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Closing the Achievement Gap: The Promise of Dual Language Programs for English Language Learners

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CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP: THE PROMISE OF DUAL LANGUAGE
PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

A Thesis Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Designation
University Honors

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Abstract

With an academic achievement gap formed between English Language Learners (ELL) and English-dominant students in the United States, this thesis examines the literature on the successes and failures of different types of bilingual educational programs in order to determine which provide students with the highest levels of academic achievement and affective benefits in an effort to alleviate the differences between the majority and minority language status is education. It also investigates the research on effective practice within these bilingual educational programs, focusing on what administrators and teachers can do in order to foster the highest levels of success within their schools. In accordance with the literature reviewed, a dual language program model is selected as being the most academically and affectively successful. The paper then goes on to provide a program model, based on the foundations of the dual language model, which includes recommendations related to guidelines for implementation and practices for teachers and administrators. The paper then concludes with suggestions for future research in the area of bilingual education for ELL students.

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Jocelyn Strong

Introduction

With the number of immigrant and non-English speaking students steadily increasing within the United States in recent years, the debate over the education of English Language Learners (ELLs) has become increasingly relevant. According to The National Center for Education Statistics (2009) the number of non-English speaking children aged 5-17 increased from 4.7 to 11.2 million between 1980 and 2009. With a sharp increase of this nature, the need for effective programs that would meet the needs of ELLs has become progressively more important. As is often true of most educational agendas, disagreements and conflicts over instructional plans for English language learners have developed between educational professionals and researchers, due to a failure to close the achievement gap that has been formed between ELL and English-dominant students. Communities have implemented different types of programs in order to try to meet their students' needs. In schools that have a number of different languages spoken by the children other than English, English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are the most cost-effective and logical solution. However, in communities where there are a large number of students speaking the same language other than English, bilingual education has become a more popular option for addressing English language learning.

This idea of bilingual program models that use the learner's native language as a tool for learning has become a large part of the English language learning debate and is the primary focus of this paper. Although there has been much debate over the most effective bilingual programs, one type, called the transitional model, has become the most prevalent within schools in the United States (Estrada, Gómez, & Ruiz-Escalante, 2009). However, it is under the currently predominant transitional model for bilingual education that the academic achievement gap between ELL and English-dominant students has been formed. In Iowa, a state that is home to a

wide range of different language minority groups, ESL programs are usually implemented. These programs are not bilingual, as they do not use the native language of students as a tool for instruction. This is a more feasible option for schools in these types of communities, because teaching using the native language of all of the language minority groups would be nearly an impossibility. However, according to a report by the Iowa Department of Education (2011) ELLs have been performing significantly lower than their peers. In the last year, only 50.4% of fifth grade ELL students tested proficient in reading and 51.6% in mathematics, while 84.1% of English-dominant, white children tested proficient in reading and 84.0% in mathematics.

Similar deficits between ELLs and English-dominant students were found in the report cards of other states with high levels of non-English speaking students, such as Texas and California (Texas Education Agency, 2011; California Department of Education, 2011). In these states, transitional bilingual programs have more traditionally been implemented. This means that students within these school districts were initially allowed to use their primary language in the classroom as a tool, but were eventually transitioned into the mainstream classroom in which English was the only means of instruction. The existence of such a gap in these types of programs that do not foster the long-term maintenance of the primary language for ELL students, such as the transitional and ESL models, brings forth an interesting question. Are there other less prevalent bilingual programs that are more effective for ELL students? This thesis seeks to examine the academic successes of different bilingual programs, as well as look at effective instructional and administrative practices that can be employed within these programs, in an effort to create recommendations for a program model that can help to close this gap between ELL and English-dominant students.

In the process of writing this thesis, I reviewed literature on different bilingual educational program models including instructional as well as administrative practices. My investigation focused on the following research questions:

- 1.) What bilingual educational program model yields the most positive academic and affective (emotional) results for ELL students?
- 2.) What instructional and administrative practices lead to success within these program models?

This research involved an extensive review of literature related to the successes and failures of different bilingual program models. More specifically, I defined the sort of *success* that I was searching for as both *academic* and *affective*. For the purpose of this thesis, academic success is defined by academic achievement, while affective success is defined by high levels of emotional satisfaction. Studies on academic success involved findings related to academic achievement as measured by standardized tests. Measures of affective success relied more on interviews and surveys completed by students, parents, and staff that measured levels of motivation, confidence, and attitudes towards the program. My investigation also included looking at studies that examined which methodologies and instructional practices used within the ELL classrooms were most successful, as well as discerning which administrative procedures work best in implementing and maintaining a successful bilingual program.

Using the information from this extensive review of the literature, the thesis concludes with a synthesis of the research and the introduction of an original comprehensive program for administrators, school districts, and teachers who wish to implement an effective educational program backed by research for ELL students. These recommendations include information

about the specific model that the program will follow as well as guidelines related to instruction for teachers and to implementation and maintenance for administrators and school districts. I will refer school districts and communities that have one major language minority group, such as Texas and California, to an additive, bilingual program model. However, for communities with many different minority language groups, such as Iowa, I will suggest a more practical option, such as an English as a Second Language program. Ultimately, the goal is for these programs and recommendations to fill the void and close the academic achievement gap that the currently predominant program has created.

Literature Review

Background

Before discussing the literature on bilingual educational programs, it is necessary to develop some background information on the topic. Although the term *bilingual education* is multi-faceted, it can simply be defined as an instructional approach that incorporates the student's native language to make instruction more meaningful (López & Tashakkori, 2006). Because the concept of bilingual education is so broad and encompasses a number of different program types, it is important to distinguish the many differences between these varieties, because it is these very differences in methodology and instruction that create the divide among professionals in the field of education.

Soltero (2004) identified six main types of programs that are available for second language learners in the United States. These program types are immersion, structured English immersion, transitional, maintenance, ESL, and submersion. Although these six types of programs are all distinct, Soltero points out that they fall within two paradigms: additive and

subtractive models. These two categories relate to how much and for how long the program uses the first language of the child as a supportive resource for the acquisition of the first language.

Put in simplest terms, additive programs are those that provide a substantial amount of support for the student in maintaining their native language while acquiring an additional language (Oregon Department of Education, 2007). The program types that are additive in nature are maintenance and immersion programs. Maintenance programs focus on scaffolding, or providing specialized support for students as they acquire the second language and continue developing their first language by initially providing a large amount of instruction in the first language and gradually decreasing this amount as the student grows. Immersion programs, also known as dual language or two-way immersion programs, integrate non-native and native English speaking students into one classroom with the common goal of further developing their first language while acquiring a second language. In this type of program, both groups of student are able to use the other as a resource to help support the development of the second language. In immersion programs, both languages are used for a certain pre-determined amount of instruction in order to fully immerse students in both languages, helping them to not only maintain their native language, but to also acquire a second language. This differs from a maintenance program in that two different language groups are taught together and learn to read, write, and speak in the two languages.

In contrast, subtractive programs seek to develop the second language with the ultimate goal of abandoning the first (Soltero, 2004). The program models that fall within this category are ESL, structured English immersion, and transitional programs. ESL programs are very prevalent in US schools with a high number of ELLs and are usually pull-out services in which students are separated from the mainstream classroom and taught basics of the linguistic system

of the second language. These programs, as with all subtractive programs, do not support the maintenance of the first language. Structured English immersion programs (different than additive immersion programs), focus on second language acquisition and provide students with virtually no native language support and only a small amount of ESL assistance, which usually occurs during pull-out classes (Soltero, 2004). Lastly, transitional programs initially provide students with a significantly higher amount of support in the first language than a structured English immersion program, but with the eventual goal of transitioning students into the mainstream classroom in which they will no longer be allowed to use their first language.

Submersion, also commonly called sink or swim, is discussed separately from the rest of the program types because it is not unanimously accepted to be a program model at all (Soltero, 2004). With submersion, the students are put into a classroom in which English is the only language of instruction. This is often the only option in schools with no teachers or administrators that are trained to teach non-native English speakers and that do not have the resources to provide an ESL program. This model is, of course, not considered bilingual because it does not use the first language of the student as a resource for *any* amount of time.

It should be noted that this thesis focuses solely on *bilingual education* programs. That is to say that the research reviewed was that which pertained to programs that used the native language of ELL students as a tool for at least some period of time. However, it is known that these programs are not always realistic possibilities for certain schools. In communities in which there are more than one language minority groups, it becomes difficult to incorporate *all* students' native languages. These diverse communities pose a unique issue in which resources, meaning qualified bilingual teachers and supplementary classroom materials, become difficult to obtain for ELL students. In this case, districts more commonly use less additive, non-bilingual

programs, such as structured English immersion or ESL models, as the more feasible option. These particular cases are not included in the research focus of this thesis.

Academic Benefits

Research conducted to determine the best program model for bilingual education is vast. However, whether this research has truly been considered in an effort to implement the most effective programs in schools is still up for debate. As mentioned previously, the most prevalent type of bilingual education in U.S. schools is based on a transitional model. However, an overwhelming amount of the literature seems to favor a program centered on the ideals an *additive* program; more specifically, an immersion, or dual language, model. Furthermore, studies performed in a range of different program types and grade levels have determined that dual language programs yield higher levels of overall academic achievement, as well as academic gains in language development and learning in different content areas. These studies will be discussed in the following section.

Overall academic benefits. Many researchers of bilingual educational program models have found that students in dual language programs are equally or more successful than their peers in other types of programs for second language learners. A study performed in a school district in Texas that had adopted a program that follows the Gómez and Gómez model, a form of dual-language program model (Gómez, 2006) found that students who participated in this program for at least three years performed at high levels on statewide assessments. Ninety-four percent of fifth graders that studied within the program met the reading standard on the Texas statewide assessment, while only 73% of all 5th grade students in the district reached the same level. The results were comparable on the assessment for mathematics. Similarly, in another

study of a dual language program in Texas (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008) results from a state-wide standardized test indicated that students progressed in the areas of reading, mathematics, and science more than their peers district- and state-wide. Not only are students in these successful dual language programs performing above average on measures of language, but they are proving to flourish in all content areas. This means that students within these programs are developing the language, and yet are not losing out on learning important academic content.

Studies in other states with high levels of ELL students have yielded similar results. Krashen and Biber (1988) surveyed several programs that were serving the needs of second language learners in California and found that students in well-designed additive bilingual programs not only outperformed comparison students in different programs, but also met local and state standards of achievement. Comparable outcomes were described in a report of the research on bilingual education programs by Thomas and Collier (2002), who determined that, after 4-7 years in a dual language program, bilingual students outperformed monolingual students in academic achievement in all subject areas. A number of other reports have come to the same conclusion: that an immersion/dual-language education increases students' academic competencies (Lindholm-Leary, 2005; Collier & Thomas, 2004; Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2001). Overall, it seems that programs that foster the maintenance of students' native language are not detrimental to their progress in language development and other academic areas. On the contrary, students prove to be just as successful, if not more, in an additive environment.

Academic success in language. Many researchers have studied the academic successes of students in dual language programs specifically in the area of language and language skills. These studies have not only examined success in the second language, but also that in the first language. In one study performed by Collier and Thomas (2004), ELLs in 1st-5th grade who

participated in dual language programs significantly outscored ELLs in transitional and developmental, or one-way immersion, programs on measures of English achievement. Students in another dual language program studied by López and Tashakkori (2006) scored higher than students in the comparison transitional program on measures of Spanish, their first language. Gándara (1997) also concluded that immigrant students who continued to study their first language academically outperformed immigrant students who had not maintained their first language. It seems to be the fear of many opponents of additive bilingual programs that the continued practice and maintenance of the first language will somehow take away from the successful acquisition of English. However, this research seems to only further prove that programs that support the maintenance of the first language are not only able foster success in the acquisition of English, but also in the continuing development of the first language. It seems that the student *can* have it both ways.

A review of the research on dual-language programs performed by Lindholm-Leary (2005) also detailed the success of this program model in the area of language proficiency. According to the report, 5th and 6th grade students who had attended a two-way bilingual program since kindergarten or first grade had become fully proficient in both of the languages. Another report stated that one-way and two-way bilingual education programs are the only programs that have been successful in reaching the 50th percentile in both the first and second language and in maintaining or exceeding that level of success through the end of their schooling (Thomas & Collier, 2004). Thomas and Collier (2002) found that ELLs in one-way bilingual classes usually reach grade level proficiency by 7th or 8th grade and also maintain or exceed that level of success. The authors went on to explain why this success was so profound:

This is truly astounding achievement when you consider that this is higher achievement than that of native-English speakers being schooled through their own language, and who have all the advantages of nonstop cognitive and academic development and sociocultural support. (p. 11)

The fact that students who are taught in two languages, one of which is completely new to them, can possibly perform better than their English-dominant peers speaks volumes of the impact that a two-way, or dual language, program can have.

Academic confidence. It seems that ELL students are not only more successful in the area of language, but they are also more confident in their language skills and are able to use them effectively. A majority of students in the dual language program at Chacón School in Texas stated that they were confident in their ability to speak, read, and write in Spanish and English, and 79% of students indicated that they were able to study mathematics in both languages (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003). Furthermore, half of students stated that they were able to read evenly in both Spanish and English. These student responses indicate that both native and non-native English speakers not only believed that they had benefited from instruction in two languages, but were able to put their bilingualism into use during academic tasks. Furthermore, they felt confident about their abilities. According to Krashen (1981) Affective Filter hypothesis, confidence is a large factor in how successful students are in acquiring language. In short, the more confident students are, the more accessible language input becomes for students. According to the research at Chacón School, dual language programs have the ability to provide both native and non-native students with the confidence in their language skills that may ultimately lead to their increased success.

Academic benefits of bilingualism. This idea that both native and non-native students can benefit from a dual-language education program is one that is also well-documented. Lessow-Hurley (2003) pointed out that bilingual students who have developed high levels of proficiency in both languages seem to have academic advantages over their monolingual peers, not only in language studies but also in mathematics. It has also been found that bilingual children possess more cognitive flexibility than monolingual children (Cummins, 1981). In summarizing some of the most distinctive benefits of a dual language program model, Calderón and Minaya-Rowe (2003) noted that bilingual students are more cognitively and linguistically prepared to deal with academic tasks that require creativity and problem-solving. They explained that bilingual persons also have the advantage of being able to comprehend and communicate with other persons who are not from their own culture, something that will serve as a benefit in the increasingly diverse world in which we live. Overall, it seems that English language learners are not the only students who benefit from a dual language program model. Both groups of students can not only find great academic success, but can also benefit from social advantages that will aid them in our ever-diversifying society.

While discussing the academic benefits of bilingualism, it seems necessary to briefly note the common argument *against* becoming bilingual. Many opponents of the dual language program model have proposed the argument that maintaining the first language and, therefore, becoming bilingual will impede the development of proficiency in the second language for ELL students. Anyone taking this stance does so under the assumption that students whom are on-task in English and only English for longer amounts of times will develop at a faster rate in the English language and will fare better on academic performance measures. Much of the research, however, has disproved this notion. The research actually shows that as students receive more

instruction in their *first* language their academic achievement in their second language improves (Collier & Thomas, 2002). In fact, many researchers have expressed the fact that instruction in the first language does not impede the acquisition of English or development in any other academic content area (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; Barnett, Yarosz, Thomas, & Blanco, 2007; Cummins, 1981; Gándara, 1997; López & Tashakkori, 2006). A number of studies and reviews have also stated that content knowledge as well as skills learned in one language can be transferred to a second language, meaning that time spent developing concepts and skills in the first language is not time wasted (Cummins, 1981; Estrada et al., 2009; Krashen, 1991; Lessow-Hurley, 2003; Teale, 2009). It is evident that maintenance of the first language is in no way detrimental to the acquisition of the second language and is, in many cases, actually beneficial.

Unsuccessful models. Although the research supports the idea that dual language programs foster academic success, there is seemingly an equal amount of reports that other programs besides the dual language model were *unsuccessful* on certain measures of academic success. Collier and Thomas (2004) found that students in transitional programs, which do not foster the maintenance of the primary language and aim to push students into mainstream classrooms, only *maintain* the success that they had in closing the academic achievement gap and do not further close the gap once they leave the program and join the mainstream classroom. Aside from the inability to close the achievement gap, it seems that transitional programs fall short of the academic successes of dual language programs, as well. In one study that compared dual language and transitional programs it was found that academic gains were superior in the school that took on an additive, dual language model (Barnnet, Yarosz, Thomas, & Blanco, 2007). Furthermore, it was noted in this study that the costs of the two programs were essentially

the same. With two programs that yield significantly different levels of academic achievement but that are similar in cost, it is clear that the dual language program is a more effective option.

Another issue with transitional program models is the fact that it seems many educators are confused about what proficiency in English means (Cummins, 1981) and , therefore, are transitioning students to the mainstream classroom at a time when they are not yet prepared. Cummins argues that students are often considered to be proficient enough in English to participate in an English-only classroom after a short amount of time (sometimes only just six months). However, according to Estrada et al. (2009), most ELLs need anywhere from five to seven years to master English well enough to be at this level of proficiency. This relates to two specific kinds of language proficiency: basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), which may be the cause for this confusion on the part of educators prematurely moving ELL students into mainstream classes. Students may quickly become proficient in BICS, which are the language skills that pertain to basic commands and conversation in English; however, it takes a significantly longer period of time for students to become proficient in CALP, which are the language skills that are characterized by content-based literacy skills and more advanced language use. When these students are exited from transitional programs before they have been given the opportunity to fully develop their academic English skills, they begin to have difficulty with their academics and their performance decreases (Cummins, 1981; Lessow-Hurley, 2003). Thomas and Collier (2002) warned of the dangers of transitional programs which only span one to three years, noting that research has shown that four years is the absolute minimum length of time that it takes for ELL students to reach grade-level proficiency in the second language. However, it seems that in many transitional programs fluency and basic communicative language skills are too often

misconceived to be overall language competence and proficiency. When this misconception leads to the premature transitioning of students into an English-only classroom, this can prove detrimental to the students' overall academic growth.

Affective Benefits

Although closing the academic achievement gap between ELLs and traditional native English-speaking students is one of the foremost concerns of researchers in the field of education, there is another element of the whole child that must be examined. Affect can play a large role in the academic success or failure of a student (Krashen, 1981). By definition, affect concerns the feelings and emotions of students. Although these factors may not seem directly related to the academic achievement of students, the thoughts, attitudes, and emotions of students can have a great impact on the performance of students, especially in area of language. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1981) proposed that students' feelings of motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence play a facilitative role in their success in acquiring a second language. That is to say, students who are highly motivated, have low levels of anxiety, and have high levels of self-confidence are better equipped to successfully acquire the target language. According to this research, affect does seem to matter.

Positive attitudes and beliefs about bilingualism. One of the affective benefits of dual language programs that was most commonly mentioned in the literature was overall positive feelings about being involved in the program and becoming bilingual. In one particularly compelling study (López & Tashakkori, 2006), interviews with students who participated in a dual language program revealed that the students had positive feelings towards the instruction that they received in both of the languages and felt confident that their newfound bilingualism

would benefit them in the future. Lindholm-Leary and Borsato (2001) also questioned students in a dual language program to determine their attitudes and found similar results. These students indicated that they not only felt valued in the program, but were also generally glad to be involved in the program and would recommend it to other students. Evidence of positive attitudes towards dual language programs have been confirmed in other research studies and reviews (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003; Lessow-Hurley, 2003; Lindholm-Leary, 2005). It seems that students not only feel that they are important in dual language programs, but also feel that they have gained something from being involved in one. The benefits relate to how these programs foster positive attitudes, high levels of confidence and motivation, positive cross-cultural relationships, and better affective responses from teachers, administrators, and parents.

In many of the studies on the success of dual language programs, students spoke more in depth of the benefits that they perceived would come from becoming bilingual through this type of program. Students commonly expressed the belief that bilingualism is a valuable asset and that it will help them in their future endeavors (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003; López & Tashakkori, 2006). Students involved in López and Tashakkori's study specifically pointed out a range of benefits that bilingualism presents them: being able to communicate between different groups of people, maintain their cultural heritage, and use the new languages as an academic aid. Students in dual language programs have also indicated that learning through two languages, rather than one, helped them to do better in school and challenged them in a way that they would not have been challenged in a standard school model (Lindholm-Leary, 2005). Perhaps one of the most compelling examples of positive feelings about being bilingual came from a study of high school students who had been involved in a dual language program beginning in kindergarten (Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2001). These students indicated that they not only

value education, but they also strongly believe that it is the best way to a better life. Nearly all of the students stated that they wished to go to college, that they believed that being bilingual would help them to someday get a better job, and that they were proud to be bilingual. Overall, the research indicates that students in bilingual programs feel good about being bilingual and are confident that it will lead to more success in the future.

Higher levels of confidence, self-esteem, and motivation. Aside from developing positive attitudes about the dual language programs and beliefs about the benefits of bilingualism, it seems that students involved in dual language programs also experience increased levels of confidence, motivation, and self-esteem. In some of these programs, students who were once reserved and afraid to participate were transformed into active learners who were not afraid to speak up (Estrada et al., 2009). An increased sense of confidence was also expressed in interviews with students in the Chacón School dual language program that was previously mentioned (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003). Estrada et al. also reported that teachers indicated that after transitioning to a dual language program model, students demonstrated higher levels of motivation and enthusiasm towards learning. Teachers in another study (Collier & Thomas, 2004) reported similar observations, noticing a positive difference in student responsiveness and engagement in the lessons, which may have been attributed to the students' heightened levels of motivation. The research also seems to indicate that the supportive nature of a dual language program, which allows for students to maintain their first language, can help bolster the self-esteem of the student (Lessow-Hurley, 2003). The dual language program model, which is centralized on the idea that the maintenance of the first language and the cultural heritage of the student is beneficial to students, seems to support students in a way that makes

them feel safe and valued, thus improving their feelings of confidence and self-esteem and increasing motivation to learn.

Positive cross-cultural relationships and attitudes. Other findings from the literature that are relative to affect indicate that dual language programs foster positive cross-cultural relationships and attitudes. In a society that is becoming increasingly culturally diverse, this is something that is not only relevant but of the utmost importance. Dual language programs present an effective way to develop these relationships and attitudes because they have a strong cross-cultural component at their core (Genesse & Gándara, 1999). Collier and Thomas (2004) pointed out that in segregated classrooms, there are many sociocultural concerns that arise; however, dual language programs can help resolve some of these issues. Lessow-Hurley (2003) reported that students in dual language programs developed positive attitudes toward people with backgrounds and languages that differ from their own. Furthermore, because these programs include students from at least two different cultural groups, they help students to learn from each other and, as a result, to respect each other as valuable resources and partners (Collier & Thomas, 2004). Alanís and Rodríguez (2008) also noted that the two-way nature of the program provides a safe atmosphere in which students can learn about another culture without having to sacrifice their own. The dual language program model is the only bilingual educational program that presents the unique opportunity for two different groups of students to share their cultural heritage without feeling that their own identity is threatened.

The fact that students are able to maintain their home language and cultural heritage has been shown to be more important than one might think. A review of the literature by Gándara (1997) cited research that indicates that when children are required to transition to an English-only, mainstream classroom it can cause a disruption to the relationship between the child and

the parent, which often results in a loss of the ability of the parent to support the student in schooling. As Gándara explained, this disconnection between home and school can sometimes even lead to higher levels of delinquency and alienation. In other words, not supporting the maintenance and continual development of ELL students' first language and, in turn, not supporting the maintenance of the students' cultural heritage not only takes away from their personal identity, but can also create a barrier between the student and parents involved. Dual language programs provide promising results of helping students foster their cultural heritage in a way that may alleviate the issue of loss of parent-child relationships that appear in transitional programs. One example of this type of success (Thomas & Collier, 2002) occurred in an area of Canada in which the heritage language, French, had been in strong decline for years. When a dual language educational program was put in place, families experienced a dramatic renewal of the language as well as increased academic results.

Better responses from teachers, administrators, and parents. The affective benefits of dual language programs reach beyond the student and into the experience of all participants of the programs. Collier and Thomas (2004) found that teachers, administrators, and parents indicated they feel that being part of a growing dual language program means that they are a part of something special. Furthermore, teachers in this study expressed feelings of excitement and reported that they love teaching and would not consider leaving their jobs. Parents of both language groups involved also tend to participate more actively in the school and feel as if they are not only welcomed in the program, but are also valued and included at all times. Calderón and Minaya-Rowe (2003) echoed this sentiment, stating that "For the most part, TWB [Two-Way Bilingual, or Dual Language] program parents tend to have higher levels of involvement." (p. 205) It was evident that within a program that is accepting of different languages and

cultures, parents of ELL students felt more comfortable and valuable to the system than they might have in a program that was trying to transition their children away from their native language and culture. These positive feelings on the part of teachers, administrators, and parents were an integral part of building a constructive environment in which learning can occur.

Unsuccessful models. Many of the other bilingual program models do not yield the same positive affective outcomes as the dual language model. In fact, it has been shown that many students leave different programs with negative feelings. One example of this phenomenon comes from a study conducted by López and Tashakkori (2006), which compared both the academic and affective outcomes of a two-way, bilingual and a transitional program. While the study found that students in the dual language program generally had positive feelings towards program, as was mentioned earlier in this section, students in the transitional program did not feel the same way. These students expressed frustration over the fact that their second language had become dominant and that they were no longer able to communicate effectively with Spanish speakers. They also indicated that their lack of bilingualism took away from the maintenance of their cultural heritage and made communication with some of their family members increasingly difficult. Overall, it seems that the students felt a certain level of aggravation about the program in which they were enrolled, rather than the feelings of pride, enthusiasm, and confidence that students in dual language programs have discussed.

Potential Drawbacks

After reviewing the literature on the academic and affective benefits of different bilingual program models, it seems that dual language programs yield the most positive results. On the opposite end of the spectrum, transitional programs, which are the most prevalent in US schools,

seem to be the least effective in both arenas. Taking into consideration the compelling evidence, the remainder of this paper will take the position that dual language programs are the most beneficial for ELL students, given that the number of language groups within the community is conducive to this type of program model. Although dual language programs may not always be a possibility, as mentioned previously in the paper, it seems that they are the most effective bilingual program available for teaching both minority and majority language students. That being said, the following sections will discuss the types of instructional and administrative practices that have proven most beneficial within these dual language program models. First, however, it seems valuable to briefly discuss the potential drawbacks of dual language program models and offer explanations for how these drawbacks can be avoided. As with any educational program, there are issues that are undoubtedly going to be encountered and it is the goal of this section to alleviate any issues with this program model before moving forward in endorsing it.

Although there do not seem to be many arguments against the implementation of dual language programs, there are a few that were encountered in the research. One review of studies over the effectiveness of dual language programs (de Jong, 2009) found that there are several specific issues that may present themselves within these types of programs. The first issues deals with codeswitching, which pertains to the switching back and forth between the two languages of instruction. In the case of the dual language program, the issue can be that teachers may often codeswitch to English many times during second language instruction. In other words, teachers stop speaking the minority language and switch to English at a time when all instruction should be in the minority language. This may be due to the fact that, in some cases, the English teacher may not even be required to be bilingual. This codeswitching is undoubtedly an issue, as it deprives both groups of students of valuable exposure to the minority language. However, it

seems that it is possible to alleviate this problem by requiring that teachers of the minority language be native or at the very least highly fluent speakers and setting forth specific guidelines for when both languages are to be spoken and when they are not.

Another issue that deJong (2009) discussed is that of English dominance. Dual language programs are faced with the particularly difficult challenge of providing an experience that helps both native and non-native speakers of English to acquire a second language. The reason that this can be such a hard goal to accomplish is the fact that English holds the higher status in American society and, consequently, is more omnipresent inside and outside of the classroom. When a native English speaker leaves the classroom, it is inevitable that he will encounter much more English than the native language. For this reason, it has been shown that native English speakers continue to be dominant in their first language, which is English, while non-native English speakers also begin to become more dominant in English, which is their second language (Howard, Christian, & Genesse, 2004). However, because closing the achievement gap of ELLs is the main concern of this paper, this is not an issue that causes much concern at the present time. However, those wishing to implement a bilingual program with particular concern for the development of a second language for native English speakers should take this information into consideration and perhaps adjust the program model in a way that provides these students with more second language exposure.

In his review of the research, Krashen (1991) went into great depth about the different arguments that proponents of dual language education have developed. Foremost was the claim that some studies have found that there was no real difference between ELL students' English language achievement in dual language and submersion programs, which to proponents indicates that dual language programs are not any more successful than submersion programs. Although,

as discussed previously, it has been shown that many dual language programs do in fact yield better academic achievement results than subtractive program models, this argument may be valid in some cases. However, Krashen questioned the fact that this was interpreted so negatively. If students are performing similarly in both programs, that is to say that students who are exposed to significantly less English (those participating dual language programs) have acquired just as much of the language as those who are exposed to it all of the time (those participating in submersion programs). In that way, this argument does not really present a drawback to dual language program models at all. Rather, it may bring forth some concerns about the overall effectiveness of submersion programs.

Best Instructional Practices

After determining that dual language programs seem to foster the most positive results for ELL students, it is important now to look at how teachers and administrators within these programs can produce the highest levels of success. It goes without saying that any educational program is limited by the educators and instructional practices which are employed within the program. That is to say that the *teaching* that takes place within the program is of the utmost importance. That being said, my research then led me to look at what teachers could do to promote academic achievement and which instructional practices were endorsed by research. In doing so, I noticed that these practices were generally related to four different functions within the classroom: overall instruction, language development, skill development, and assessment. In the following section, I will discuss these four categories and the specific strategies that are associated with them.

Strategies for overall instruction. Those practices that related to overall instruction can best be described as general guidelines for effective practice within a dual language program model. One of the most prominent suggestions for overall instruction was to incorporate cooperative learning activities into the teaching of all subjects. Cooperative learning strategies, or techniques that require students to work collaboratively towards completing a learning task or goal, can be one of the most crucial strategies for ELL students because they provide students with the chance to practice the second language in an environment that is safe (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003). Dual language programs have the unique benefit of consisting of two groups of native language speakers who can serve as great resources for each other. Cooperative learning is a tool through which students can access the native language knowledge of their peers through communication and collaboration. It has been shown that cooperative learning activities can also increase the motivation of ELLs, as they provide peer support and require the contributions of *all* students, regardless of their level of achievement (Soltero, 2004). As Howard and Christian (2002) pointed out, cooperative learning activities also give students the chance to work in heterogeneous groups, which helps in the development of cross-cultural relationships. A number of reviews and studies have suggested the use of collaboration and cooperative learning in the dual language classroom (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; Helfrich & Bosh, 2011; Teale, 2009; Thomas & Collier, 2004). It seems that using the heterogeneity of the classroom context to benefit the students is found to be rather effective.

Another overall instructional strategy that the literature suggests is adapting lessons to make them culturally relevant to students. In a dual language program, this manifests in providing learning experiences relative to the English language and culture, but also providing rich resources in the minority language. Teachers should strive to acculturate students rather than

assimilate them (Helfrich & Bosh, 2011), meaning that they should work towards educating students from the non-native English group of students on American culture while demonstrating the value and importance of their cultural heritage and language by incorporating them into classroom activities. In order to achieve this, Helfrich and Bosh encourage teachers to explore the backgrounds of students in order to plan instruction around areas of interest and relevance to them. Similarly, Teale (2009) reported that it is crucial for teachers to adopt and accommodate their lessons in a way that makes instruction more compatible with the home culture of students. He also recommended connecting to students by using texts with content that is familiar to them. Along those same lines, Krashen (1991) indicated that, because research suggests that reading is a major element of language and literacy development, ELL students benefit from being in a print-rich classroom in the second language, meaning that teachers should ensure that there are culturally relevant books in *both* languages, not just English. Overall, teachers should strive to make all children's, especially ELL students', cultures and languages appreciated and included in all instruction, because it has both academic and affective benefits.

Another consensus among the literature on overall instructional strategies for ELLs was the idea of sheltered instruction. Howard and Christian (2002) described sheltered instruction as speaking at an appropriate rate for the students' proficiency level, using visual aids, using manipulatives, providing many opportunities for interaction, modeling, and reviewing key concepts and vocabulary frequently. The authors explained that sheltered instruction is beneficial because it gives teachers a way to teach the same academic material as a mainstream classroom in a way that allows all learners to be involved. In this way, students who are at a lower level of proficiency in one language can still learn academic content through that language by means of the support provided through the sheltered instruction. Other ways to incorporate

sheltered instruction strategies are to extend explanations and redundantly present information using pictures and gestures, define vocabulary in context, repeat and paraphrase key concepts, and clearly enunciate all words (Soltero, 2004; Teale, 2009). Making input comprehensible by using strategies similar to these was a theme that was found in much of the literature (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003; Helfrich & Bosh, 2011; Lessow-Hurley, 2003). Because the strategy makes important academic content more accessible to all students, it is hard to argue its validity.

Although there were many other commonly mentioned effective strategies that fell into this category, it is not possible to extensively cover them all within this paper. However, I will briefly mention a few of the remaining overall instructional strategies that seemed to appear the most. One common thread found in many articles was the idea of developing thematic units to integrate all areas of instruction and relate to students' interests (Lessow-Hurley, 2003; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Many researchers also suggested integrating hands-on, discovery-learning types of activities within the classroom, as opposed to incorporating rote learning and worksheets (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; Lessow-Hurley, 2003). Finally, the consensus seems to be that ELL students need to be given challenging, grade-level content (García, 2008; National Council of Teachers of English, 2008). Whereas many remedial programs tend to water down curriculum for ELL students (Estrada et al., 2009), students can benefit from being taught challenging curriculum by teachers who accommodate instruction to the needs of the learners.

Strategies for language development. The second category of instructional practices is that which pertains to language and literacy development. As this paper primarily focuses on improving education for English language learners, it is important to consider the strategies that work best for teaching children language skills. The most overwhelmingly endorsed practice involved use of the first language in the classroom. As Lessow-Hurley (2003) stated, strong

primary language development helps students to ultimately learn English because when students understand their *own* language this can be transferred to understanding similar concepts in the study of English. Although the resources that a school has may determine just how much a program can use the first language of minority students, teachers should pursue ways to support the continued development of students' first language (Flynn & Hill, 2005). Many other researchers have presented similar suggestions, emphasizing the importance of first language usage for students who are acquiring a new language (Calderón, Sanchez, & Slavin, 2011; Estrada et al., 2009; National Council of Teachers of English, 2008; Teale, 2009). Given that a dual language program is, by definition, supportive of maintaining the primary language of ELL students, this is an instructional practice that should already be at the core of a well-implemented program.

Another key element of language and literacy instruction in a dual language program is separation of languages. What this means is that certain subjects or times of day should be dedicated to instruction solely in one language or the other. Howard and Christian (2002) explained that there are three ways to distribute the two languages in a dual language program: by time, by topic, and by person. Distribution of language by time often means that programs are divided into time blocks, and certain time blocks are allocated to English while the others are allocated to the minority language. If programs chose to distribute language by topic, certain content is taught in one language while other content is taught in the minority language. What is important to remember with this type of language distribution is that *both languages* are used for language arts instruction. Finally, distribution by person is characterized by two teachers working together, one teaching in English and the other teaching in the minority language.

No matter the type of language distribution, research indicates that it is crucial that language is distributed evenly and that teachers keep the languages clearly separated. Howard and Christian (2002) suggested that separating the two languages gives students the opportunity to be fully immersed in both of them and, therefore, gives the students more chances to interact with the second language. This separation of languages must go beyond just the medium of instruction. Any environmental print, such as visual aids, posters, and other materials, should be in the language that is associated with the content area or teacher to which it pertains. Students should also be encouraged to use only the language of instruction in interactions with peers and in classroom conduct. Although it may seem like a tedious task to ensure that the two languages remain completely divided, it seems to be one of the most important elements of instruction. In fact, Calderón and Minaya-Rowe (2003) cited a clear separation of languages as one of the components of success within a dual language program. In order for students to develop fully in both languages, they need the opportunity to be fully immersed in each *separately*.

It also seems that the explicit teaching of important vocabulary is a key element in language instruction. In fact, in a recent review of the research, vocabulary knowledge was found to be a strong indicator of overall verbal ability in students (Calderón et al., 2011). The same review states that vocabulary is “the foundation of school success for English learners and other students.” (p. 6) Research also suggests that a child’s vocabulary in kindergarten and first grade is a predictor of his or her future success in the area of reading comprehension (Cunningham, 1997). Because difficult or unknown vocabulary is sure to present itself to all students throughout the acquisition of a second language, it is important that teachers alleviate the confusion by pre-teaching vocabulary or helping students to develop dictionary skills. Endorsing this sentiment was a review by Teale (2009), which suggested that extra attention should be paid

to identifying and clarifying important or difficult vocabulary for teachers to be effective in their literacy instruction. Calderón et al. reported that students benefit the most from vocabulary programs that are long term and comprehensive, and that vocabulary should be taught explicitly before, during, and after reading. Although this strategy relates to language and literacy, it should be noted that students benefit from explicit vocabulary instruction before readings in any subject area.

Although there was an abundance of language and literacy strategies discussed in the literature reviewed, the aforementioned were those that were most commonly endorsed. However, there were a few more that were compelling enough to be briefly mentioned as well. Some researchers specifically noted that the equal inclusion of all components of reading, as identified by the National Reading Panel should be included in literacy instruction (Calderón et al., 2011; Teale, 2009). These categories are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. Another suggestion from literacy instruction comes from Howard and Christian (2002) who suggested that teachers engage students in instructional conversations, providing them with the opportunity to immerse themselves in meaningful dialogue that will foster language development. Other researchers have echoed this suggestion, calling for natural, rich interactions within the classroom (Lessow-Hurley, 2003; Teale, 2009; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Language and literacy instruction is a multi-faceted, yet crucial element of the development of ELLs and, therefore, should integrate the most effective practices and strategies.

Strategies for skill development. Although academic content requires extensive instructional attention, students must also develop the skills necessary for learning. One particular skill, called metacognition, is especially important for ELLs (Anderson, 2002,

Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003). Anderson defined metacognition simply as thinking about thinking (p. 1) or, in other words, being aware of and monitoring what they know how to do and what they do not yet understand. As Oxford (1990) explained, language learners are often overwhelmed by a great amount of newness in the beginning stages of their education. Because of this, the ability to regulate one's thinking and select appropriate strategies to bridge gaps in understanding becomes increasingly important for these students. Anderson suggested that teachers explicitly instruct students on how to prepare and plan for learning, select and use learning strategies, monitor strategy use, orchestrate the use of various strategies at one time, and evaluate strategy use and learning. This five step approach to metacognition allows students not only to set goals for learning, but to also learn how to use and evaluate different strategies that will help them to be more successful in their learning. Oxford provided a number of metacognition strategies that teachers can introduce to students and encourage the use of, including linking new material to something they are already familiar with, organizing, setting goals, considering the purpose, and paying close attention to the task. Although research supports the idea that the use of metacognitive strategies is beneficial to students, Oxford noted that research also shows that students use these strategies less often than other cognitive strategies. For this reason, teachers should not assume that students know how and when to monitor their thinking and apply appropriate strategies, but, rather, should take care to model and encourage the use of effective metacognitive strategies.

Students that are being introduced to a new language will also need to be able to adapt to the new language and compensate for the lack of knowledge that they initially possess. Oxford (1990) described these compensation strategies as any method that a student uses to make up for inadequate repertoire of essential elements of language such as vocabulary and grammar. These

strategies include making intelligent guesses, using mime or gesture, adjusting or approximating the message, coining words, and using circumlocution or synonym. These strategies allow the student to overcome initial language barriers in a classroom without resorting to the use of the first language, which provides them with the practice that they need to continue developing in the second language. Oxford noted that learners who are skilled in strategies such as these sometimes communicate better than students who possess more knowledge of words and structures in the second language. As was discussed with metacognitive strategies, it is important that teachers explicitly teach and encourage the use of compensation strategies in all areas of language learning, including speaking, writing, reading, and listening.

Another set of skills that Oxford (1990) suggested instilling in students, especially ELLs, are what he calls affective strategies. As the research has shown, affective factors such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety, play a large role in the success of language learners (Krashen, 1982). As Krashen explained, high levels of motivation and self-confidence and low levels of anxiety are conducive to the acquisition of a second language. That being said, the affective strategies that Oxford suggested can help students to lower anxiety, encourage themselves, and monitor their emotional state of being. Some of the suggested strategies for doing these things include students employing relaxation techniques, using laughter, making positive statements, rewarding themselves, listening to their bodies, writing language learning diaries, and discussing their feelings with someone. When students use these strategies effectively, they are able to control their emotions and improve their self-perception in order to lower this “affective filter,” as Krashen coined it, and be more successful in the acquisition of the language. Although the use of affective strategies can yield positive results in ELLs, Oxford indicated that studies say they are underused in many classrooms. Although it may seem that

these strategies do not relate to academics, teachers must understand that they can help discouraged, anxiety-ridden students to make positive steps forward in their development as a language learners.

Strategies for assessment. Although this section focuses on instructional practices within bilingual educational programs, I believe that assessment should also be discussed briefly, as it is the means by which teachers can gauge whether their instruction is truly successful or not. It is recommended that instruction and assessment are continually linked (Teale, 2009), meaning that teachers should strive to ensure that they are teaching what they are assessing and assessing what they are teaching at all times. In doing so, teachers are able to tell whether their students understand the material or whether they, the teachers, need to make adjustments to their instructional plans. Teale also suggested basing assessment on clear learning objectives that not only build over the instructional year, but also build across grade levels. Teachers should have a clear idea of the short-term and long-term goals that they wish for their students to achieve. This will help them to align instruction to learning objectives and will aid in constructing assessment materials that can effectively determine whether these objectives have been met or not. When it comes to bilingual educational programs, there should be objectives for both language and content in each lesson (Howard & Christian, 2002). Because many of these programs are unique in the fact that they aim to teach content *through* the target language, it is important that teachers do not neglect either component. Teachers need to carefully consider how they can incorporate language skills and concepts as well as grade-level content into their lessons. Assessment should also focus on testing the students' abilities in both of these areas. Overall, teachers must put in the time and effort to ensure that their instruction focuses on clearly laid out instructional

objectives and that students are assessed often in order to determine whether these objectives have been met.

Administrative Practices

So far, this paper has discussed the roles of teachers and students within dual language educational programs. However, administrators, one of the most important parts of any school program, have not yet been mentioned. Perhaps Soltero (2004) put it best when she said:

...for a dual language program to thrive and for students to successfully accomplish its intended goals, competent and creative leadership is indispensable. The views, attitudes, and expectations of the principal set the tone for the entire school. (p. 128)

Because the actions of school administrators are so critical in the success of any program, this section will focus on what researchers say about effective administrative practices. More specifically, the major practices that were found throughout the literature will be discussed, including incorporating professional development, monitoring and evaluating the program, being an advocate for the program, being knowledgeable about the program, providing support for teachers, and allocating resources for students.

Focusing on professional development. Although instructional practice relates to what teachers do in the classroom, it is important for administrators to incorporate professional development into their program so that teachers continue to receive training in the latest methodology and pedagogy. Calderón et. al (2011) cited a strong, on-going focus on professional development for staff members as one of the factors of highly effective programs. More specifically, the authors found that studies have shown professional development programs to be most effective when they provide highly applicable teaching techniques, hands-on practice, in-

class demonstrations with their own students, and personalized coaching. Administrators should do their own research on different professional development programs and find those that not only meet their school's specific needs, but utilize these types of authentic, applicable practice. More specifically, training for teachers in bilingual educational programs should have a heavy focus on strategies that work effectively for both ELL and English dominant students and should be based on the latest scientific research (Flynn & Hill, 2005). A program cannot be successful without continual development and it should be the job of the administrator to research and acquire effective professional development programs for their staff.

Monitoring and evaluation of the program. Monitoring the progress and overall success of the program is another important part of what administrators do within any program. Especially in the younger years of the program, it is important to ensure that teacher's instruction is yielding positive academic results. One means of tracking the success of the program is for the administrator to constantly collect formative data and use it to inform the conception of future plans (Calderón et al., 2009). Although actual testing is the job of teachers, not administrators, it is important that administrators oversee the ongoing evaluation of the program and of student performance tests (Collier & Thomas, 2004). In other words, administrators must act as enforcers in order to ensure that assessment is continuously a part of the program. If necessary, a coach or on-site facilitator can be employed to help implement the program and keep it on track for reaching major goals and producing positive outcomes (Calderón et al., 2009). Specifically, Flynn and Hill (2005) suggested that administrators make sure that teachers are assessing for adequate progress in *all* areas. In a bilingual program, it may be easy to focus primarily on language development outcomes, but major content areas such as reading and mathematics should also be assessed. Evaluation should not be limited to student outcomes, however.

Teachers and administrators should also engage in ongoing reflection and self-evaluation (Howard & Christian, 2002). Reflection allows staff to take the time to consider whether they are being effective and to make thoughtful adaptations that will hopefully increase students' success.

Advocating and supporting the program. Aside from being regulators and enforcers, administrators also have the important job of being totally committed to and supportive of their programs. Researchers and professionals seem to be in agreement about this. First and foremost, administrators and staff should *believe* in their programs and the methodology behind it. In a bilingual educational program, this manifests itself in the consensus amongst all staff that bilingualism is cognitively, socially, and affectively beneficial for both ELL and English dominant students (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008). Flynn and Hill (2005) also pointed out the administrators in programs that involve ELL students must believe in the importance of diversity and the acceptance of all cultures. This means that they should have an integral role in creating an understanding of diversity within their school and promoting an environment that is accepting in nature. When it comes to supporting the program as a whole, the word “committed” seems to be key. Furthermore, administrators must also be fully committed to sticking to the bilingual program model that they chose to implement (Collier & Thomas, 2004). This means that they must enforce rules that relate to the time allocated to each language, the language of instruction assigned to each content area, etc. This should be no problem for administrators who believe that their program is effective and based on sound practice, which they should be. In fact, Calderón and Minaya-Rowe (2003) suggested that administrators should be the strongest advocate of the program. If they do not have confidence in their program, no one will.

Being knowledgeable about the program. Not only should administrators believe in the program, but they should also be knowledgeable about it. If they plan to be an advocate for

their program, as they should, it is crucial that they become aware not only of components of the program model, but also of the related pedagogy (Soltero, 2004). Alanís and Rodríguez (2008) not only suggested that administrators possess a high level of knowledge about the program, but that they also commit to continuing to learn more, attending trainings and visiting other similar programs. When administrators possess extensive knowledge about their program, they are able to maintain and protect it so that it can run the way that it is intended to. Without this knowledge base, administrators run the risk of making uninformed decisions that could be detrimental to the school and its students.

Providing support for teachers. A successful program will not just come from training, evaluating, and advocating, though. Administrators also must be careful in dealing with the people within the program. Most importantly, they must be supportive of the teachers in their efforts to be effective educators. Calderón and Minaya-Rowe (2003) delved more deeply into this topic in their step-by-step guide for designing and implementing two-way bilingual programs. They suggested that administrators begin by stating expectations explicitly for cooperation amongst teachers. In order for any program to be successful, teachers must use each other as resources and sounding boards in order to ensure that their instruction is the best it can be. Calderón and Minaya-Rowe also suggested that the administrator meet with teams of teachers regularly in order to discuss any issues regarding curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student progress. Flynn and Hill (2005) agreed, stating that administrators should support teachers in their instructional efforts by providing ample opportunity for collaborative work and planning. Minaya-Rowe and Calderón encouraged administrators to also regularly observe the teachers as they teach and to provide them with feedback. Although they should be supportive of

their staff, it is also their job to ensure that teachers are doing their best to provide students with the instruction they need.

Allocating resources for students. Teachers are not the only people within the program that need special attention from administrators; students require support as well. First and foremost, students need the proper resources for learning within a bilingual program. As Flynn and Hill (2005) put it, qualified teachers are important resources for students. Administrators should work to hire great teachers equitably, meaning that the teachers of both languages should be highly qualified and prepared to teach within a bilingual educational program. Administrators also need to ensure that students who need extra help are matched up with the most experienced teachers (Flynn & Hill, 2005). Teachers are not the only resources that administrators must allocate in order to improve the education of students within their programs. Whether it be books in the target language, software programs, new technology, etc., there is always something that can supplement and improve student learning. As supporters and advocates of their students, it is important that administrators take an active role in allocating the outside resources that students need. Another way that administrators can improve the education of students is by holding them to high academic standards. Although it seems a difficult task to learn a new language, it is important that administrators foster an environment in which high academic goals are maintained for all students (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008). Flynn and Hill suggested that administrators expect student achievement in not only language, but also in all content areas. If administrators have the attitude that students *can* and *will* be successful, it seems that they are more likely to do so.

Factors of Success

Prior to moving forward with my recommendations, I would like to briefly discuss something that came up numerous times throughout the literature: factors of success. Aside from very specific instructional strategies and administrative practices, there were several key elements that arose that continually led to heightened levels of success within dual language programs. Much of the research focused primarily on these factors of success, outlining precisely how to implement an effective dual language program. Upon examining these components, it became clear that these should be a part of this paper. The importance of the ensuring that a program is implemented in the best manner possible is crucial. Collier and Thomas (2004) spoke of this importance when they stated that “how the program is implemented can influence the rate at which English learners close the gap.” (p. 13) The factors of success, adapted and synthesized from various bodies of research, will help administrators and teachers to begin, maintain, or revise a dual language program in a way that will hopefully improve overall levels of success.

General requirements. To begin, the literature offered many suggestions for general requirements and principles by which administrators and teachers should stand in order to be successful as a dual language program. First, programs must adhere to the requirement of being an additive, rather than subtractive, language-learning environment (Thomas & Collier, 2002). In other words, dual language programs must be fully supportive of the acquisition of a second language while still maintaining their primary language. Along the same lines, administrators and teachers must ensure that each language within the dual language program has equal status (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; Howard & Christian, 2002). As Alanís and Rodríguez explained, teachers must be careful as to not promote one language over the other. Both languages should be seen as equally valuable and important within the classroom. Equal language distribution, whether by time, topic or person as discussed previously, supports this notion of equal status of

language. As Soltero (2004) suggested, successful programs even take care to distribute language equally during transition times, play, and rest periods. In schools that provide special classes, such as art, music, and physical education, this instructional time, which is more than likely provided in English, should be taken into account when determining how much time is spent on each language. Lindholm (1990) also stated that having an equal balance of students from non-native and native English speaking backgrounds is essential for success. This is another way through which dual language programs can provide students with equal opportunities to be exposed to both of the languages. Good dual language programs take the matter of language status and distribution seriously and work hard to ensure equality.

Another general key to success is the length of participation required of students. As discussed previously, pulling students out of bilingual programs too early can stunt their cognitive growth. With research indicating that the length of time spent in a dual language program is positively correlated with academic achievement (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008) it becomes important to distinguish exactly what the optimal length of participation is. In one review of the research, Thomas and Collier (2002) pointed out that even the most effective dual language programs can only close half of the achievement gap in 2-3 years, which is the typical length of a remedial, or transitional, program. Therefore, the authors suggested that short-term programs, no matter how strong all other components are, will not be successful in closing the gap. They suggested that a program is sustained for at least 5-6 years. Lindholm (1990) said that 4-6 years is the appropriate amount of time, while Soltero (2004) suggested participation of up to 6-8 years. Although researchers seem to differ slightly on their opinion of the optimal length of participation, it is clear that dual language programs must require *at least* 4 years.

Curriculum and instruction. There were also many suggestions in the literature that pertained to how to tailor curriculum and instruction within a dual language program so that it led to higher levels of success. Although specific instructional practices were discussed in depth earlier, there are a few general keys for ensuring that the curriculum and instruction within a bilingual program are effective. First and foremost, teachers must deliver grade-level, challenging content for students. This means that strong programs do not water down academic curriculum because they think that students learning a new language cannot “keep up” or understand the content. Rather, they introduce complex, higher-end skills and engage students in cognitively challenging work that matches their maturity level (Oregon Department of Education, 2007). García (2005) agreed, saying that teachers should deliver grade-level content and foster the development of high level, mature literacy. A strong focus on language arts instruction was also a major theme within the research. Collier and Thomas (2004) stressed the importance of having high-quality language arts instruction in both languages. Whereas all other subject areas can be taught in one language or another, it is a necessary component of effective language development that language arts instruction be provided in both languages. One particularly successful dual language program cited a strong literacy component as one of the keys to their success, stating that they incorporate language activities into all content areas (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003). Finally, the use of instructional time was brought up many times throughout the literature. In a review of the literature on the success of dual language programs, Thomas and Collier (2002) found that the quality of instructional time was one of the major factors that influenced success. That is to say that programs that used available instructional time effectively, providing students with maximum comprehensible input for the optimum period of time, were more successful. García (2005) agreed, encouraging the protection

and extension of instructional time so that students are provided with the most opportunities for exposure as possible. Overall, instruction must be tailored to fit the needs of all students, which requires a certain level of challenge and a substantial amount of instructional time.

School environment. Knowing that affect plays a large part in academic success, it comes as no surprise that the school environment is a crucial component of a successful dual language program. Administrators, teachers, and other staff must work diligently in order to create a safe, comfortable and supportive community for learning. Along the same lines, there must be collaboration and cooperation within the community of teachers. Teachers at the Chacón School, which has been mentioned throughout this paper, stated that the school climate was one of most salient features within their program (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003). Within the school climate at Chacón School there were many positive traits: observable harmony among teachers, hard work, commitment, and readiness to defend the program if necessary. One teacher described why this positive climate is so important:

Our success is due to our enthusiasm and the fact that we want to work like donkeys... We do not limit ourselves... Basically we defined the teachers' dedication; it is a complete dedication. We work together; otherwise, we would all sink together. (p. 65)

A positive and unified school climate can range from having overarching academic goals and behavioral standards to elements such as school mascots, slogans, or songs that support a cohesive environment (Howard & Christian, 2002). Thomas and Collier (2002) noted that the school community should also be supportive socioculturally, creating a sense of acceptance and inclusion. The nature of a dual language program, consisting of both majority and minority language groups, lends itself perfectly to the development of strong cross-cultural relationships

and a classroom community that welcomes diversity. As for creating a supportive community of teachers, Lindholm-Leary (2005) stressed the importance of administrators establishing cohesion and collaboration amongst teachers and staff. This may mean providing teachers with blocks of time for collaborative meetings or encouraging team-teaching. By whatever means, it is important that administrators and all staff are committed to creating a positive school environment.

Effective teachers. Teachers, who are the foundation of academics and instruction within the classroom, undoubtedly play a big role in the success of any educational program. Without good teachers no program would flourish, despite the program model, curriculum, environment, etc. In fact, high-quality teachers were cited by many authors as being one of the most crucial factors in the success of the program (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; Howard & Christian, 2002; Lindholm-Leary, 2005). Teachers in dual language programs take on the important role of being the primary model of the language (Oregon Department of Education, 2007). That is to say that teachers must be highly fluent and proficient in the language in order to model how the language should sound for the learners. Despite bilingual fluency, teachers should take care to facilitate, rather than dominate, conversations in the classroom. As a model it is important that they provide students with an understanding of the language, but students also benefit from engaging in their own conversations as well. Teachers within dual language programs should also be familiar with bilingual education, meaning that they are aware of the underlying theories of bilingual education as well as appropriate strategies and assessment pieces that work best within these programs (Lindholm-Leary, 2005). Alanís and Rodríguez (2008) also emphasized the importance of teachers believing in the value of dual language education and showing confidence in what they are teaching in the classroom. It is crucial that teachers are

not only prepared to teach within a dual language program, but are also enthusiastic about and committed to working in a dual language program (Howard & Christian, 2002). However, teachers will never know everything about teaching in dual language programs and should be willing to continue learning throughout their career. A number of reviews cited ongoing learning and professional development as a key component of successful teachers (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003). Overall, qualified teachers who are committed to continuously improving their instruction will prove beneficial to any dual language program.

Parent involvement. Parent involvement was perhaps the most common factor of success in all of the literature. Overall, dual language programs must ensure that their school is welcoming to parents of all cultural backgrounds and that they all feel that they are a valuable part of the program (Lindholm-Leary, 2005). It has actually been shown that parents whose children are enrolled in any type of immersion plan often have higher levels of involvement (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008). This may be attributed to the fact that immersion programs, such as dual language programs, foster the maintenance of the primary language and culture of minority language students and, in this way, parents feel that they are being respected and valued. A successful dual language program sees parents as resources, encouraging them to share their “funds of knowledge” (Teale, 2009). At Chacón School, parents fully participated and demonstrated a strong sense of ownership of their children’s education (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003). This participation included sharing in decision making, volunteering at the school, tutoring at home, and advocating for their children. Also, teachers at Chacón expressed the importance of parental involvement and demonstrated commitment to working with parents. Teachers must heed caution to diverse backgrounds, however, and should take into account that parents may not be familiar or comfortable with these typical forms of involvement (Soltero,

2004). Soltero suggested that teachers collaborate with parents in order to formulate ways that they can be involved in their child's education. Teachers may need to share instructional materials, strategies, and practices that parents can use to support academic development at home. Soltero also pointed out that schools are responsible for providing the information and resources necessary for parents' support of educational progress. Overall, administrators and teachers must work with parents in order to make a strong connection between the school and home environment in order to foster the highest levels of success.

Recommendations

After doing an extensive review of the literature, I will now synthesize this information in order to create recommendations for administrators and educators who wish to implement a bilingual program that is based on research and effective for ELL students. As mentioned earlier, the recommendations that I set forth are specifically designed for a community in which there is just one group of minority language students. This program will not be suited for a school district in which there are several different language groups, as it is a *bilingual* program. Specific criteria for the program model will be suggested in the following section, as well as instructional and administrative practices. The section will end with some additional recommendations that are intended to lead the program towards overall success.

Program Criteria

1. Program Model

The program set forth will follow a dual language, or two-way immersion, model. This means that two different language groups will be educated in one setting. In most cases, the dual language program will consist of an English-speaking group of students and a

minority language-speaking group of students. Within the program, students will be taught grade-level academic content in both languages. Additive by nature, the goal is for students to develop a second language while still maintaining their first language.

2. *Length of Participation*

In accordance with the literature reviewed, students should be required to be enrolled in the program for at least five years. Whether the particular school district chooses to implement a program with a longer participation period is completely optional, but may perhaps prove more beneficial to the student. For example, a K-8 program would allow ample time for students to develop linguistically, both in conversational and academic language (BICS and CALP), and would also avoid the issues of splitting the group of students up in the middle of their schooling. What is important is that the program adheres to an additive philosophy, focusing on fully acquiring the new language while maintaining the second language, rather than attempting to transition students to mainstream, English-only classrooms as soon as possible. Programs may implement strict policies that forbid students from entering the program late or leaving the program early in order to maintain their commitment to the required length of participation. With this stipulation there must, of course, be some sort of available alternative for the other students who are not able to join the program at the beginning stages. That is something that should be decided prior to implementation of the program and firmly enforced, if so chosen.

3. *Language Distribution/Separation of Languages*

School districts may choose prior to implementation which language distribution model they wish to follow—by topic, by time, or by person. However, teachers must be *fully committed* to following this model and administrators to enforcing it. Languages should be distributed equally and made totally separate as to allow students equal exposure and opportunities to develop in both languages. If the school chooses to distribute language by topic, certain subjects should *always* be taught in one language and the other subjects should *always* be taught in the second language. Language arts instruction should be provided in *both* languages. This is important for the explicit teaching of certain structures and grammatical components of both of the languages. If the school selects a language distribution by time, each language should be allocated equal amounts of time within the classroom. When dividing up time, administrators and teachers must take into consideration special classes, such as art and music, which are typically taught in English. This classroom time should be carefully accounted for in the division. And if the school follows a language distribution by person model there should be a certain teacher(s) who always teaches in one language and another teacher(s) who always teaches in the other language. No codeswitching should take place, meaning no teachers should change the language in which they are teaching for any reason. Teachers should also take care to separate the languages within the classroom environment as well. Posters, books, CDs, and other supplementary materials should be organized in a manner that distinguishes which language they pertain to, whether that be through color-coding , separating the room into two halves, etc. Students should never be confused about which language they are currently learning in.

4. *Student Population*

The student population within the dual language program, as stated before, should consist of just two language groups. These groups should be as close to equal in quantity of students as possible. This will allow for optimal group work and exposure to both languages. If one group of students overpowered the other in numbers, students would not be able to equally provide each other with language input and support. However, when there is a balance of students they are able to work in pairs and groups that have an equal distribution of both languages, allowing them to support and scaffold one another. Although it may not always be feasible to have an exactly even number, this is a very important element of the program model and should be taken seriously. If there is a limited number of minority language students, administrators may have to consider creating a capacity for English-dominant students and may have to devise a screening process in order to meet this number.

Instructional Implications (For Teachers):

1. *Challenging and Rigorous Academic Content*

It seems that the common misconception is that students learning a new language are in some way at a disadvantage and that they cannot handle the challenges of grade-level content. Perhaps those who take on this misunderstanding assume that students who are learning a language are being so cognitively challenged by this task that they are not able to learn much more. However, as the research shows, students within bilingual programs do in fact benefit from challenging and rigorous academic content. Teachers should stick

to grade-level content in all areas and should provide students with challenges that require cognitive flexibility. Students should be required to use higher-level thinking skills and should be asked to develop concepts through rich, hands-on learning experiences. As with any program, teachers will have to make adjustments to lessons in order to meet the needs of higher and lower achieving students. However, in general, the academic achievement gap can only be diminished if students are allowed to work in the content areas at their own grade level and in a rigorous manner.

2. *Cooperative Learning*

Dual language programs, by nature, provide teachers with some of the best resources—students. As native speakers of at least one of the languages of instruction, students can help to scaffold the learning of their non-native peers. Substantial amounts of research have indicated that cooperative learning within the dual language classroom proves one of the most beneficial instructional strategies. The native speakers of whatever language is currently being used for instruction can help the non-native speakers to understand the language and content that is being presented. Students serve as great supporters in this sense because they have first-hand experience with needing help with the language of instruction and can aid the student *at their level*. This is something that teachers may not be able to do. Prior to engaging students in any cooperative learning task, teachers should set forth the rules and expectations for the activities. Cooperative activities are only beneficial if they are well-organized and thought-out. Students should also be given explicit roles within the group (i.e. recorder, task facilitator) so that all students are on-task and involved in some way. Teachers may choose to explicitly teach the rules and

expectations of cooperative work at the beginning of the year and continue to practice the procedures in an effort to make it routine. No matter how teachers choose to use it, cooperative learning and group activities should be a prominent part of the dual language classroom.

3. *Cultural Inclusion*

In an effort to maintain and appreciate the cultures of all students as well as make instruction relatable, teachers should strive to make lessons culturally inclusive. Including cultural elements into lesson plans not only makes students feel valued, but it also serves as a way to get students interested and excited about learning as it is relative to them personally. In order to preserve the sense of equality and harmony within the dual language classroom, teachers should attempt to include *all* students' cultural heritage equally. Teachers must be careful not to overgeneralize in their pursuit of cultural inclusion, however. Not all students who speak a certain language come from the same cultural background. And not all members of a certain culture celebrate the same customs and traditions. Teachers should take care to interview students in order to discover the salient features of their cultural heritage. In order to include cultural elements into lessons, teachers can incorporate books, video clips, student sharing, parent visits, etc. It is improbable to think that teachers can always include culture into their lessons, but they should strive to make sure that all students are able to maintain and value what makes them unique.

4. *Sheltered Instruction*

Sheltered instruction is currently a very popular technique for language teachers and has proven beneficial to many language learners. Being fully immersed in a new language can be a struggle for students, but sheltered instruction helps increase students' learning without having to switch into the native language. Incorporating cues, such as using gestures and pictures, defining difficult vocabulary prior to lessons, and speaking clearly and deliberately, into instruction helps to give students context by which they can gain understanding and is at the core of sheltered instruction. If teachers constantly switch between languages in order to create meaning for students, they are not being fully immersed and will not acquire the language effectively. By embedding sheltered instruction into all lessons, teachers help students to cope with any lack of knowledge while still being engaged in the second language. Teachers should use sheltered instruction strategies whenever necessary and may incorporate it so often that it becomes second nature to their teaching.

5. *Strong Vocabulary Instruction*

Difficult, unknown vocabulary can be a large hurdle for language learners to jump. For that reason, it is crucial for dual language classrooms to incorporate strong vocabulary instruction. Prior to readings in any of the content areas, teachers should introduce and define any new vocabulary. In some cases, certain words may seem simple. However, teachers should never assume that their students know any words for certain. Teachers should be constantly checking for understanding and should encourage students to speak up if they encounter a word that they are unfamiliar with. Aside from pre-teaching

vocabulary for readings, teachers should also incorporate the teaching of grade-level vocabulary into their everyday instruction. Word walls, weekly vocabulary quizzes, and other instructional strategies can be helpful in introducing students to a wide range of new and relevant words. Teachers cannot possibly acquaint students with all of the difficult words that they will encounter, though. Helping students to develop strong dictionary skills is another crucial component of teaching students to cope with unknown words. Although it may seem obvious to some, many students are not familiar with how to look words up in the dictionary. Teachers should take care to explicitly instruct students on how to go about finding the meanings of unfamiliar words. Because students are being fully immersed into two languages in a dual language model, it is crucial that teachers work diligently to increase student understanding by helping to define difficult words.

6. *Skill Development*

Aside from teaching students academic content, teachers have the important job of helping students to develop important skills. Within a dual language program, certain skills are more crucial than others. Students should be taught metacognitive skills that enable them to consider their thinking and select appropriate strategies in order to fill in any gaps. Metacognition skills include organizing, setting goals, defining a purpose, and connecting prior knowledge to new material. Dual language students must also be able to compensate for a lack of knowledge, as learning in a new language can often be full of unknown words, structure, and content. Students may need to learn how to make intelligent guesses, adjust the message, use appropriate synonyms, or use gesture to get

their point across. These compensation strategies may become one of the most important tools that beginning language learners possess. The newness of learning in a different language can also cause a lot of stress and anxiety within students. Being able to employ affective strategies such as using relaxation techniques, laughing, making positive statements, writing in a diary, and discussing their feelings with someone can all make the learning process for these students much easier and less straining. No matter the strategy being taught, teachers must take care to be very explicit in their skill instruction. Even when it seems obvious, they can never assume that students will know how to employ a certain strategy. Teachers should also provide students with ample opportunities to practice the skills that they are developing in order to ensure that they can use them effectively.

Administrative Implications:

1. Professional Development

As discussed many times throughout this paper, professional development and continuous learning are crucial elements of a successful program. Administrators should require staff, including themselves, to participate regularly in professional development programs. Administrators should research different programs in order to direct staff towards those which are most beneficial and relative to their needs. As discussed earlier, the most effective professional development programs are those that provide applicable teaching techniques and hands-on practice. It is also helpful if they go beyond the classroom, with in-class demonstrations with their own students and personalized

coaching according to their strengths and weaknesses. Professional development for dual language staff should also include instructional strategies and techniques that are beneficial for both English and non-English speaking students and should be backed by the latest scientific research.

2. *Monitoring and Evaluation*

In order to ensure that any program is yielding the kinds of results that are desired, there must be some sort of continuous monitoring and evaluation. In the years immediately following implementation of the program, administrators must be especially vigilant. In order to monitor and evaluate formally, student performance tests should be regularly administered and analyzed. This can range from teacher-created tests and quizzes to state-mandated tests. Administrators and teachers should work together to analyze and evaluate the data. These academic evaluations should focus not only on language outcomes, but, rather, achievement in all subject areas. Are there any gaps in achievement or areas of weakness? Administrators can use this data to form future plans and to make revisions to the program's structural and instructional features.

Administrators must also take time to go into the classroom and evaluate instruction. Sitting in on a lesson and meeting with the teacher afterwards to give positive and constructive feedback enables teachers to improve their instruction and gives administrators a chance to be hands-on within the program. In some cases, an on-site coach or facilitator may need to be brought in to make sure that everything is moving smoothly towards successful outcomes. Administrators should always engage in self-evaluation and should encourage teachers to do the same. Weekly reflection or self-

evaluation forms could be mandatorily turned in order to ensure that all practice is reflective.

3. *Support and Advocate*

As was mentioned many times throughout this paper, administrators must be fully supportive of the program and should fully believe in its potential to improve the education of both groups of students involved. Administrators should be prepared and willing to defend their program and the methodology that it is based on, as well as be able to articulate how it is best for the cognitive, social, affective development of students. Commitment to the program is crucial, meaning that administrators should be fully dedicated to taking the necessary steps to implement and maintain the best program possible. Administrators must be willing to stick to the model and guidelines that are set forth for the program prior to implementation and should not waver. This will involve strictly enforcing rules and issuing appropriate repercussions for any actions or behavior that call into question the integrity of the program. Because they should be supportive of and confident in the dual language program model, it should be no problem to take the necessary actions to ensure that it is run properly. By nature, dual language programs create a very diverse population. Administrators should also take care to advocate for a safe, tolerant, and culturally-inclusive learning environment in which appreciation for diversity is a central component. Overall, administrators must be the “cheerleaders” for their program, coming forth as the most prominent supporter and advocate.

4. *Knowledge of Program*

Along the same lines of being an advocate and supporter of the program, administrators must be very knowledgeable about the methodology and pedagogy behind the dual language model. This administrator, as the primary advocate of the group, must be able to explain all of the benefits of a dual language program versus other bilingual models to anyone who has questions, concerns, or wishes to argue against the practices used within the program. Administrators must also be aware of specific elements of the model that their program follows; for example, they should know whether language is distributed by time, topic, or person. This enables them to enforce rules that keep practice within the program consistent and reliable. Aside from being knowledgeable about all of the in's and out's of the current program, administrators should be fully committed to continuous learning and opportunities for growth. They may visit similar programs or attend conferences and seminars in order to broaden their understanding of the dual language model and to bring new, innovative ideas to the program.

5. *Support for Teachers and Students*

Administrators also have the influential role of working with all members of the dual language program—teachers, students, parents, and staff. With such a critical role within the program, it is important that administrators demonstrate full support for members of the program and do their best to make them feel that they are valued. They can show their support for teachers by acknowledging and possibly even rewarding achievements and by showing appreciation for their work. They can also be supportive of teachers' work by providing them with time during the day to plan and collaborate, allowing them to

prepare thoughtful and creative instructional plans. Administrators must also be supportive of the students, making sure that they feel that they are an important part of the program. Taking the time to get to know students, giving them praise and encouragement, holding them to high academic standards, and allocating helpful resources are all ways by which administrators can show their support and confidence in students.

Other Recommendations:

1. Equal Status of Languages

Aside from equally *distributing* languages, care should also be taken in making sure that each language is given equal *status* within the dual language classroom. Teachers should express the value and importance of *each* language and should be careful not to favor one over the other. Students should feel as if their home language is valuable, but should also feel that there is a benefit to acquiring the second language. This sentiment will not be accomplished within an environment in which one language is dominant. For this reason, it is critical that teachers adhere to the language distribution model that has been selected for their program and that they do not, for any reason, waver. Admittedly, equal status of language may be difficult in a society that is very English dominant. However, teachers must try their best to alleviate any inequality that may go on outside of the school inside of their classroom, by adhering to the language distribution model, providing students with equal amounts of resources in both languages, and not openly favoring either of the languages over the other.

2. *Parent Involvement*

Parent involvement is crucial within a dual language program. As noted before, bilingual programs tend to have a higher amount of parent involvement, perhaps due to the accepting, culturally-diverse nature of the program. Administrators and teachers should do their best to make sure that parents feel welcomed and valued within the program and should work hard to get them involved. Teachers should consider parents as a resource and should invite them to share their knowledge with the class. This may come in the form of sharing a piece of their cultural heritage with the class or by working with small groups of students on a language task. Parents should also keep parents involved in their child's education by encouraging them to share in decision making, volunteer at school, and tutor at home. Parent involvement comes in many forms, and teachers should be aware that some parents may feel less comfortable with certain kinds of involvement than others. All parents, however, should be encouraged to work with their children at home in order to support their educational growth. Teachers should provide parents with the necessary guidelines and resources that will enable them to work with their child at home. Overall, parents should feel that they are a crucial part of their child's education and should be given the opportunity to help foster their success.

3. *Positive School Environment*

Keeping in mind the importance of affect in language acquisition, administrators and teachers must work to create a positive, cohesive learning environment within the school. To begin with, the program should have pre-determined over-arching academic and behavioral goals and objectives set forth prior to implementation. In this way, the school

will be unified by a set of common goals for which they are all reaching. Also, teachers *should be willing to set aside time to collaborate with one another. This collaboration not only builds rapport amongst teachers, but it also provides them with the opportunity to improve each other's instruction by building off of their collective strengths.* With common academic goals, collaboration becomes even more beneficial. A dual language program must also foster an environment that is welcoming and accepting of cultural diversity. This idea can be reinforced through teacher's lessons, signs and posters in the physical environment, sharing amongst students, etc. Teachers should also take care to build a sense of community within the classroom, ensuring that all students feel safe and cared about. Feeling valued can help build confidence and self-esteem and lower anxiety in students, all of which are helpful in improving academic performance. There are a number of other ways that the entire school can build a sense of community and caring, whether it is by having a mascot, a school song, school pride assemblies, etc. Teachers, administrators, and staff must take the matter of building a cohesive school environment very seriously and should do all that is in their power to be certain that students have positive feelings about the program.

4. *Teacher Quality*

Without quality educators, no program can be successful. That is why it is critical that dual language programs employ the best teachers available. The question is, what are the qualities of a fit dual language educator? The first, most critical element is their language skill. Ideally, the teacher should be a native speaker. Native speakers provide the best, most error-free language input possible and, therefore, are the best models for language

learners. However, hiring all native speakers may not always be a feasible task.

Administrators should do their best to hire teachers with the highest level of language skill possible. The teacher must be able to speak fluently in the minority language and should be able to use a wide range of simple and complex vocabulary. Administrators should look carefully at the teacher's certification, ensuring that they have adequate training in the language of instruction. Aside from language competence, teacher candidates should also display a certain amount of knowledge of dual language programs, a commitment to the pedagogy that is behind dual language programs, and enthusiasm about being a part of the program. They should also demonstrate a desire to continue learning and developing as a professional. Administrators should take time to carefully analyze and evaluate the experiences, attitudes, and abilities of the teacher candidates. The hiring of a dual language program teacher should be no simple task, as their competence is an absolutely crucial component of the program's overall success.

Conclusion

Discussion

The goal of this paper was to determine which programs proved most successful at closing the academic achievement gap as well as which programs yielded positive affective, or emotional, results. After extensively examining the literature, bilingual language programs seem to be the most successful in narrowing, if not completely eliminating, the achievement gap. Bilingual programs allow students to maintain and use their native language while developing a second language, which the research shows to be more beneficial than transitioning students to

English without using the native language as a tool. More specifically, one bilingual program model seems to stand forward from the rest in a number of ways. Dual language programs provide a unique opportunity that allows two groups of students from different language backgrounds to develop a new language while still maintaining and learning in their own native language. Within this program, students not only receive support from their teachers in the acquisition of the second language, but also from their peers. An extensive amount of research indicated that students within dual language programs not only closed the achievement gap and met the achievement levels of their peers, but that they often *exceeded* them. Students within dual language programs also expressed feelings of pride, motivation, and confidence, while students in other programs indicated a sense of frustration at losing fluency in their native language. In the research that was reviewed for this paper, a dual language program model seemed to be the only that proved consistently successful on both the academic and affective level.

Significance

With a significant difference in the academic achievement of English-speaking and ELL students in the schools of the United States, finding a program that can serve the needs of language learners is critical. Although the research indicates that dual language programs yield higher academic achievement results than transitional programs, the latter remains the most prevalent program in schools across the nation. Research also warns against moving students into mainstream programs prior to their *full* language development, which typically takes upwards of five years. However, these transitional programs that are found in a majority of schools seek to

push students into English-only classrooms as soon as possible, often before an adequate level of language development has been achieved. This paper presents an alternative to the currently predominant programs that is supported by a significant amount of research. The dual language program that is recommended not only allows students the opportunity to maintain their native language as well as adequate time to fully acquire a second language, but also proves to be cognitively, socially, and emotionally beneficial for students involved. This paper also synthesizes important research on effective instructional and administrative practice as well as factors of success within dual language programs, which provides administrators, teachers, and school districts with the tools to implement a highly effective program. Overall, the literature reviewed and recommendations set forth provide a framework for a program model that may have the ability to transform the current nature of the education of ELL students.

Limitations

As with any research project, this paper has limitations that should be noted. First, with such a short amount of time it was nearly impossible to review and analyze a large body of research. Although there were many research articles reviewed for this paper, perhaps with more time there could have been even more research done. Without being able to examine the research at such extensive lengths, it is impossible to conclude that all research is in accordance with the findings in this paper. Although the research seemed fairly conclusive about the positive outcomes of dual language programs, it is also a possibility that there is more research out there that found negative results within these programs. Also, this paper only concerned itself with bilingual program models, which are not always feasible within certain communities. Further research could have been done to determine which non-bilingual programs are able to yield the most positive results for ELL students. Without this information, the paper is not able to provide

practical recommendations for a number of school districts. Finally, there are potential drawbacks that this paper is not able to provide concrete solutions for. The English dominant society in which we live in creates difficulties for the equality of language status and language distribution for students and may result in less than total immersion for English-speaking students. Research would have to be done and considerations made in order to determine a way to alleviate this potential drawback of dual language programs.

Implications for Future Research

Although the research is vast on the topic of bilingual and dual language educational programs, there must be more effort made to find practical ways to bring effective bilingual education programs to the bulk of US schools. It seems that the transitional program has become the most prevalent type, because it is the most simple, realistic solution to the increasing quantities of diverse language learners. Although dual language programs have proven to be highly effective, research must also focus on ways to transform the same additive, maintenance type of program into something that is applicable to a community that is composed of more than one large minority language group. Because these types of communities are becoming more common across the country, school districts must implement programs that often do not support the maintenance of the primary language, quickly transition students into mainstream classrooms, and employ teachers who do not speak the native language of the students. Researchers in this field must strive to produce a program model that meets the needs of these school districts and that also includes some of the more salient features of dual language programs: longer participation time, maintenance of the primary language, supportive peer work, etc. At the very least, research should be focused on which non-bilingual programs yield the

most positive academic and affective results, just as this paper did for bilingual programs, in order to improve instruction for ELL students within these more diverse communities.

Also, researchers should focus on finding ways to alleviate the potential drawbacks of dual language programs. Issues such as continuous codeswitching and English dominance present challenges for the success of these programs. More research must be done to discover why these issues arise in certain programs and how to avoid these setbacks, if possible. More extensive research should also be done on the successes and failures of each type of bilingual program model currently being implemented throughout the country in order to provide a more concrete determination of which type of program is able to provide ELL students with the best education possible. This paper focused primarily on the failures of subtractive, transitional programs, but more research can be done to determine whether other types of programs are able to yield similar or possibly even better results than dual language programs. In short, it is impossible to discover the best way to educate minority language students without delving deeper into the research and further analyzing the literature.

Although there are limitations to the research that was done within this paper, the outstanding amount of evidence in favor of the dual language program model speaks to the potential promise that this type of program can have for both ELL as well as English-dominant students. In our ever-diversifying world, the need to provide students of varying language backgrounds is becoming increasingly more important. The inability to give these students the type of support that they need has created an academic achievement gap between ELL and English-dominant students that cannot be ignored. Taking into consideration the research and recommendations set forth in this paper, teachers, administrators, and school districts should feel

empowered to create programs that accommodate for the needs of language learning and provide students with the type of support and instruction that is necessary for their academic growth.

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