

Introduction

In the 1974 landmark case *Lau v. Nichols*, the Supreme Court ruled that the government has an additional responsibility to assist English-learning students above and beyond expectations for traditional students. For the justices, “There [was] no equality of treatment, merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.” In this statement, the writers of the majority opinion argue for the principle of vertical equity. Unlike horizontal equity where all of our nation’s children are treated the same including receiving the same amount of funding, vertical equity requires that all students have a fair and equal opportunity to succeed even if that means additional funding. The decision essentially gave the same civil rights to English Language Learners as it does to students with physical and mental disabilities. As the number of minorities in this country continues to grow, which presumably will lead to more children in need of English language assistance, our school systems have an increased obligation to uphold the principles of *Lau v. Nichols*.

English Language Ability and Poverty: A Philosophical Discussion

The United States has an obligation to provide the best education possible for English Language Learner (ELL) children for a number of moral and economic reasons. From a philosophical perspective, this paper uses Amartya Sen’s definition of poverty as a lack of capability and will show how, in the US, students who do not speak English inherently lack the capability necessary to achieve personal agency and freedom of choice for their own lives.¹ In the US, the principle of “equality of opportunity” has been central to the nation’s values going all the way back to the Declaration of Independence and restated in the Fourteenth Amendment. However, equality of opportunity cannot just mean giving every child the same resources or

¹ Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 40.

“primary goods” because people are born with differing levels of capability and resources. In order for all children to have the opportunity to achieve freedom of choice and full capability, the government must provide a varying amount of resources to individual children.

In order to justify this unequal amount of resources in order to create equality, or the need for vertical equity in the US, we must apply a moral foundation. We can then build on this essential cornerstone with economic reasons for the proper education of English Language Learners. Without a moral foundation, no matter the political restraints involved, any argument for additional resources will fail. In *Just Health*, Norman Daniels, a student of John Rawls and his “justice as fairness” theory, develops his principle of “fair equality of opportunity” to explain the need for an unequal distribution of resources. Although Daniels focuses on health and its repercussions in modern American society, many of his expanded principles can be applied to education, the topic Rawls chose to address in his original work. Like health, education is not a commodity to be bought or sold, and “is of special moral importance because it contributes to the range of opportunities open to us. Therefore, the socially controllable factors that promote [education]...derive special importance from their contribution to protecting opportunities.”² The quality and availability of education, and in the context of this paper specifically English education, is like health in that it can either inhibit or expand a person’s opportunities to succeed. Yet why must we define education and health within a special moral context? Daniels asserts that society requires a special moral foundation for its decisions in order to view all of its members as worthy of self-respect:

Principles of justice involve recognition: They establish a public basis for viewing others as worthy of respect...The stronger principles say that society is committed to fair terms of cooperation that do not judge people’s worth solely by the talents and skills they bring

² Norman Daniels, *Just Health* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 21, 54.

to the market; rather, they give people fair conditions under which to develop their capabilities.³

If society were to look at an ELL solely under the context of his marketable talents and skills, society would surely cast him off without a second thought. However, by establishing a moral context for the treatment of ELLs, society can justify their education as enhancing their capabilities so that they may develop their full capabilities.

Nevertheless, Daniels does not suggest that the US government spend all of its money on providing healthcare or education because he recognizes that resources are finite. So in a world in which resources are limited, how do we determine where best to invest? To answer this question, Daniels uses Rawls's "difference principle." Due to the natural lottery, people are inherently born with varying skills and capabilities. Rawls and Daniels propose that society can justifiably grant these inequalities if and only if they help the poorest lot: "Rather than supporting a 'trickle down' of gains from inequality, the difference principle softens the effects of the social and natural lotteries by requiring a maximal flow downward."⁴ For example, a college that employs some kind of affirmative action towards low-income students may not be treating all students equally, but this kind of inequality is okay because it helps those who are worst off. Similarly, providing an unequal number of resources for ELL students is justifiable because these students generally represent the poorest lot who will require additional funds in order to achieve the same capability as their English-speaking peers. However, by recognizing the reality of scarce resources, we also establish the need for the most cost-effective method possible of capability-building in order to provide the maximum support to this poorest lot. In combination with the idea of "fair equality of opportunity," the difference principle can serve as a proper justification for special education for ELLs but it requires that the government employ

³ Daniels, 56.

⁴ Ibid., 53.

the best method available to build this population's capabilities while still saving resources for other disadvantaged groups.

Daniels supports Rawls's difference principle by expounding on Rawls's own idea of "fair equality of opportunity." Like the difference principle, fair equality of opportunity allows for natural inequalities among people in the form of social factors that are not distributed equally at birth. However, fair equality of opportunity does require elimination of "certain impediments to opportunity" for all persons, such as the inability to speak English.⁵ For Rawls and Daniels, educational needs qualify as "special needs" because they are unequally distributed and often affected by race and socioeconomic status, or for the purposes of this paper, English-speaking ability.⁶ Fair equality of opportunity establishes the need to compensate for natural differences that the blanket principle of "equality of opportunity" fails to recognize. By upholding this principle, the US educational system has a philosophical basis for providing the most effective English education it can. A colleague of John Rawls, Amartya Sen, can help to further explain this requirement and how English education can be seen as a kind of poverty eradication.

Students who lack the ability to speak English are inherently impoverished because they lack the capability to achieve freedom of choice. To illustrate this principle, Sen uses the example of a pregnant woman: "With the same bundle of primary goods, a pregnant woman or one with infants to look after has much less freedom to pursue her goals than a man not thus encumbered would be able to do."⁷ Here Sen uses a very noncontroversial example to demonstrate his theory that poverty cannot just be determined from income, but from the capability or agency that a human has. In the case of a pregnant woman or a mother of an infant, no matter her income level, she will always need more resources to achieve her full capability

⁵ Ibid., 60.

⁶ Ibid., 60-61.

⁷ Sen, *Inequality Reexamined*, 27.

than a man of the same socioeconomic status. Likewise, years later in *Development as Freedom*, Sen provides an example that relates even more clearly to that of ELLs. In explaining the crucial differences between income poverty and capability poverty, Sen states:

Handicaps, such as age, disability, or illness, reduce one's ability to earn an income. But they also make it harder to convert income into capability, since an older or more disabled or more seriously ill person may need more income (for assistance, for prosthesis, for treatment) to achieve the same functionings...⁸

Like a physically disabled person, an ELL child will need more assistance, monetary or otherwise, in order to achieve the same level of functioning and capability as that of one of his or her native English speaking peers. Sen proffers the pregnant woman instance and that of the disabled man as clear-cut examples, but the same principle applies to English Language Learner children. Like the pregnant mother-to-be as compared to a perfectly healthy man, English Language Learners automatically suffer from poverty, defined as a lack of capability, and will need additional resources in order to overcome this poverty. Sen provides a clearer example of the same principle that the justices in *Lau v. Nichols* upheld.

Nevertheless, without further discussion, English-language ability would seem to be merely a tool towards achieving capability. While, in Sen's words, English-language ability can be valued for "instrumental reasons," society must also appraise its intrinsic worth towards a person's freedom.⁹ For example, a political voice has intrinsic and instrumental value since it creates a feeling of personal control and serves as a tool to achieve other capabilities, like women lobbying for the right to vote a century ago. English language education, if done correctly, can help boost a person's self-esteem and self-confidence in her own abilities by erasing barriers, such as embarrassment and feelings of self-doubt, that often arise in ELLs. By boosting a person's self-esteem, adequate English education can improve an ELL's self-efficacy, allowing

⁸ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999), 88.

⁹ Sen, *Inequality Reexamined*, 41.

her to control her own life.¹⁰ English education therefore has instrumental value, since it can help create other capabilities like social and literacy skills, as well as intrinsic value, since English-speaking ability in itself creates self-esteem.

English Language Education: the Options Available

Lau v. Nichols, above all other court decisions, has driven the bilingual education movement and the controversy surrounding it. However, many researchers, politicians, and school administrators understandably question if bilingual education represents the best method for educating ELL children, especially considering the current high drop-out rates for ELLs in comparison to native English speakers. Supporters of the “English-only” movement, such as the Proposition 227 advocate group “English for the Children,” contend that if the goal is to teach immigrant children English, it only makes sense for the classes to be taught in English and therefore support the Structured English Immersion method (SEI). However, other educators argue that transitional bilingual education (TBE), or the instruction of ELL students in their native language until they are able to succeed in an English classroom, represents the best method for integrating these students into an English-dominated country. TBE supporters argue that it lets the teacher focus on basic literacy in the child’s native tongue before progressing to instruction of another language. Another possible method under the bilingual education umbrella is dual language instruction. Dual language programs include both native English speakers and nonnative English speakers attending the same school and working towards the same goal: bilingualism. This paper examines the pros and cons of TBE, dual-language, and English immersion programs, in order to determine the most cost-effective way to improve an ELL student’s capability and give him a fair opportunity to succeed.

¹⁰ Caroline Head, conversation with author on 7 April 2010.

Examples of the Need for Properly Implemented Bilingual Education

In June 1998, California's voters passed Proposition 227, the English-only initiative for the state's schools, with 61 percent voting in favor of the proposition and 39 percent voting against it.¹¹ The official language of the resolution declared that California's current bilingual education programs were wasting time, money, and resources, ultimately failing California's ELL students:

Whereas the public schools of California currently do a poor job of educating immigrant children, wasting financial resources on costly experimental language programs whose failure over the past two decades is demonstrated by the current high drop-out rates and low English literacy levels of many immigrant children; and ... young immigrant children can easily acquire full fluency in a new language, such as English, if they are heavily exposed to that language in the classroom at an early age.¹²

The initiative had a profound effect on California's schools, due to the high percentage of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the state (1.6 million students in 2005 alone and continually growing), of whom the majority are Latino.¹³ It also significantly affected California's teachers who struggled with improper implementation procedures, including lack of training and time to learn the new required curriculum, though some agreed with the initiative in theory. The Proposition's declaration that bilingual education wastes financial resources cannot be taken lightly and must be considered in light of desired outcomes more than just the fastest and cheapest way to teach English fluency. Some personal anecdotes of their feelings regarding Proposition 227, described in the article "Has California's Passage of Proposition 227 Made a Difference in the Way We Teach?" in interviews taken by the educator researchers, can help to

¹¹ J. Cummins, "Language Interactions in the Classroom: From Coercive to Collaborative Relations of Power," in *Bilingual Education: An Introductory Reader*, ed. Ofelia García and Colin Baker (Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters, 2007), 108.

¹² CA Secretary of State, "Proposition 227: English Language in Public Schools Initiative Statute," <http://primary98.sos.ca.gov/VoterGuide/Propositions/227text.htm>.

¹³ Patricia Gándara and Russell W. Rumberger, "Defining an Adequate Education for English Language Learners," *Education Finance and Policy* Vol. 3, No. 1 (2008): 130.

demonstrate the feelings teachers and students alike experienced with English-only education for ELL students.

Javier was one of the teachers interviewed. Prior to the passage of Proposition 227, he had nine years experience in the classroom: four years as a second-grade TBE teacher and five years as a classroom aide while he put himself through college. For Javier, “Using no Spanish frustrated me. I felt like my hands were tied behind my back. . . . I was forced to alter my teaching techniques (that I know worked!) . . . (The program) works at the beginning but in the long term it doesn’t work.”¹⁴ Javier felt frustration at having to toss out successful lesson plans due to a state mandate; he had no authority in his own classroom and no forum in which to express his opinions. Like Javier, Mario expressed frustration with the lack of teacher preparation after the initiative’s passage: “Proposition 227 was too abrupt. . . . Kids are suffering from it, especially if there are insufficient teachers with the necessary training to help these kids.”¹⁵ Unlike Javier, Mario was a veteran teacher who had been teaching for over thirty years and held a master’s degree. As an immigrant who had come over from Mexico as a child, Mario was a firm believer in transitional bilingual education. He believed it necessary to have a strong literacy background in a child’s native language before he or she could attempt to learn another. Once this background was established, Mario was in favor of phasing the native language out in order to develop English language fluency.

The angriest reply came from Jose. Jose had been teaching for seven years when Proposition 227 was implemented, and he too had a master’s degree. He expresses the need for more time and flexibility to meet the needs of all students: “I do not support Prop 227. I believe all children learn at different rates. Therefore, how can we say that we will only provide them

¹⁴ Anna Arellano-Houchin, Claudia Flamenco, Moisés M. Merlos, and Lorena Segura. “Has California’s Passage of Proposition 227 Made a Difference in the Way We Teach?” *The Urban Review* Vol. 33, No. 3 (2001): 230.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 231.

with a specified amount of Spanish support or instruction? That's ridiculous! By the time students reach the fourth or fifth grade they are expected to function without any primary language support."¹⁶ Jose even mentions an incident where someone from the district entered his classroom in order to observe his teaching and reprimanded him for having Spanish posters on the wall.¹⁷ In Jose's opinion, this state mandate seems to have destroyed any potential teacher autonomy in the classroom.

In addition to the outspoken teachers against Proposition 227, some of the teachers interviewed indicated support for the English-only campaign and only desired more time and training for proper implementation. Gloria had been a teacher for about five years before the passage of Proposition 227, two of which were spent in a bilingual classroom. When the interview was taken, she had already spent three years in a structured English immersion (SEI) classroom. Gloria spoke in favor of English-only education: "English is better for our students. Our ultimate goal is for them to be fluent English speakers... [Our students] haven't been impacted. On the contrary, they are doing the transition faster."¹⁸ Unlike the other teachers and the authors of the article, Gloria does not think the SEI methods throw students into a "sink-or-swim" situation. She is not alone. Like Gloria, Gina had been teaching for six years when Proposition 227 passed. A former ELL student herself, she taught in a bilingual classroom until 1998 and then transitioned into an SEI classroom. Gina emphatically states her support of English-only education: "I believe bilingual education only delays students' ability to become fluent English speakers."¹⁹ The authors write off Gina and Gloria's reaction to ignorance about the benefits of bilingual education, which seems unfair especially since the study's sample may

¹⁶ Ibid., 232.

¹⁷ Ibid., 231.

¹⁸ Ibid., 233.

¹⁹ Ibid.

be skewed and certainly was not random. Nevertheless, all of these opinions together demonstrate the significant controversy surrounding the education of ELLs and how best to do it. This controversy seems to erupt over the disagreement about the desired outcome from ELL education.

Although the authors of this article did not interview any of the children affected by Proposition 227, one can imagine the confusion that ELL children must have felt as well. After months of speaking with their teachers in Spanish and English, turning off that support system would have led to feelings of abandonment on their part, emphasizing the need for careful implementation of any new ELL program. However, the question remains whether or not Proposition 227 achieved its objective, and if it did, whether that objective was the best one for an ELL child's overall capability development. As of yet, no studies have been published analyzing the effects of Proposition 227 on children's overall development. Some anecdotal evidence can help to illustrate the challenges that ELL children face in mainstream education. At a small Head Start program in rural Virginia, there are three four-year-old boys who are the only Spanish speakers in a classroom of 20 students. They came to school knowing no English at all. The two teachers, who do not speak a word of Spanish, try to work with them by using Spanish-speaking volunteers from the nearby college and even by reaching for an old Spanish dictionary at times to try to communicate with these special students. For the majority of the time, however, these three boys, Juan, Carlos, and Jesus, are left on their own to fend for themselves in a mainstream class, making this situation a good example of complete English immersion with very little native language support.²⁰

²⁰ Based on the author's own experiences from 2009 to 2010. Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the students.

Juan has been in the program for two years and knows more conversational English than his peers, though he seems to lack any academic English as he struggles to respond to simple questions the teachers ask, such as “Can you name this pattern?” Carlos has a lot of energy and participates in all the dancing and movement class exercises, but when a teacher invites him to speak or even sing, he often shies away. Yet Jesus is the one who seems to suffer the most from the lack of communication with his teachers. A very shy and quiet boy naturally, Jesus has become so introverted that he struggles to pick up on any verbal cues from the teachers and must always look to his two friends for support. However, Jesus seems genuinely intelligent with real potential if only he could receive the support necessary for his success. When I worked with him on a number of occasions, using Spanish where appropriate, he answered questions about the ABCs and other topics better than either of his friends. Even Juan and Carlos, who failed a conversational test in English, did perfectly fine speaking to each other and me in Spanish. In Spanish, their development seems on-track if a bit slow due to inadequate interactions with peers and teachers. Juan and Carlos do slowly seem to be learning English and pick up on social cues very well (Jesus struggles with both). However, their inability to write letters or recognize the alphabet will put all three of them at an immediate disadvantage when they enter kindergarten.

When ELL students enter kindergarten already behind their English-speaking peers, they frequently will develop an inferiority complex about their intellectual ability. Too often, teachers and school officials inappropriately see ELL children as slow or not smart enough to keep up with the rest of the class. As they are treated this way, the children internalize these beliefs and begin to think that they really are lacking; as such, the often improper diagnosis becomes self-fulfilling. A 1998 study by Gottfried, et al. examined the intrinsic motivation in students and how environment can play a significant role. The authors determined that home environment and

parental involvement can adversely or positively affect a student's intrinsic motivation to succeed.²¹ Likewise, an unsupportive classroom environment could also inhibit development of inner motivation. Jesus, Juan, and Carlos will probably develop enough conversational English by third or fourth grade to get by, but they will probably never feel academically successful or achieve their full potentials. Their stories show the need for a solution to this rapidly growing problem. Before even beginning to argue for one instructional method over another; however, we must define a clear objective for the education of English Language Learners.

Desired Outcomes and Intended Benefits: The Merits of Cost-Benefit Analysis

Many studies seem to declare a program effective or ineffective without much thought to the objective of the programs themselves. If the end-goal is to have students learn English as quickly as possible, a successful program will starkly contrast with one whose ultimate objective is providing its ELL students with enough self-esteem and confidence to use English for the rest of their lives. Although long-term propositions are increasingly difficult in a strapped financial climate with politicians who are, at best, elected every six years, our schools must consider what is best for their ELL students over time. This is not to say that cost-benefit analysis does not have merit, but rather that potential benefits above and beyond what is cheapest and quickest in the short term must take precedence. Possible long-term measurable benefits of improved education for ELLs include increased high school graduation rates and decreased grade retention. Yet there are other less tangible benefits that must also be considered, such as improved self-esteem, self-confidence in English speaking abilities, and positive relationships with native English-speaking peers. With careful consideration of all of these benefits, an appropriate cost-benefit analysis can be applied.

²¹ Adele Eskeles Gottfried, James S. Fleming, and Allen W. Gottfried, "Role of Cognitively Stimulating Home Environment in Children's Academic Intrinsic Motivation: A Longitudinal Study," *Child Development* Vol. 69, No. 5 (October 1998): 1456.

Although many outside the economic or business world can be quick to dismiss cost-benefit analysis, it can be a very useful tool in order to determine how to most efficiently allocate our educational system's limited resources. Colloquially, cost-benefit analysis can help our schools "get the most bang for their buck." Nevertheless, cost-benefit analysis does not mean that the cheapest solution is the best. On the contrary, proper CBA looks at all benefits, in the short- and long-term, like those proposed above. This form of CBA can be very hard to calculate, however, due to the difficulty of measuring many of the benefits and the time and resources needed to complete such an in-depth study. Although exact numbers may be difficult to determine, we can consider the estimated costs against the expected benefits.

The desired outcome is developed full capability and freedom of choice fostered within the realm of limited resources and fair equality of opportunity for ELL children. By developing full capability, including the self-esteem necessary to use their English ability, immigrant children will be able to break free of the isolation of many immigrant communities that even affects second- and third-generation children. In this sense, adequate English education will provide both instrumental and intrinsic value for its benefactors. In order to determine the full value, complete cost-benefit analysis will have to measure self-esteem creation. Though challenging, measuring self-esteem creation is not an impossible task. The economist Art Goldsmith among others has developed a method for measuring self-esteem, despite its lack of monetary value, through self-reported data before and after a program. Yet self-esteem begins to form at such a young age that asking a kindergartener to self-report data seems unrealistic. Instead, a methodologically sound study will have to employ a control group. Researchers should observe four different sets of students in their environment beginning in kindergarten and ending at the end of elementary school in order to determine their self-esteem levels (by age eleven,

ELL students should be able to assist in reporting their own self-esteem levels). By comparing four groups over time, including a control group of ELLs in mainstream education, a group of ELLs in an English immersion classroom, a group of ELLs in a dual-language classroom, and a group of ELLs in transitional bilingual education, the study will be able to determine the best method for improving an ELL student's self-esteem and confidence in his own English language ability thereby contributing to the creation of capability. Once self-esteem is measured, we will have a better idea of which method best creates the intangible benefits of an adequate English education towards the development of human capability and can then adjust any programs based on the data.

Literature Review

Although this study of self-esteem development has yet to be completed, we can estimate many of these benefits. The literature review of the different forms of education shows support for dual-language programs over any others with capability development as the most important objective. In Lindholm-Leary and Block's article, "Achievement in Predominantly Low-SES/Hispanic Dual Language Schools," the authors describe their own study to measure the effectiveness of a 90:10 dual-language program in California. A 90:10 program involves 90 percent Spanish instruction in kindergarten, 80 percent in first grade, and so on until it reaches a fifty-fifty equilibrium between English and Spanish. In dual language programs, ELLs and native English speakers are both encouraged to participate as peer interaction will help both populations develop bilingualism.²² Their study included 659 Hispanic students from four schools in three separate California school districts. Each of the four schools had a minimum of 66 percent low-

²² María E. Torres-Guzman, "Dual Language Programs: Key Features and Results," in *Bilingual Education: An Introductory Reader*, ed. Ofelia García and Colin Baker (Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters, 2007): 50.

SES and 80 percent Hispanic students.²³ The authors used a control group of students at similar schools not enrolled in a dual-language program, making this study methodologically preferable.

By looking at student achievement scores on California's state tests, they determined that, by fifth grade, the dual-language participants had caught up to the statewide passage rate of 29 percent for all Hispanics; a small achievement, but an achievement nonetheless.²⁴ Although this study does not show an end to the achievement gap between native and nonnative students, it does help. In their conclusion, the authors state: "Data from both studies are consistent in showing that Hispanic students participating in a dual language program in segregated settings of predominantly low SES/ Hispanic schools achieve comparably or significantly higher than their mainstream peers in tests of English reading/language arts and mathematics."²⁵ Additionally, although some parents of native English speaking students expressed concern that their students would fall behind other native English speakers in their initial three years of education, the study showed that participation in a dual-language program was actually beneficial to these students.²⁶

Although the authors warn that their results should not be applied to all dual-language programs, especially those with different components from their own, they effectively demonstrate the potential benefits of a well-orchestrated dual-language programs. One criticism of this study is that the authors do not address the issue of costs related with the dual-language programs, though we can assume they were not prohibitive since these programs were already under way in the school systems.

²³ Lindholm-Leary, Katherine and Nicholas Block. "Achievement in Predominantly Low-SES/Hispanic Dual-Language Schools." *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* Vol. 13, No. 1 (January 2010): 48.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

In sharp contrast to the methods of the Lindholm-Leary and Block study, a 1996 article written by Rossell and Baker and entitled, “The Educational Effectiveness of Bilingual Education,” performs a meta-analysis of 72 unique studies of bilingual education. Overall, the authors determine that bilingual education is not a cost-effective way to instruct ELLs. While the authors never explicitly state their objective for ELLs, a key critique of their study, they seem to place the most emphasis on how ELLs can learn English the fastest way possible and not any other long-term outcomes. They seem to ignore the philosophical reasons for English education, focusing merely on the perceived economic outcomes or worse, only the development of a peer conversation-worthy English-speaking ability. Furthermore, their meta-analysis seems to be comparing apples to oranges, as many of the studies they use have very different variables and objectives. Their study is a good example of the argument for strictly English immersion education. In their own words, they describe the theory behind Proposition 227: “If children are deficient in English, they should have more, rather than the same amount or less, English language instruction.”²⁷ Yet this “sink-or-swim” attitude has left many children to sink; though Proposition 227 asserted that “experimental” bilingual programs were the reason for ELLs’ failure, even before its passage, 70 percent of all California’s ELLs were either in an English-only program or in mainstream classes without any specialized attention.²⁸ This statistic seems to suggest that many ELLs were failing or dropping out due to inadequate preparation for the real world or a lack of successful bilingual programs. Nevertheless, the authors also highlight the need for additional research, probably the authors’ biggest complaint. Since the study was published in 1996, two years before Proposition 227, much more research has been completed since, but the need for random-assignment research is still high.

²⁷ Christine H. Rossell and Keith Baker. “The Educational Effectiveness of Bilingual Education.” *Research in the Teaching of English* Vol. 30, No. 1 (Feb. 1996): 42.

²⁸ Cummins, 109.

Despite the flaws inherent in this study by Rossell and Baker, Baker has performed other research that holds more weight. A leading researcher in the field of structured English immersion (SEI) education along with J. David Ramirez, Baker argues that SEI is the best instruction method for ELLs since it allows teachers to maximize the time spent teaching English while still allowing for some limited instruction in the native language as necessary. Baker uses Ramirez's national longitudinal study begun in 1985 to define SEI, as well as a number of other studies conducted about Texas's bilingual education and Canada's immersion programs to show its effectiveness.²⁹ Although he states that Canada's programs are a good example of implementable SEI programs in the US, this claim seems weak due to the highly diverse political atmosphere in Quebec promoting the study of French and English versus that in the US often decrying the use of Spanish at all. In another twelve-year study of an SEI program in El Paso, Texas, which limited native language instruction to thirty minutes per day, the SEI students scored higher than their TBE counterparts on all state tests for eleven of the twelve years.³⁰

Along with other evidence, Baker concludes that "the only valid information known about LEP [limited English proficiency] students is that they need help with English. Therefore, teaching and helping them in English is indisputably correct."³¹ He proffers that even with one year in an intensive SEI program, such as one he studied in Seattle; an LEP student can enter a mainstream classroom

Baker's evidence concerning a Seattle school system's SEI program shows only that LEP students in this program gained about twice as many NCE (Normal Curve Equivalents) as compared to LEP students who received no help at all and entered a mainstream classroom right

²⁹ J. David Ramirez, "Comparing Structured English Immersion and Bilingual Education: First-Year Results of a National Study," *American Journal of Education*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (November 1986): 122-148.

³⁰ Keith Baker, "Structured English Immersion: Breakthrough in Teaching Limited-English-Proficient Students," *The Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 80, No. 3 (November 1998): 201.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 203.

away. However, Baker does not offer a comparison group of students in a TBE program, which makes his study not very useful. It would seem other studies' recommendations that students spend a minimum of three years in an SEI program should still be followed in implementation of an SEI program. Most importantly, Baker focuses on English oral proficiency and, to some degree, relative success in mainstream education after program exit to determine success. He does not take into account other factors, such as self-esteem creation or other long-term factors like graduation or employment rates. A comprehensive analysis of any programs for ELLs must include more than English fluency alone.

Baker, a staunch advocate of Proposition 227, co-wrote a paper in 1992 with Susan Alexander that argues against transitional bilingual education's positive effect on self-esteem. Again using a meta-analysis of a number of different studies measuring self-esteem created through bilingual education, Baker and Alexander try to show that TBE does not affect self-esteem at all. According to them, even those studies that show a positive effect are not methodologically sound since the authors cannot be sure that positive self-esteem is more than a corollary to any English education or, in their words, "the chicken-and-the-egg problem."³² Furthermore, Alexander and Baker claim that they concluded their own study of more than 1,000 students in bilingual education programs that their self-esteem was actually lower than their mainstream ELL peers due to a feeling of alienation, possibly similar to that of students in special education programs. While the authors fail to define their method for measuring self-esteem, they do make an interesting point. Especially in schools where ELLs are in the minority, which would make this issue redundant in a school with a very high ELL population, separation from their native English speaking peers, even into a positive TBE environment, could have

³² Susan Alexander and Keith Baker, "Some Ethical Issues in Applied Social Psychology: The Case of Bilingual Education and Self-Esteem," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* Vol. 22, No. 22 (1992): 1751.

negative long-term social effects. A comprehensive program that seeks to help ELLs gain conversational and academic fluency in English as well as bolster their self-esteem and self-confidence, leading to higher capability, must not alienate them from their peers.

A case study of a specific program of a school in New York that uses a dual-language program can provide an excellent model for an effective way to instruct ELLs with all the previously stated long-term goals in mind. This school, PS 84, employs an “alternate ten-day model,” in which two teachers team teach a grade alternating between English and Spanish so that by the end of the ten day period, all students will have received equal amounts of English and Spanish education. The elementary school is 53 percent Hispanic, though the dual language program is open to Hispanic and non-Hispanic children. The most important part of the model is strict separation between the two languages; although the teachers are bilingual, they can only speak in their target language. For example, if a first grade student asks his Spanish-speaking teacher, “What does this mean?” then the teacher must still answer him in Spanish. Principal Morison, the author of the article, emphasizes the need for a content area focus versus directly teaching the language: “...children learn language as a by-product, through use. The primary aim of the dual language program is academic growth...Children are not given a differentiated curriculum based on language dominance.”³³ Morison describes the key features of the dual language program, including this content focus, and he has successful results to back up his claims. Although neighborhood parents were initially skeptical to enroll their children in the program, the success of the first students allowed the program to grow from seven to 28 classrooms in only five years, complete with a waiting list. Despite the relative age of the article,

³³ Sidney H. Morison, “A Spanish-English Dual-Language Program in New York City.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 508 (Mar. 1990): 163.

written in 1991, and the lack of randomized results, Morison offers a solid example of a successful dual language program from which to model.

Recommendations

Based on both the already existing research and the intended outcomes, two recommendations emerge, one for a state or district with a high percentage of ELL students and another for low percentage ELL districts. For the former, the dual-language program at PS 184 can serve as a model. With at least one dual-language elementary school in each district, parents of both native and ELL students could enroll their children into the program using a magnet school random lottery design for admissions, helping to dispel any anger from parents who may feel their child is being unfairly treated by being either forced into or not allowed to attend the school. Realistically speaking as well, the program would be more popular politically if it were open to both native English speakers and ELLs, since it would not seem like biased treatment towards ELLs. In order to achieve many of these goals, a publicity campaign would have to be enacted in order to teach families in the area about the benefits of a dual-language program, such as those offered in the Lindholm-Leary and Block article, as well as answer any questions that may arise. After its implementation, furthermore, every five years a study should be conducted to measure the effectiveness of the program based on the intended outcomes delineated earlier.

The program would work like this: while there would be some flexibility in kindergarten or a child's first year in the program, after that there would be a very strict separation between Spanish and English instruction. Two teachers for each grade (or a multiple of two) would team teach and be responsible for two classes of students who would rotate on a ten-day schedule (Monday, Wednesday, Friday in Spanish; Tuesday, Thursday in English and vice versa the next week). Each class would be a mixture of native English speaking and ELL students. One teacher

would speak and teach only in English and the other only in Spanish, but the rules would not be as strict for the children. For example, a student could ask a question in the other language, but would always be answered in that classroom's language. After exiting elementary school and entering a mainstream program, the students would have to have tutoring available to them to ensure a positive transition.

This program would help both Spanish-speaking and English-speaking students gain fluency in the other language. Most importantly, it would set the two groups up as equals, since one-half of the class would struggle one day and the other half the next. They would have to work together in order to fully understand the lessons. The ELL students would not be separated from their peers and therefore would not develop a sense of inferiority that could have a permanent negative impact on their self-esteem. The program would not be cheap, as it would require well-trained bilingual teachers as well as the money for start-up costs. However, in the long-term, the investment should more than pay-off.

For districts with a small percentage of ELL students, investing in a dual-language program would not be practical and the costs would likely outweigh the benefits. In these circumstances, structured English education would have to do as the best possible method for working with and engaging ELL students. Although transitional bilingual education has shown to be effective in helping students gain English fluency, in all likelihood smaller schools would not have the funds to pay for more than one full-time bilingual teacher. If this teacher could spend even one hour a day of instruction with each classroom with ELL students, he could have a positive impact.

When implementing any new program to help English Language Learners, two key concerns must be kept in mind. First, putting a new program into practice requires time, training,

sufficient resources, and a certain amount of flexibility for each district to mold the program to its unique demographic needs. Even the best designed program, if executed improperly, can become a disappointment in practice. Second, and most important, any program must have equal capability development for English Language Learners as its over-arching goal. We must balance the reality of limited resources available with the goal of maximizing fair equality of opportunity for English Language Learners in the United States.

Conclusion

The need for adequate instruction of English Language Learners increases every day. While this issue is of economic consequence due to the performance of ELLs in the job market, this paper has focused on the moral necessity of cost-effective education for ELLs. Cost-benefit analysis must consider all the potential benefits of an educational program, such as improved self-esteem and positive interactions with native speaking peers, in addition to academic English fluency. In order to improve ELLs' capability and offer them a fair and equal opportunity to succeed in life, the state must provide these students with additional resources necessary for achievement. Through an analysis of current research, this paper has argued that in areas with a high concentration of ELLs, well-implemented dual-language programs are the best way to achieve our stated objectives. As we continue into the next decade, however, the most essential take away from this analysis is the need for methodologically sound, longitudinal studies that measure all costs and benefits associated with the education of English Language Learners. Without this kind of research, we are just guessing at the best way to help our nation's children. When it comes to helping our children escape poverty and achieve their full capability, a guessing game just will not do.

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