Comparing the Fidelity of Spanish Two-Way Immersion Programs in DE to their Model

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Introduction

- Language other than English increased by 148% from 1980 (23.1 million speakers) to 2009 (57.1 million) in U.S.A.
- Spanish speakers increased by 24.4 million

Benefits:
- Cross-cultural understanding
- Ability to learn
- Superior cognitive processing skills and early oral language
- More advanced inhibitory control and executive functions (attention & memory)
- Improved sensory processing
- Delaware’s TWI plan (est. 2012)
- 50-50 model following WLIP

Aim

- Examine the fidelity of DE’s TWI programs following their guiding WLIP model and nine guidelines.

Procedures

- 1 school
  - 2 classrooms
    - 1st & 2nd grade
- Case study includes:
  - Spanish classroom observations, 60 min/classroom
  - Interviews with Spanish classroom teachers

9 Guidelines

1. Students must participate for at least six years
2. There is a balanced ratio of speakers in each language
3. A separation of languages for instructional purposes (do not integrate language during instructional time)
4. Emphasis on minority language in early grades
5. Core academics are emphasized as well as instructional excellence
6. Parents maintain a positive relationship with the program
7. Effective leadership and support by administrators and instructors
8. A positive school environment composed of an additive bilingual environment
9. High-quality instructional personnel and staff training

Observations

- Program established in district in 2015. The school will add a grade as each class progresses with the $10,000 contributed to start a new grade.
- Composed, primarily, of English speakers and Spanish as second language. Spanish dominant speakers tend to be enrolled in other programs (ESL).
- Both classes follow 50-50 model
  - All instruction in Spanish
  - Teachers spoke in English 1x
  - Students responded in English:
    - 3x in 1st grade classroom
    - 2x in 2nd grade classroom
  - Teachers reminded students to speak Spanish 2x in each class
- Children begin TWI education in Kindergarten
- Unlikely to be enrolled after 1st grade
- Follow DE curriculum
- Teachers report TWI program increases maturity
- Teachers translate material to Spanish
- Lack of Spanish materials
- Parents create materials or organize PTA events
- Daily communication with parents
- Parents unable to help unless they speak Spanish
- One teacher & one teachers aid
- Offer further 1:1 support
- Equal split with 50-50 model
- Encourages additive bilingualism
- Opportunities for more support
  - Divided into groups in classroom
  - Teacher & aid
- Native Spanish teachers
- DE provides professional TWI training

Summary & Recommendations

- Overall, the program meets most guidelines established by Lara-Alecio et al. (2004) and WLIP model created by Jack Markell (2012).
- Recommendations:
  - Balanced ratio of native speakers of each language.
  - Materials in Spanish supplied for teachers that follow the curriculum.
  - More clear reporting of data outcomes for the student’s Spanish/English language abilities by the school district.

References