was spoken and on English days English was spoken. I have noticed other areas during the school day taking time away from the dual language program. I feel if the dual language model were followed more closely my child would be more fluent in Spanish. He can understand some but to carry on a full conversation in Spanish, he can't (personal communication, June 1, 2009).

Another parent's dissatisfaction was expressed with the following statement:

In the beginning it was very good and time was well spent on the Spanish end. Now they never speak Spanish in the classroom, and only have Spanish reading 3 days a week, and during science. The language of the day was not used in my daughter's class this year and it is very disappointing, gratefully- she was successful in other years (personal communication, June 1, 2009).

Twenty-eight of the surveys that were returned to the researcher were in Spanish, and were completed by parents whose primary language is Spanish. Two of the 28 Spanish-speaking parents reported that they were dissatisfied with the

program, but they did not provide an explanation for their dissatisfaction. The other 26 parents reported that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the program. Several parents provided reasons for their satisfaction, one parent wrote “I am very proud of my daughter because she is worth two people; she is going to be successful in her future because in this country people who speak two languages are worth double” (personal communication, June 1, 2009). Another satisfied parent wrote down the following statement “The dual language program is good. My children have advanced in Spanish. They speak it and write it better. And because children have a better future being bilingual, they can have a better job and be better people. Thank you for the program and for all the help you provide our children”.

Overall the surveys helped in concluding that the majority of the Spanish speaking parents are satisfied with Pioneer’s dual language program, and the English-speaking parents have noticed many changes occur during their child’s participation in the program, which has led to their dissatisfaction with their child’s acquisition of Spanish.

The reading fluency data was collected during school hours, which allowed all 54 students to be tested. The data is reported in two separate Tables 4.1 and 4.2. Students A#1 through A#28 are from the researcher’s classroom, students J#1 through J#26 are from the researchers partner teacher’s classroom. For readability, the data was organized by the number of years a student has participated in the dual-language program.

Table 4.1: Researcher's Classroom Reading Fluency and Retell Data

Student	Number of Years in Dual-Language	Spanish Fluency/Retell	English Fluency/Retell
A #1	1	66/21	145/41
A#2	1	55/29	57/13
A#3	1	33/5	124/68
A#4	1	92/35	131/59
A#5	1	49/7	107/15
A#6	1	133/6	145/38
A#7	1	93/34	128/85
A#8	2	32/12	105/40
A#9	3	87/44	136/56
A#10	3	91/54	118/36
A#11	3	140/62	173/43
A#12	3	46/38	106/73
A#13	3	67/17	125/63
A#14	3	129/53	143/31
A#15	3	59/3	120/27
A#16	3	166/73	223/73
A#17	3	42/19	92/29
A#18	3	61/4	123/40
A#19	3	87/5	119/23
A#20	4	63/6	153/54
A#21	4	76/5	132/43
A#22	6	71/10	128/32
A#23	6	59/7	85/18
A#24	6	123/48	150/48
A#25	6	100/22	192/94
A#26	6	134/34	131/51
A#27	6	99/57	131/37
A#28	6	100/46	119/41

Table 4.2: Researcher's Partner Teacher's Classroom Reading Fluency and**Retell Data**

Student	Number of Years in Dual-Language	Spanish Fluency/Retell	English Fluency/Retell
J#1	1	51/18	70/23
J#2	1	34/7	102/18
J#3	1	60/15	116/54
J#4	1	128/57	118/30
J#5	1	67/12	87/32
J#6	2	61/12	66/29
J#7	2	49/7	33/19
J#8	2	57/13	68/43
J#9	2	80/21	91/32
J#10	3	48/7	75/21
J#11	3	74/20	101/34
J#12	3	71/11	117/29
J#13	3	81/18	118/31
J#14	3	98/27	72/23
J#15	3	52/6	96/55
J#16	3	91/14	100/27
J#17	4	97/27	123/27
J#18	6	142/36	107/47
J#19	6	157/71	165/63
J#20	6	110/25	142/47
J#21	6	150/56	124/57
J#22	6	164/74	149/56
J#23	6	113/37	189/61
J#24	6	132/44	126/33
J#25	6	146/39	171/53
J#26	6	153/40	109/41

In both the researcher's and the partner teacher's classroom, the students who had been in the dual-language program for six years had a higher number of words read per minute and a higher retell. In the researcher's classroom only one student met the fluency benchmark of 146 words per minute. Student #A16 read 166 words per minute with a retell of 73. This student is in their third year of participating in the dual-language program, but was the only one in the researcher's classroom to meet

the fluency benchmark and close to meeting the retell benchmark. Having read 166 words in one minute the retell benchmark is 83; student #A16 missed the retell benchmark by 10 words. In the partner teacher's classroom five students meet the fluency benchmark, and one of those met the retell benchmark. All five of the students who met the fluency benchmark were in their sixth year of participation in Pioneer's dual-language program.

Twelve of the fifth grade students in Pioneer's dual-language program were in their first year of participation. Ten of the twelve students read under 100 words per minute and had low retell scores. Fifth grade is the last year of dual-language at Pioneer, which means that the students who start dual-language in fifth grade only get one year and then are sent off to middle school. These students received only one year of Spanish instruction, which may be a reason for their low fluency and retell scores.

There were some students who came very close to meeting the benchmark and missed it by a few words. Students like A#11 who is in their third year in the program and had a score of 140 words per minute with a retell of 62 is one of the students who came very close to meeting the benchmark. This is a student who although has not been in the program since kindergarten, has excelled in their academic acquisition of Spanish, and in three years of participation in the program has come very close to the benchmark. Student J#4 read 128 words per minute with a 57 retell, this student is only in their first year of participation in the program. There are clearly some students who can be successful when added in to the program later than some of their peers.

The fluency data collected from the fifth graders at Pioneer shows that the students who are in the program for six years have acquired more academic reading ability than the students who are added into the program between first and fifth grade. There are exceptions, which mean there is students who can be added into the program during the later years and successfully acquire a second language. There are also the students who have been in the program for six years and still struggle in their Spanish fluency. Typically, these students are also struggling English readers or low academically in other subjects. Students who are added to the program after kindergarten are in the process o acquiring the Spanish language, but without the six years of Spanish instruction have been unable to meet the fifth-grade benchmark.

Chapter V:

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the dual-language bilingual education program being used at Pioneer elementary and to determine the outcome on student acquisition of the Spanish language when implementing a program and not following the program model with absolute fidelity.

The results of the study indicate that not implementing a dual language program the way it was designed could be one of the causes for students not attaining the goal of full bilingualism by fifth grade. The majority of the students who were in the program for the full six years had higher fluency and retell results than the ones who had been added to the program later in their elementary years. Some students who were added to the program during the third or fourth year of the program were able to successfully integrate into the requirements of the program. Almost all of the students who were added to the program in fifth grade had a low Spanish reading fluency. Adding students to a dual language program in fifth grade is not beneficial for students. They are already too far behind their peers in Spanish reading ability and comprehension, and one year of Spanish instruction is not going to help them attain significant amount of academic Spanish.

The surveys indicated that the parents of the primary English-speaking students were disappointed with their child's oral and written acquisition of their second language. On the other, hand the parents of students who heard Spanish spoken at home were satisfied with the dual language program and with the results of the child's language acquisition, which leads this researcher to believe that the level

of Spanish being spoken at home may have increased due to the student's participation in the dual-language program. The primary English-speaking students do not have the same scenario at home. They do not have parents who speak only Spanish, and therefore do not have as much time devoted to speaking their second language at home. Both types of students however need to continue to grow in their acquisition of Spanish academic language to help them reach the necessary level for proficiency.

Conclusion

This study touches only the tip of the iceberg of dual-language research. Reading fluency and retell is only one facet to determine the level of success a student has in a classroom. Further research into the type of student that is successful in a dual-language classroom could help administrators decide when a new student should be placed in an existing dual-language classroom. A screening process to determine if students belong in the program could be administered when a new student is entering a school; doing so could help improve the level of academic Spanish that can be spoken in the classroom. Teachers would no longer have to lower the cognitive academic language to ensure that all students have access to the language. Not all students are good candidates for participation in a dual-language program. Determining what type of students would succeed in academically acquiring two languages could help ensure that the right type of student is placed in the program.

Dual language programs are still relatively new to the United States. There are still many controversies and questions over the success of dual-language in

achieving the programs goals of full bilingualism. There are many different areas of programs that can be researched to have a more clear idea of how to improve the existing form of bilingual education, which has increasingly become dual-language programs.

Recommendations

The author of this study recommends researching schools that are having success with various dual-language models could help determine what type of model works best with a given population. Schools that have been successful in meeting the dual-language goal and their models could be further researched and the data could be reported to help schools who are struggling with their own dual-language model. Another recommendation is to research how many schools are implementing the dual-language models the way they were designed, without changing any time constraints on the subjects that must be taught in the second language. It would be interesting to read research on a school that has stayed loyal to the model and been successful, and vice-versa a school in which all the rules of implementation were strictly followed but has not achieved the desired results. There are some schools around the United States in which the entire school follows the language of the day. Research could be done to see if there is a higher rate of success when an entire school adheres to the requirements of a dual-language model.

Some schools in our Yakima Valley area adopted the dual-language program and then quickly dropped it deciding that it was not meeting their student's needs. It would be interesting to learn why some schools chose not to continue implementing

dual-language in their schools and what prompted them to eliminate the program from their school. Many schools have also chosen to continue implementing a dual-language program, while making changes to fit the program into their schedule.

What kinds of changes are being made and the effects of those changes is an area that has not been extensively researched.

There are still many areas of bilingual education that have not been explored by researchers. Research done on successful bilingual education programs can help provide school administrators with options when choosing a program to implement in their school.

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