

## **Bilingual Programs and Issues**

### **Investigating the Long-Term Effects of a Project Follow Through Bilingual Education Model: Culturally Democratic Learning Environments**

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This study evaluated the long-term (25-35 years) effects of a Follow Through bilingual-multicultural elementary model (K-3), Culturally Democratic Learning Environments (CDLE). The short-term findings of the CDLE model, obtained while the program was being implemented, indicated that it was an effective bilingual education program for teaching Mexican American students who were at risk for academic underachievement and failure. The long-term findings investigated in this study indicated that years enrolled in the CDLE program significantly influenced Mexican values endorsed and Spanish language usage. Furthermore, former CDLE students had significantly higher rates of graduation and multiculturalism than former control students. Compensatory education and multicultural programs have long-term positive effects and encourage effective participation in our diverse society.

## **Pathways to Bilingualism: Young Children's Home Experiences Learning English and Spanish.**

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This study explores the ways in which two young children learn English and Spanish at home, and the role of early childhood centers in educating children bilingually. At the beginning of the study the two participants Josefina Cortes and Kayla Jimenez (pseudonyms chosen by their families) were 16 and 15 months old. Josefina lives with her mother and father and her 11-year old brother. Josefina's mother is fluent in Spanish and understands and speaks some English; her brother and father are bilingual.

Kayla's family includes her mother and father and her 4-year-old sister. Her mother and sister speak both English and Spanish, the father speaks English and understands some Spanish. Since Kayla was 14 months she has been spending about 8 hours a day, 4 days a week with her maternal great grandmother, who talks to her in Spanish.

The methodology includes participant observation, audiotaping and interviews with all members of the family. The researcher called the family in advance to schedule the monthly observation. Josefina has been observed at home for about 28 hours. Kayla was observed for about 40 hours, mostly, but not exclusively, in her great grandmother's home.

The data show two different patterns of language input, illustrating two ways of becoming bilingual dictated partly by each families' bilingual profile. Josefina's input at home is mostly in Spanish. Also, Josefina spends at least two weeks a year in the Dominican Republic with family who speak only Spanish. She receives about three hours of input in English daily through the television programs that she watches alone (mostly cartoons) and with her family. English is also used to teach Josefina the numbers, letters, greetings and manners. Since two years of age she has been attending two day care centers where, at her mother's request, she has been addressed in English. Josefina understands Spanish and English. She requests her wants and needs mostly in Spanish, she greets people in English, states some letters only in English and some numbers in English and Spanish.

For Kayla the main input at home is in English. Kayla's great grandmother, however, speaks to her mainly in Spanish; her mother and sister sometimes address her in Spanish. For example, Kayla's mother always reprimands her daughters in Spanish. Kayla watches television more often in English but watches cartoons in Spanish on weekends. Kayla understands English and Spanish but she speaks basically English and a few words in Spanish.

Early childhood centers have an essential role to play in educating children bilingually. First, they have to display a positive attitude toward these families' choices by accepting, respecting and promoting both their native language and English as recommended by NAEYC (1995). Secondly, early childhood personnel have to inform the families about the research on effective ways of developing balanced bilinguals (McLaughlin, 1992). Third, they have to promote

collaboration with the families and the community to adequately educate the many young children who are exposed at home to another language besides English (Sanchez & Thorp, 1998).

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# **Assessing Young Spanish-Speaking Children's Developing Early Literacy Skills Using Storybook Tools: La Aventura de Violeta y El Cambio en Dante**

Andrea DeBruin-Parecki

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The United States' overall national preschool Spanish-speaking population is growing rapidly (Bean, Cushing, & Haynes, 1997). According to the United States Department of Education, the number of Latino/Hispanic children enrolled in preschools as of 2001 exceeded 40% (USDOE, 2002). Many of these young children speak little or no English when entering preschool. Yet these children may have developing concepts about literacy's uses, functions, and forms that are not tapped by current curricula and testing and assessment practices (August & Hakuta, 1997; NICHD, 1999). Simply translating existing curricula and instruments into Spanish may not fully resolve these issues and may conceal rather than reveal children's emerging knowledge about literacy (NICHD, 1999; Tabors, Paez & Lope, 2002). It is important to understand the contexts in which children develop their growing literacy skills.

There is converging evidence that certain early literacy concepts predict young children's later reading achievement, including oral language (vocabulary and comprehension), concepts about print, alphabet recognition, and phonological awareness (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Most current assessments focus on concepts about print, alphabet knowledge, and phonological awareness. The Early Literacy Skills Assessment (ELSA) (DeBruin-Parecki, 2004) was created to be a comprehensive tool that measures the missing element of comprehension, as well these other literacy concepts.

The Spanish version of the ELSA, called La Aventura de Violeta (DeBruin-Parecki, 2004a), rather than being a simple translation, takes into consideration differences between the two languages that are relevant for the domains being tested. This presentation will describe the ELSA and discuss the Spanish validation study.

Data on the Spanish ELSA was collected in 2004-05 in Texas. There were 7 classes and 88 children with complete data, average age 4 years 4 months in this study. Teachers reported that 83% of the children had little or no understanding of English at the start of the study. All teachers trained to administer the instrument were bilingual. A professional translator and a linguistically skilled native speaker of Spanish was employed to translate the ELSA into Spanish, paying attention simultaneously to fidelity of the literacy domains and to characteristics of the Spanish language. Particularly challenging were features of rhyming and alliteration. The ELSA is administered by the child's trained teacher and takes approximately 20 minutes. It is done one on one with the child in a comfortable place. The child is scored on 23 questions, many with multiple parts. Items are scored for each of the topics within the four principles, i.e. comprehension includes prediction, retelling, and connection to life.

Reliability and validity was established in this study. Analyzed data demonstrated that the children in this study made significant progress across all 4 early literacy principles and each concept within them. It is also interesting to note the progress made in comprehension. Gain

scores indicate the Spanish speaking population made greater progress in comprehension than comparison populations (Head Start and Middle Class private preschool). Pre data has been collected and post data is currently being collected on this version and the new version *El Cambio en Dante*.

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