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Sustaining a Dual Language Immersion Program: Features of Success

- positive effects

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The promise of dual language education has spurred a movement in the field of bilingual education to shift from remedial programs to enrichment forms of bilingual education. Although research supports the effectiveness of such programs, many programs do not maintain their level of implementation and quickly revert to their original remedial form. This research looks at one elementary campus that has implemented a 2-way dual language program for more than a decade. Findings indicate that pedagogical equity, qualified bilingual teachers, active parent-home collaboration, and knowledgeable leadership contributed to the program's success.

} more detailed look at components of a successful program

Key words: dual language education, leadership in bilingual programs, successful factors in bilingual education

of ELs → shows need for effective programs ...

The continued growth in the number of speakers of languages other than English is reflected in the rapidly increasing number of students in U.S. schools for whom English is a second language. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2005) show that the number of school-age children who spoke a language other than English reached almost 10 million in 2004. Such a dramatic increase continually challenges educators to provide effective language programs with

> good fact for support

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for those who are English dominant. Several reviews have been conducted of research and evaluation studies concerning bilingual and immersion education that identify certain pedagogical and social factors that contribute to successful language education programs (Carter & Chatfield, 1986; Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins, 1988; Thomas & Collier, 1997b; Willig, 1985). These factors form the core criteria of successful language education, particularly dual language education programs, and serve as a framework for effective implementation and successful outcomes (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). These criteria include (a) administrative and home support, (b) school environment, (c) high-quality instructional personnel, (d) professional development, and (e) instructional design and features. Because variations in program design and delivery occur within a particular sociopolitical context, it is necessary to look at individual programs to identify factors that may contribute to the effectiveness of this model (Freeman, 1998). In particular, it is imperative to examine the factors that contribute to program sustainability in an era of increasing hostility toward bilingual programs.

*Results -
Methodology
Section*

hmmmm... could mean the difference between a good or bad program
targeting the components that bring success

MODES OF INQUIRY

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to explore the factors that may have contributed to the success and sustainability of one dual language program in an inner city, urban-diverse campus. The aforementioned critical features of successful dual language education programs were used as a foundation from which to begin the research.

Research Questions

1. To what extent has participation in the program contributed to students' academic outcomes?
2. What factors contributed to the sustainability of the dual language program at City Elementary?

Procedures

To address the central questions set forth in this paper, we used three sources of data: (a) site visits and non-participant observations; (b) taped and transcribed key personnel interviews; and (c) data from the fifth-grade English Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in reading, mathematics, and science.

We utilized purposeful sampling within a case study methodology to identify key personnel for focus group and individual interviews. Informants included 10

gives validity or reveals loopholes...

tated the longevity of the program. A kindergarten dual language teacher referred to City's principal as a motivating force: "She expects a lot from us, and then I think that sort of turns around on us, and then we expect a lot from our parents and our kids, too."

A crucial factor in the success of this campus was the principal's desire to build leadership capacity among her teachers by allowing them to implement creative strategies in the classroom and encouraging them to take on leadership roles. She shared a democratic view of leadership as she consistently engaged teachers in the decision-making process: "Well, I can't make the decision for them. They have to decide for themselves." Each of these aspects demonstrated a sincere belief in the program and its level of effectiveness for all students and contributed strongly to the sustainability of the dual language program.

*Also called
Discussions!*

*not always heading
[often in
conclusion!]*

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The power of a dual language program is not just in its additive nature but in the pedagogical equity that exists for both language groups. It is not enough to merely adjust the language of instruction; teachers must adjust their philosophy, their teaching strategies, and their view of ELs. As teachers shift their belief about second language acquisition to one of enrichment versus one of remediation, the entire focus of the curriculum begins to shift as well. Teachers begin to evaluate how the curriculum best serves the needs of their students as they create the conditions under which children and parents can empower themselves. This cannot happen, however, without an administrator who understands the nature of bilingualism and the importance of advocacy for teachers, students, and biliteracy.

*call for awareness
& change to
audience...*

One common phrase among all interviewed was the continuing need to "fight" for the program with central office staff and some parents, as voiced by one teacher: "Although they do not inherently support the program, they do not block its implementation either." Administrators must be aware of the pitfalls and the need to support teachers at every step of the way. Otherwise, the influence of standardized testing and the desire for a quick transition to English overpowers teachers' best intentions and ultimately sabotages the program.

CONCLUSION

Dual language bilingual programs address several serious issues facing education in the United States. ELs are no longer segregated for any portion of the school day but are receiving the same core academic curriculum as their English-dominant peers. It is the kind of access ELs have to high-status knowledge and the quality of instructional interactions in dual language programs that defines educational qual-

ity and promotes greater equity. This is possible because effective dual language classrooms promote a high degree of student involvement (A. G. Ramirez & Stromquist, 1978; Strong, 1983), contextualize classroom discourse (Wong Fillmore & Valadez, 1986), and value students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds (García, 2005). This situation empowers native Spanish and native English speakers by promoting native Spanish and English language development as well as academic progress, and it nurtures a strong sense of self-identity (Christian, 1999; Thomas & Collier, 1999).

author uses of many sources to support her own point which is

authors "call to action" of teachers, admins., parents

* Changes in policies, programs, and practices that positively address the changing demographics by bringing disparate groups together are not only necessary but inevitable. The most significant reform in educational opportunities for ELs occurs when teachers and administrators at individual school sites work together at the campus level. These changes are not possible, however, without committed administrators, parents, and teachers who understand the process of bilingualism and the nature of schooling for language minority children.

call for awareness - continued research to better understand how to reach success!

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I may find another good article here!

* - mmm... good 1st article. Gives me (+) elements of program. To have wider scope of review, I'll look for an article that either has a different element of focus, even one with negative findings to look at the contrasts and synthesize the arguments. *