The Importance of the Implementation and Learning of Spanish Language Arts

by
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Abstract

In the United States, there are "roughly about 54 million" people who are of Hispanic or of Hispanic heritage which, much of this population consists of the student population in schools across the country (Hispanic or Latino Populations, 2015, p.1). As these students become enrolled in school, the need to accommodate for their linguistic and academic needs is greater. The purpose of Dual Language bilingual programs is to progress students' native language while, developing their second language through language arts and content instruction in both languages. The students who part take in an effective Dual Language program are privileged to develop two languages and become culturally diverse among their peers. This capstone project investigates the need for more Spanish instruction in Dual Language programs.

The Importance of the Implementation and Learning of Spanish Language Arts

Chapter 1

Introduction

Currently, in the United States there are "roughly about 54 million" people who are of Hispanic or of Hispanic heritage (Hispanic or Latino Populations, 2015, p.1). Within the American education systems, there is a broad range of programs available for students. There are educational programs available for students who are Hispanic, who may be native or heritage language learners or for non-Hispanic students who want to learn a second language. These programs are known as bilingual programs where these students receive suitable instruction based on language needs. Sadly, some of the bilingual programs available strive for students to be solely immersed in English instruction with minimal maintenance of the first language. A few bilingual programs are highly suggested by educational researchers and philosophers. These programs are believed to be the most effective as well as, best suited for student achievement overall in both their native and second language. A population of students entering the U.S. educational system is exposed to more than one language. The importance of having successful bilingual programs that support learning in both languages has become an important piece in the implementation of the country's educational system. "The numbers of Dual Language learners who enter in the U.S. educational system has increased substantially in recent years having surpassed 3 million children" (Hammer & Uchikoshi, 2011, p. 4). One of the most popular and well-supported models of bilingual education is the Dual language Two-Way and One-Way model. Both programs support the instruction and maintenance of the native language. These models of bilingual education emphasize instruction in both languages, meaning that all of the content areas are taught interchangeably in both the native and second language.

Problem Statement:

Within the Dual Language model of bilingual education students are entitled to receive an equivalent amount of their instructional day, if not most of their instruction in both languages. With the implementation of the Common Core curriculum and the big focus on the state English Language Arts assessment, there has been a tremendous push for English-only instruction. This emphasis on English Language instruction is due to the high number of students who scored very low on the assessment causing districts, administrators, and teachers to make instruction in English important. Teachers and administrators are forced to focus on improving assessment scores due to the requirements of Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) to keep their jobs and districts to save government funding. The researcher has worked within a Dual Language program at a local school where she has noticed the extreme emphasis on English-only instruction within the classroom and the lack of support from the district and administrators concerning the instruction of native language arts. With English instruction becoming a focal point in the instructional day there has been a significant decrease in Spanish Language Arts (SLA), both for the English and Spanish populations in the program. Dual Language program is defined as "a curriculum delivered in two languages, conventionally half of the day in one language of instruction and the half in the other" (Brisk, 1998, p.14). The overall outcome of the program model to produce students who are both bilingual and biliterate within a classroom with a mixed population of diverse language dominate students. The Dual Language model is not successfully implemented and the importance of teaching both languages is being overtaken by English instruction due to the English Language Arts Common Core Assessment and lack of knowledge on the benefits and essentialness of Spanish Language Arts.

Significance of the Problem:

The Rochester City School District is located in Rochester, New York. It is categorized as a medium-size school district with a diverse student population with a high number of families who are economically challenged. The Rochester City School District currently has 42 elementary schools, 25 secondary schools, and 5 specialty schools (RCSD, 2015). Many of the secondary and a few of the primary schools house a variety of different programs that are student centered.

Currently, John James Audubon School #33 is the biggest elementary school in the District, which houses approximately 1,079 students (NYSED, 2015). The majority of the students who attend the school are economically disadvantaged (approximately 1,012 students). The make-up of the population of the school consists of 631 Black students, 388 Hispanic students, 52 White students, and 8 other ethnicities (NYSED, 2015). Due to a large number of Hispanic students, the school also houses a Dual Language bilingual program, which is one of the few different bilingual programs being offered throughout the District.

School 33 is recognized by the Rochester City School District and community for its exemplary reputation in early childhood education programs, such as Universal Pre-K and Preschool, reputable special education programs, and the Dual Language program. Currently, at School 33, there are 130 students in the Dual Language program in Grades K-6 with less than 20 in the PreK program. There are nine Dual Language classrooms with two teachers in Grades K-4 while Grades 5-6 have one teacher. In each classroom, the student population is 50% students who are English dominant or Hispanic Heritage language learners while the remaining 50% are solely native Spanish dominant students. The physical kindergarten classroom is separated in half to house the two teachers in separate areas. Each kindergarten teacher teaches one language

and the students are split by language dominance. Throughout the day in the kindergarten rooms, the groups of children are mixing and switching rooms to get exposure to the second language. In Grades 1-4, teachers share the classroom, but each teacher is an expert in either the Spanish or English component of the program. All of the students are mixed within the same classroom and receive instruction in both languages. Both teachers can teach students in both languages, but alternate core areas in both languages with support from one another, and both teachers work in small groups for instruction. In Grades 5-6, the teachers teach both languages with 50% of the day allocated for both languages.

The researcher conducted a survey (Appendix A) for the teachers in the Dual Language program in regards to the amount of time that is spent on native language instruction other than English instruction. The survey consisted of eight questions, which express the teacher's attitude, views, and knowledge of home language instruction in regards to Spanish instruction. Approximately 11 teachers took the survey from Grades PreK-5. All of the teachers in the program were given the survey to complete.

The first question from the survey asked teachers how much time they spend on native language arts instruction in Spanish while the second asked if there was a lack of Native Language Arts instruction. Both teachers from PreK and Kindergarten (Spanish component) answered the question with both stating about 80% of their day is dedicated to Spanish instruction. Both teachers in these early grades expressed that they felt that there was no lack of Spanish Language Arts instruction for their grade level. In Grades 1-3, teachers answered the question by stating that SLA is only taught for at least 1 hour to 1 ½ hours daily due to children being pulled out of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), but they noticed that more instruction was given in English. The teachers in these grade levels all expressed the same

feelings that there is a lack of SLA instruction. In Grades 4-5, the teachers shared that about 30 to 35 minutes daily of SLA instruction is being taught, and there is a lack of Spanish Language Arts (SLA) instruction compared to its counterpart of ELA instruction.

Question three of the survey was a two-part question, which asked the teachers about their belief of the importance of Native Language Arts in conjunction with the second language and their views on how Administration along with the District view of Spanish Language Arts. All of the teachers across the grade levels shared that they do believe that Native language instruction is extremely important to help build and complement the learning of the second language. The teachers all expressed that they feel there is no support or understanding of the importance of Spanish Language Arts instruction based on their experience with the District and Administration. All of the teachers shared that there is a lack of material to accommodate the Common Core Standards. The teachers also mentioned that most, if not all, material has to be translated by teachers, and no specific time is allocated in the mandated District schedules for SLA. Teachers felt as if neither the District nor Administrators understood the benefits to how successful a student who is bilingual is throughout his/her academic and adult careers.

In questions four through five teachers were asked about their background knowledge of the New York State Bilingual regulations and the Home Language Progressions from the EngageNy website. All of the teachers answered the questions by stating that they were familiar with the regulations, but not with all of the changes and requirements of the regulations. Most of the teachers were familiar with Home Language Progressions and had integrated them into their teaching. In conjunction with the 5th question, the question asked teachers if they believed the ELA Common Core curriculum could be adapted Spanish Native Language Arts instruction. Many of the teachers shared how the District made a huge emphasis of the ELA Common Core

be solely taught in English and not including time to adapt the standards for Spanish instruction. The teachers also mentioned that the curriculum is lengthy and causes a lot of confusion in English. They also felt that it would not be appropriate for translating into Spanish instruction due to the lack of materials. With the teachers not agreeing about the curriculum, most mentioned that the standards could be easily adapted to Native language instruction.

The final questions of the survey asked the teachers about what type of professional development they would like to have for assistance in Native Language instruction. All of the teachers agreed on having a professional development on the essential components of Native Language Arts, but would like to learn how they could adapt the Common Corse Curriculum, and Standards into the Native Language Arts.

The teachers all expressed that there is a need for more, better, and structured native language instruction for the Spanish component of the Dual Language program. To ensure and conduct a successful and productive Dual Language program, it needs to follow the program guidelines and with that being said, the equality of teaching both languages. Students should be exiting the program having proficiency in both of the languages learned. Teachers in the program understand the great importance of effectively delivering a successful program, yet they struggle due to the District's lack of knowledge on the needs of the program.

Purpose:

A successful Dual Language program effectively integrates the instruction of both languages equally. The purpose behind a Dual Language program is to maintain the first language while acquiring a second language and at the end of the program to be bilingual and biliterate. With the lack of sufficient Native Language Arts instruction within the Spanish component of the program, the students are not receiving the appropriate amount of instruction

to successfully complete the program with the intended outcome. The teachers of the school where the study was conducted understand the needs first hand of the program while the District and the State do not understand the importance of success in the dominance of English due to the mandated testing. Across the state and country, the biggest controversial issue has been the Common Core testing with students scoring poorly along with the teacher evaluation systems such as APPR, and educational funding. Throughout this project, the researcher's focus will be to explore the purpose and need for native language instruction with some emphasis on regulations and state guidelines for bilingual education along with the integration of Common Core. With the information gained and learned throughout the research, a professional development workshop will be created to guide teachers and suggest ideas for better implementation and integration of Native Language Arts instruction. Dual language was developed to give equal instruction time in both languages, and based on the researcher's findings the model is not being implemented with fidelity in language arts. This professional development would be presented at the studied school's monthly Dual Language Council meeting. This training serves as an informative guide for teachers to support their students and lead to more success for the future bilingual students in the program.

Rationale:

Bilingual education throughout the decades of implementation in schools around the country has faced many hardships with the overall implantation of the models. Due to both federal laws and regulations the formats of the models have caused districts to reform how they would be carried out in schools. Not only do bilingual programs encounter difficulty with state regulations, but the overall American view or philosophy on being multilingual in a country, which focuses on the use of English. Another aspect to consider is the country-wide

implementation of both the Common Core Standards and the Common Core Curriculum, which caused more difficulty in bilingual education. States and districts were pushed by federal law to ensure all students are becoming academically proficient in both in math and English. States and districts that do not meet the high standards set by the state are threatened to lose both Federal and State funding. For bilingual programs such as Dual Language, this caused a huge issue triggering districts and administrators to emphasize English instruction. In turn, Dual Language teachers are faced with shorting their native language instruction to ensure students are prepared for the mandated State Common Core Assessments.

"A second language is learnt by an individual or a group without detracting from the maintenance and the development of the first language. A context where a second language adds to, rather than replaces the first language is important from bilingualism" (Baker, 2001, p.132).

Considering that half of the population of students in a Dual Language program is native Spanish-speaking students, the emphasis on English instruction does not allow them to build cognitive skills in their native language. In Dual Language programs, "if one language become dominant (e.g. due to much larger numbers of one language group), the aim of bilingualism and biliteracy may be at risk" (Baker, 2001, p.213). A well established and reputable Dual Language program must follow the model outlines of a balance in languages to be implemented with fidelity and to obtain the intended outcome. Teachers have found it difficult in implementing and following the correct Dual Language model because of the focus on English proficiency.

Definition of Terms:

Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR): Teacher evaluation system based on classroom teaching performance and student assessment score performances.

Bilingual Education: Education program that integrates the use of two languages for instruction (Brisk, 1998).

Common Core Curriculum (CCC): Modules of content generated to implement the embedded common core standards within each unit and lessons.

Common Core Standards (CCS): Standards established to guide students for college and career readiness through the evolution of skills to meet each standard.

Dual Language: "a curriculum delivered in two languages, conventionally half of the day in one language of instruction and the half in the other" (Brisk, 1998, p.14).

English Language Arts (ELA): Is the teaching of language art skills in English in the core areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL): Consists of instruction by a certified ESOL teacher to teach and further English language skills both socially and academically.

Heritage learner: A student whose primary language is English and who knows or has exposure to the second language by heritage.

Monolingual: When one language is solely spoken by an individual.

Native language (L1): An individual's primary language (also known as home language).

Second Language (L2): Second language is any other language other than the primary language learned. (Lightbrown & Spada, 2006)

Second Language Acquisition: Is the development and domination of another language other than the native language.

Spanish Language Arts (SLA): Is the implementation of language art skills in Spanish, which include reading, writing, speaking, and listening (also known as Home Language Arts or HLA).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Government and political views have become the key roles that affect our nation's educational views from funding and learning standards down to what can happen daily in the classroom. The basis of this research will solely concentrate on the topic of the implementation of Spanish Language Arts in Bilingual Education with focuses on language acquisition and Dual Language programs.

Bilingual Education

The United States is one of the most diverse countries of the world, where people have been coming and continue to come bringing different culture and languages throughout history. According to Lindholm-Leary (2001), "today, in contrast, the initiatives dedicated to establishing English as the official language are orchestrated at the national level by a powerful and heavily funded political organization" (p. 13). English has been adopted across the nation as the official language, which in turn has caused some issues in the educational system regards to serving the non–English speaking student population. Bilingual Education programs were established to serve the children who speak diverse languages in the education system. In various parts of the world Bilingual Education is viewed as an elite program where students become the masters of two languages to have "vocational and social success" (Brisk, 1998, p. xv). According to Brisk (1998), in the United States, Bilingual Education is misinterpreted causing flaws in the implementation. In the U.S., Bilingual Education "refers to the education of children whose home language is not English" (p. xv), which does not take into account the actual learning needs of a bilingual student. Those students who are speakers of other languages still need an education

which serves their needs just as their fellow English-speaking peers' receive. Even though forms of Bilingual Education have been practiced through the nation's history there still much reformation needed to implement a program that fits the needs of all learners.

Within the umbrella of Bilingual Education, there are a several types of models, which differ in approaches for the population and intended outcomes of the program. Some of the programs are intended to develop proficiency in English while others push to maintain the primary language. The implementation of these models across the board may have similarities, and yet have their differences. Bilingual Education can be categorized into the different aims of the program, such as if the program is a transitional or maintenance of the language. Baker (2001) defines the term transitional "to shift the child from home, minority language to the dominant, majority language" (p. 198). In the case of the U.S. students would be immersed in the English Language with microscopic to no instruction in the native language. With the term of maintenance Baker (2001) refers to it as "attempts to foster the minority language in the child, strengthening the child's sense of cultural identity…" (p. 198). Maintenance models continue to foster the student's home language and use it to build the second language. Within the maintenance models are "Enrichment Bilingual Education" where students who are part of the language majority master a second language while maintain their home language (Baker, 2001). A few popular models to be briefly discussed are English-Only Models such as ESL (English as Second Language) and English Immersion; maintenance models such as Dual Language (also known as Two-Way), Heritage Language, and Immersion. These models have been used across the country with very few that fit the true definition of Bilingual Education.

Transitional program models are a type of Bilingual Education where the students are transitioning from their native language to receive instruction in the second language. The

English-Only model is "characterized as sink-or-swim or submersion English" where no instruction in the native language is allowed in the model (Brisk, 1998). ESL programs are classes specifically for students whose native language is not English and spend their educational day in a monolingual mainstream classroom receiving daily ESL services (Brisk, 1998). Structured Immersion is another model where English becomes the sole instructional language. There are two types of structured immersion programs where the focus becomes English instruction for the non-native English speaking students. The first type teaches all content in English with the simplification of language and lessons where all of the language learning students are in the same classroom (Brisk, 1998). The second type of structured immersion is very similar to the first, but the teacher "has some knowledge of the students' home language so they can understand students" (Brisk, 1998, p. 23). Baker (2001) mentions in his research that these types of programs are "weak" forms of Bilingual Education because of the "assimilation of language minorities rather than maintenance of their home languages and cultural pluralism" (p. 196). These programs have a strict focus on English language dominance for non-native English students and allow little native language instruction.

Maintenance models are another form of Bilingual Education where the native languages are maintained; these models are categorized as enrichment models. These models are the most popular models of Bilingual Education that are most effective for achievement in both languages. Immersion in maintenance programs differs from structured immersion with the English language. The total immersion model instruction, "…commences with 100% immersion in the second language, reducing after two or three years to 80% per week for the next three or four years, finishing junior schooling with approximately 50% immersion in the second language" (Baker, 2001, p. 195). This model still allows instruction in the native language in the later years

of education allowing the student to exit bilingual. Another form of immersion is known as the "partial immersion," which "provides close to 50% immersion in in the second language throughout the infant and junior schooling" (Baker, 2001, p. 195). Partial immersion allows students to learn and practice both languages starting at the primary level until they exit their intermediate schooling. In immersion programs, parents must participate in the educational progress and teachers must be bilingual. Heritage language maintenance model is another popular model of Bilingual Education. In this model "language minority children use their native language, ethnic, home or heritage language in the schools as a medium of instruction and the goal is full bilingualism" (Baker, 2001, p. 208). This model allows the student who has a cultural background in the second language to learn and maintain the second language because half or more of the instruction is in the second language. Finally, the most popular and effective model is the Dual Language model. This model is one of the "oldest dating back to 1963 in Dade County, Florida, and developed by a US Cuban community" (Baker, 2001, p. 212). Further research and dynamics of the Dual Language model are intensely discussed in the next section. Maintenance models are the most popular and effective models allowing students to be truly bilingual while maintaining their native language.

Dual Language Model

Dual Language Model programs have a long history as well as the collection of data from across the world and nation to be one of the most effective bilingual models. The model, as previously discussed, is considered to be both maintenance and enrichment program for the student population matriculated in the program. This model is very different from any other Bilingual Education models because of the population of students it serves and the end outcome of what students are meant to achieve. This program integrates "students who are not English

proficient" with students who are "native English speakers in an environment that explicitly values the language and culture of the language minority student…" (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, p. 32). This model's intention is to unify two language groups and not only teach both groups each language, but also create a unified cultural community "regardless of language or ethnic background" (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, p. 32).

Historically, Dual Language programs have been around for a little over 30 years (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Two forms of the model were created. "The 90/10 model and the 50/50 models vary in how they divide the time each language is used for instruction" (Freeman, Freeman & Mercuri, 2005, p. 21). A school district in Dade County in Miami, Florida was one of the first districts to implement and develop the 50/50 model; in the mid-1960s (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). The 50/50 Dual Language model meant that both languages were equally taught throughout the academic school day or school year. Soon after other cities and states started developing their formats of the model such as in San Diego, the 90/10 model was created (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). The 90/10 model consists of a higher percentage at the primary (kindergarten) level of the native language while the smaller percentage would consist of the second language. As the grade levels progress, the percentage changes until it is ultimately a 50/50 model in the intermediate level (Grades 4 and up). As the years progressed, a higher population of non-English speaking students was impacting other states and causing more states to be interested in piloting and adopting Dual Language models. Results from this model show that "both language minority and language majority were becoming bilingual and biliterate, achieving at or above grade level in at least their native language, and developing positive cross-cultural attitudes" (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, p. 34).

To achieve the intended success and outcome of a Dual Language program, there are several components to implement in order for the model to work effectively. These components can determine the fate of the model's success and if the model is producing students with the intended outcome of being bilingual and biliterate. Lindholm-Leary (2001) describes a few foundational components to create a functional program. The following components become the key structure that create an effective program that follows and leads to the true outcome of creating bilingual students. The school must have the following components: Effective Leadership, School Environment, Quality Teachers and Staff, Instructional Design and Features, and Students.

Effective Leadership:

Leadership becomes the essential key behind successful programs. Leadership, such as administrators, program directors, and superintendents become an important support system for the program. Not only is it their role to support the program, but also they become the key behind the avocation of the program making sure the model is receiving the funding and materials needed. Direct school administrators (such as principals) play a vital role in making sure the school community and environment understand the role of language learning, development, and education (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Also, the principal must not only be knowledgeable about the language model, but also about the importance of its implementation along with being the support for teachers (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Another component of leadership is the actual instructional leadership that advocates and supports the program. This person has a closer relationship to the program than the principal and is knowledgeable of the program. The instructional leader's role is to be the "spokesperson, oversee model development, planning and

coordination; staff training" (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, p. 60). These roles support not only the

model, but the school, teachers, and students, which will lead to an effective program.

School Environment:

The school environment also plays an essential role in the implementation of an effective

program. A welcoming and diverse school environment is crucial to the model since the model

essentially involves two groups of language learners. The school must enforce a positive morale

for students so they can feel safe, prideful, challenged by high expectations, and filled with a

variety of activities that build a strong welcoming school community (Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

The environment must be an "additive bilingual environment" where all students have the

opportunity to develop and master a second language (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, p.62).   This

environment supports the use of both languages by motivating students to feel confident and use

the language of their choosing. Also a positive social and instructional environment is created in

and outside of the classroom where both language groups are interacting with not only the

teachers, but also their peers. The interaction of peers creates the acceptance of both groups

between one another to create a bond between the students allowing the exchange and learning

of the languages and cultures.

Quality Teachers and Staff:

Teachers are the most crucial part of the implementation of an effective program.

Teachers become the biggest advocates and supporters of the model. Teachers in the program not

only are native or to some extent fluent in both languages, but they must also have "appropriate

teaching certificates or credentials, have good content knowledge and classroom management

skills, and training with respect to the language education model and appropriate strategies"

(Lindholm-Leary, 2001, p.64). These teachers must not only understand the native tongue of

these students, but also need to be able to understand the vast cultures from which students are

coming. Teacher and staff trainings become important for an effective program. Teachers need to

have trainings on the program and its intentions. The following are important parts to the

specialized training; as Lindholm-Leary (2001) mentions the teachers need to have an

understanding of all bilingual models, know second language development and instruction,

create an cooperative learning environment, and have multicultural training. Lindholm-Leary

(2001) makes it clear that without trainings teachers will have difficulty performing and

instructing in a program in their classroom. Teachers play an important role of the correct

implementation and teaching of the model to fidelity in the classroom.

Instructional Design and Features:

   Instructional design and features become very important in the creation and

implementation of the model. Timing and duration of the program become important to

understand the essential amount of time of four to six years of language exposure and learning to

create the intended bilingual outcome. Mastery of a second language does not happen in a few

years, but in fact it will take several years as many theorists have found in their studies

(Lightbrown & Spada, 2006).The input and output of the language models must be considered to

insure the model's effectiveness. Implementation of the model consists of differentiation of

teaching for the learner, making the learning interesting, challenging and relevant (Lindholm-

Leary, 2001). The program also allows students the opportunity to converse and work with

native speakers in and outside of the school setting (Lindholm-Leary, 2001).   Creating a social

and engaging program allows the students to use the language and feel confident practicing the

language outside of the classroom promoting second language use. One final component of

instruction design becomes the academic instruction and the integrating and application of both

languages. This component becomes fundamental especially for the implementation of language

arts, which will be further discussed later in this research.

Students:

Students are an important component of a Dual Language model because they create a

diverse student population. The student population is made up of "50% English speakers to 50%

target language speakers…" (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, p.72). This mixture of students allows

students from diverse cultural and social backgrounds to be integrated with one another. Also

with students, it is important to have a supportive and positive home-to-school relationship. This

relationship requires parents to be actively involved with their child's education, which leads to

an achieving academic progress. It also makes parents active advocates for not only their

children, but also for the Dual Language model. Students become the important product that

reflects a successful program.

The Dual Language is the most effective bilingual program available, and in order to

have a successful program the model has to be followed, designed, and supported to create an

outcome where student are exiting the program bilingual. "These programs have raised the status

and importance of languages other than English in many communities across the United States"

(Freeman, Freeman & Mercuri, 2005, p. XV). This program allows students of different

language, ethic, and social groups to learn together building a diverse bilingual community.

Language Acquisition: Primary and Second

Language acquisition is very important to consider when implementing an effective

bilingual program. In order for students to have achievement in another language they need

mastery in their native language. Many researchers explain the great importance language

acquisition plays in developing multiple languages and higher level learners.

Several theorists on language acquisition have a diverse set of theories based on how language is learned in childhood, which plays a role on the mastery of the native language and its effects in the second language. "Some researchers have defined it narrowly around the control of grammatical rules, others around the ability of use the language in accomplishing cognitive task, and still others around social and communicative aspects of language" (August, & Hakuta, 1997, p. 33). These theorists such as Krashen, Cummins, and various others have different ideas behind language acquisition, but much of their studies point to the same idea of mastery of the first language works in the development of the second language. Language learning happens naturally. According to Krashen (2013), "acquisition is sometimes referred to as 'picking up' a language" (p. 1). In acquisition of the native or primary language the learning happens "subconsciously" the learner is unaware of the language acquisition because of the natural use in the surrounding (Krashen, 2013, p. 1). Second language acquisition requires learning because it is a "conscious process" because the essential rules, grammatical structure, and vocabulary have to be learned formally (Krashen, 2013, p. 1). Cummins (2000) theory relies on how language is built academically and socially for mastery in the second language. Cummins (2000) theory play importance to understand "strong correlation between bilingual students' L1 andL2 in situations where students have the opportunity to develop literacy in both languages" (p. 37).   In conjunction with Bilingual Education, language acquisition becomes very important to understand how both languages are built.

Language Arts

Bilingual education theory integrates the concept of teaching content in the dominant language of the child other than English. Each model of Bilingual Education has its own theory about the language being implemented in each content area and how much the language is used

throughout the academic day. Dual Language programs are very different than other programs because this model must consider both language groups and the outcome of making both groups bilingual. The language being implemented in all content areas, more specifically language arts becomes extremely important in the Dual Language model. State and federal mandates, such as testing specific learning standards and curriculum affect the language of instruction being implemented. This concept plays a very important role when focusing on implementing a successful Dual Language program.

The majority of the research and studies available all stress the importance of students in Dual Language and similar models need for native language instruction. A problem many programs face is the lack of instruction in the native language other than English. This situation comes at a struggle because of the focus the U.S. culture and society has had on assimilation to the dominant language, or English, causing more focus on English instruction than the second language (Hakuta & August, 1997). This problem leaves Dual Language models unbalanced in instruction of the non-dominant language. Dual Language schools strive for the teaching of both languages in all content areas to serve the diverse student population. Literacy and language arts are very important to help build both languages in all content areas, but very minimal instruction of native language arts causes concern for language growth in other content areas (Perez & Torres-Guzman, 2002).

The implementation of the Common Core Standards and mandate on state assessments caused a huge push on English instruction. The standards were developed to create a nationwide set of standards to prep children to reach college education. Focus on the standards became very important causing states to create curriculum following the standards. New York State created the Bilingual Common Core Initiative that is a guide for teachers to implement the Bilingual

Common Core Progressions. These progressions align with the New York State English

Standards to build language art standards for students whose native language is not English.

These progressions help differentiate and build on linguistic demands for native language arts

using similar standards from the English language arts standards (New York State Bilingual

Common Core Initiative: Engage NY, 2014). These progressions can be utilized as a tool to

guide teachers in native language arts while they have similar expectations as English language

arts, allowing the student to build on the same skills no matter the language.

Native language arts can be implemented in many ways in the classroom in Dual

Language classrooms; the implementation of both English language and native language arts are

vital. In discussing language arts, several aspects need to be considered, such as language,

literacy, and writing. The struggle for dual language models and more specifically teachers is

how to implement the language arts instruction without favoring one language.

Literacy is an essential component of language arts in dual language programs to build

student language skills along with skills that can be transferred to the second language. Great

programs have teachers who are well versed in highlighting "whole language, natural language

acquisition through all content areas, cooperative learning, interactive and discovery learning,

and cognitive complexity for all proficiency levels" (Freeman, Freeman & Mercuri, 2005, p.

139). The implementation of reading should begin in the native language adding the second

language as the student has mastered key components of the native language (Freeman, Freeman

& Mercuri, 2005, p. 144). Early literacy begins by establishing the basics of print, teaching

phonics, and exposure to language to establish the purpose of reading. Pérez and Torres-Guzmán

(2002) mention in their research the importance of thematic units of literature for the exposure of

different genres including cultural text, along with the importance of phonemic awareness and

the building of vocabulary that can foster literacy skills. These important components of literacy can later build on literacy skills in other content areas with the exposure of vocabulary and genres to further comprehension in both languages. Another important component of language arts is the importance of writing, which comes from literacy skills. Writing is a skill that goes sequentially with reading due to the exposure to different writing styles and vocabulary. Pérez and Torres-Guzmán (2002) also explain that student's needs exposure in a variety of writing genres (such as poetry, nonfiction text, drama, etc.) to not only enjoy the reading, but also most importantly to build on good writing. Students would benefit from using their native language as build writing skills while expanding their cognition. Both reading and writing skills are a foundational skill that will continuously expand, but are essential skills used in other content areas. Students whose first language is not English need language arts in their native language in order to evolve in both languages. Effective Dual Language programs need students to have instruction in both languages to build bilingual students. The key to building language proficiency is to effectively implement language arts in both languages.

Chapter 3: Description of the Product

The researcher created an informational professional development workshop for the members of the Dual Language Council at School #33. This professional development will encourage the idea that in "bilingual language arts class taught in the students' primary language, the teacher is developing language skills that will enhance students' cognitive and academic growth" (Ovando, Combs & Collier, 2006, p 159). The researcher was able to understand from teacher surveys and personal experience that the program at School #33 was not effectively implementing a Dual Language program. Garcia (2005) states, "the goals of DL are to provide high-quality instruction for language-minority students and provide instruction in a second

language" (p 47). The Dual Language Council consists of bilingual teachers, ESOL teachers, school administrators, and other district personnel. The workshop will happen during one of the monthly planned Dual Language meetings. Each meeting is held once a month for about an hour to an hour and 45minutes. The meetings normally consist of updates for the program and school and professional development workshops. Along with the PowerPoint presentation, participants will be provided with a mini Teachers manual for Spanish Language Arts implementation. These materials are intended to guide and give teachers ideas on how to better implement and encourage more Spanish Language Arts within the instructional day.

The first component of the informational professional development workshop is a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation contains information with engaging activities for the participants. The first active activity requires teachers to reflect on the amount of time they have daily for Spanish Language Arts instruction. Teachers from each grade level will share with the whole group the approximate timing and the presenter will note the times for the whole group. After each grade level shares the amount of instructional time spent on SLA, the group will then partake in a whole group discussion based on a question presented by the researcher. The group will then answer the following question, "What causes the limit of Spanish language instruction in the classroom?". Participants and the presenter will share their thoughts and have a detailed discussion of the question. The first few slides of the presentation give a slight amount of background information on the purposes of Bilingual Education with a closer focus on Dual Language programs. The following slides describe and inform participants of the components of an effective Dual Language Program, followed by research-based slides that support SLA instruction. The final slides of the presentation give the participants ideas and strategies to implement further SLA into their instruction. The final activity of the presentation encourages

the participants to design a daily schedule which implements a block of an appropriate amount of SLA instruction considering the grade level and Dual Language program requirements. For the final activity, the participants will be given a predesigned outline and the total of minutes in the instructional day. Members will be allowed about ten minutes to prepare a schedule outline and then present their outline to the whole group. After the participants share their outline, the exit ticket, which consists of a survey, will be passed out to participants. The survey consists of an evaluation of the presentation and any questions the participants may have.

The second component of the presentation will consist of a mini teachers' guide for implementation of SLA instruction. The researcher created a guide that teachers can relate to and can easily look up ideas. The guide has four sections: Bilingual Classroom, Spanish Language Arts, Other Content Areas, and Great Extra Bilingual Internet Resources. The bilingual classroom section contains information for teachers to design a classroom that is appropriate for bilingual students, which consist of ideas from classroom setup to groupings of students. In the following section, Spanish Language Arts, teachers are given a plethora of activities that can be embedded into the Spanish Language Arts block. The activities consist of educational videos, programs available for purchase, guided reading group ideas, ways to implement more reading and writing, and ways to increase vocabulary. In the section labeled Other Content Areas, teachers will find ideas of how to implement Spanish into the other content areas. The researcher suggests the use of cognates, silent teachers (content related posters), videos, and projects in both languages. The final section of the guide gives teachers an array of educational bilingual resources where teachers can find materials for students in both languages.

Overall, the researcher created the presentation and guide to assist bilingual teachers who are part of the Council to create and implement effective Spanish instruction. The PowerPoint

presentation is a great informational tool embedded with activities to get teachers and

administrators to evaluate SLA instruction and implementation. The guide gives teachers a small

handbook of ideas to increase and help with the implementation of Spanish in the classroom. The

intended outcome of the product is to assist students and teachers to become partners in learning

and discovery to help achieve an output of bilingual students (Ovando, Combs & Collier, 2006).

This product is intended to educate better and guide the Dual Language Council on the

importance of Spanish instruction in hopes of creating an effective bilingual program.

Chapter 4: Conclusions, Limitations in Research and Product, and Recommendations Discussions

The purpose of this research project was to emphasize further the need for native Spanish

language instruction in a dual language classroom. The researcher developed a survey for the

Dual Language teachers at School #33 in the Rochester City School District to analyze the

amount of time and knowledge teachers had to teach Spanish Language Arts. From the results of

the survey, the researcher was able to determine that the teachers of School #33 had several

limitations for SLA instruction; much of the limitations of instruction came from District

discrepancies and lack of organization for the needs of a Dual Language program. The Dual

Language program at School #33 lacks the appropriate amount of instructional time to integrate

and implement Spanish Language Arts into the instructional day. Ovando, Combs, and Collier

(2006) state in their research, "education, as a bridge, should enhance communication,

understanding, and human potential for language minority and language majority students alike"

(p.43). Research continues to show the importance of building the native language to help

develop the second. Effective Dual Language programs produce students who have reached

mastery in both languages, yet programs are suffering to achieve the intended outcome of the

program.

Limitations in Research and Project

There were a few limitations in the writing of this capstone project. One limitation is the amount of current research available. With the number of programs available around the country, there is very little current research available in regards to SLA. Within this limitation, the researcher was unable to find any up-to-date research and information on the effects of SLA with Common Core Standards on Dual Language classrooms.

Another limitation the researcher confronted was the limited size of the participants. At School # 33 there is only one bilingual classroom for each grade level in the Dual Language program with only 13 teachers. The Dual Language program at School# 33 is a minuscule program, and there is only one other school in the District which follows the Dual Language model. The researcher wonders that if more data could be gathered from the other schools if the amount of teachers facing difficulty in the implementation of SLA would be greater. The possibility of the data collected from both Dual Language schools would give the researcher a better understanding of the amount of SLA instruction that is happening in the District's two Dual Language programs.

Recommendations

Bilingual education is a form of education that is ever growing, and the numbers of students who speak other languages in US schools is increasing. Further research and studies would have to be conducted to assess further the amount of Spanish instruction occurring in Dual Language programs and other Bilingual programs around the country. The availability of materials and resources for Bilingual teachers needs to be more readily available for teachers to implement more SLA and general Spanish instruction because, currently, bilingual materials are still very limited. Future researchers should continue to create professional development, workshops, and manuals to continue to assist and educate teachers on SLA.

Conclusion

In conclusion from this project, what can be derived from the research and shared by surveyed teachers, there is a greater need for the implementation of Spanish Language Arts in Dual Language programs. In an environment where students are consistently exposed to the English language, students who are second language learners need instruction in both their native language and second language. The purpose of Dual Language programs is to allow students to maintain their native language and learn a second. If students are not receiving the proper amount of language arts instruction, then no language development would occur. The Rochester City School District along with the New York State Department of Education needs to be aware and educated on the needs of a successful Dual Language program. Educators and parents need to advocate for the proper implementation of bilingual programs across the board. These programs are pushed to fit the general education model, forgetting that language is the most important aspect. The greater inclusion and the implementation of Spanish in the Dual Language model are essential to creating bilingual students. In essence, these bilingual programs were created for "empowering bilingual students with academic strategies, and cognitive strengths they need to be effective learners is the overall goal of bilingual classes" (Ovando, Combs & Collier, 2006, p 154). With the presentation and teacher's guide, the teachers in the Dual Language Council at School #33 will be able to further analyze their program, make alterations to the teachings, and advocate for the proper needs of a successful Dual Language program. Bilingual education is the foundation to create students who are bilingual, as well as culturally and socially diverse to become global citizens.

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Appendix A

<u>Teacher Survey: Native Language Arts</u>

Please answer the questions to the best of your ability based on your personal experience with Native Language Arts. These experiences can be based on your classroom experience, undergraduate or graduate course, professional development, etc.

Grade Level:_____

1) Approximately, how much time do spend currently teaching Native Language Arts?_____

2) Do you feel that there is a lack in Native language Arts instruction in your daily instruction?

Circle: Yes   or   No
 If yes why?

3a) Do you believe that Native language instruction is important to help build and compliment the second language?
Circle: Yes   or   No

3b) If so, do you feel that Administration and Central Office officials understand the importance of Native Language Arts instruction?

4)   Are you familiar with the changes to the Bilingual Regulation in Part 154 in regards to the implementation of Native Language Arts?
Circle: Yes   or   No

5)   Are you familiar with the Home Language Progressions under Bilingual Education on the EngageNY website? If so, how do you use them in your instruction?

6)   Do you believe the ELA Common Core Curriculum allows instruction to be adapted to Native Language Arts? Please briefly explain you answer.

7) What content areas do you think is important to include in Native Language Arts?
- ☐ Grammar
- ☐ Vocabulary
- ☐ Writing
- ☐ Reading
  - o Variety of Genres
  - o Culturally Responsive Genres
- ☐ Speaking
- ☐ Listening
- ☐ Content Based instruction
- ☐ Other_____

8) If there were a Professional Development held on Native Language Arts, what would you be interested in learning about?