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DUAL LANGUAGE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN FOR
EDUCATING RECENT IMMIGRANT SECONDARY
STUDENTS ON THE TEXAS-MEXICO BORDER

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Abstract

The Literacy Program for Recent Immigrant Students is an English and Spanish program of instruction for recently immigrated secondary school students from Mexico to a south Texas school district. The major feature of this program is its design. Specifically, the design goes beyond state bilingual and English as a second language [ESL] instructional requirements, and has features not typical in other secondary ESL programs. These features include (a) the integration of language and content areas, (b) the use of two languages, Spanish and English, (c) the implementation of literacy strategies typically in elementary programs, (d) the design of instruction to accommodate two levels of Spanish literacy, prior schooling experiences and no English, (e) staff composition of Texas certified teachers and *profesoras* from Mexico teaming to provide bilingual instruction, and (f) a comprehensive plan for staff development. In addition to a description of the design, critical comments and insights are included to present successes of the program and areas needing improvement. Finally, questions are posed to stimulate thinking about how this design might be replicated.

When twelve to sixteen year old adolescent Mexican students enroll in Texas schools, they are often monolingual in Spanish, recent

immigrants, and have had interrupted schooling. These student characteristics present many challenges to the students themselves, their parents, teachers and administrators. The student first must adjust to the new school environment, then undertake the demanding task to learn the new language while acquiring academic knowledge simultaneously. Parents and school administrators have the responsibility to guide the student through the years of this arduous process to help him or her meet the state high school graduation requirements. In Texas, this means secondary course credits and a three-part English reading, language arts-writing, and mathematics test in the few short years of schooling they have left. School administrators must develop and apply expertise to design appropriate educational responses for this population to meet both legal and pedagogical requirements. The program described exemplifies how one small school district in south Texas on the US-Mexico border designed such an educational response. How this school district designed the program is as interesting as its implementation. Both are instructive to other schools with similar populations, who are searching for ways to prepare for the projected increase in this population (Cortez, et al., 1993).

South Texas Community

This community, located about 10 miles from the Texas-Mexico border, has a tropical climate, rich farmland, and vast commercial production which makes it attractive to people from Mexico seeking employment and a quiet place to live. The desire to learn English, aspirations for a good education, and the need to be near relatives who reside in the United States, are factors that also attract immigrants from Mexico into this and other border communities.

School District Demographics

This community of 15,000 has a school enrollment of 10,350 which is 99% Hispanic. Eighty-five percent enter school proficient in Spanish and limited in English proficiency. Forty-five percent are from migrant families. About 13% of the limited English proficient student population is "recent immigrant," meaning they have been in the country for less

than two years. Approximately 80% of the recent immigrants are from Mexico; the rest are from El Salvador and Guatemala. These students vary their residency between this United States community and their homes on the other side of the border. Some students move around on the United States side of the border with their parents, or alone, following seasonal labor jobs. Some young adults come to the United States alone specifically to attend school. This mobility makes it difficult for the schools to maintain accurate demographic data. Nevertheless, in any one day immigrant students can be found at their schools' doors. Because of the *Doe vs. Plyer* Supreme Court decision in 1982 (57 US 202) which prevents schools from denying them an education (Carrera, 1992), school doors must and do remain open. Students from this recent immigrant population, who were deemed to need the most assistance from the school district, were the population for whom this program was designed.

Program Background

The Literacy Program for Recent Immigrant Students represents a second language learning program atypical from other ESL programs for adolescents in the state of Texas. In 1991, this program began with special funds (for one year) provided by the state in response to an increase in the district's school enrollment which had reached the point of straining local school funds. The district's tax base, which stemmed from low-value property, amounted to allocations of only \$3,287 per student. Because of limited funds, the district realized it needed additional monies to expand service to its newcomer population. These monies came specifically from Chapter 2 discretionary funds which the Texas Education Agency granted to provide temporary relief to this district and several others. The program today continues with local funds. End-of-year evaluations, both formal and informal, showed this secondary instructional program had potential for creating additional educational opportunities for non-English proficient immigrant students.

Program Design

The program was organized using the concept of teams at two middle school campuses, all serving grades 6, 7 and 8. Each middle school campus housed approximately 1000 students. Each campus team consisted of a certified bilingual/ESL-endorsed teacher, a *profesora* or teaching assistant, and three content area teachers, totaling five members. These teams used differentiated staffing composed of one unit with mathematics, science, and social studies team members, and another unit with an ESL and reading team member, and a Spanish reading and language arts team member. A team teaching approach was used with the *profesora*, who taught in Spanish, and a certified and endorsed bilingual/ESL teacher who taught in English. Each team paired a teacher and teaching assistant, *profesora*, to achieve English and Spanish instruction in each of the areas taught in the program—English, Spanish, and content areas. Each team had the responsibility to organize, plan, and implement instruction. (See Staffing Section for details on *profesoras*.)

Five features of the program design are noteworthy because most secondary school programs in Texas lack them. These features are (a) a sensitivity to students with the most limited English skills and mainstream experiences, (b) instruction in two languages, (c) comprehensive instruction which extends horizontally to the four literacy skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing, and vertically to address all language proficiency levels, (d) both language and content instruction, and (e) the incorporation of student's cultural experiences into the curriculum. A major focus of the program design was the use of two languages for instruction. This dual language approach was based on the student's age, language abilities in English and Spanish, and previous schooling experiences.

Program Components

The program's five components are (a) identification, assessment, and placement, (b) curriculum, instruction and materials, (c) staffing, (d) staff development, and (e) parental involvement.

Identification, Assessment, and Placement. This component constituted a comprehensive assessment system for identifying, classifying and placing students into appropriate instruction. The comprehensive assessment system involved procedures required by the state, and consisted of screening and assessing students to determine if they qualified for specialized language services. The initial criterion for qualifying students for this program was recency of immigration, that is, being in the United States less than two years. The following assessment instruments then evaluated students in both languages: the *Language Assessment Scales-Oral* (LAS-O), English and LAS-O, Spanish (CTB McGraw-Hill, 1990). *The California Test of Basic Skills* (CTBS) assessed academic skills in English and the *Spanish Assessment of Basic Education* (SABE) assessed Spanish academic skills (CTB McGraw-Hill, 1988, 1987). These data were then reviewed by each campus' "Language Proficiency Assessment Committee" to make placement decisions. An additional assessment procedure was employed to enhance the information used for program placement.

The district's assessment involved a collective, informal observation procedure. Specifically, administrators and other program staff closely scrutinized the students' characteristics in the context of the entire school population, then used a scheme called "Student Categories" to place them.

The Student Categories scheme, as noted in Appendix A, is based on the school district's observations of certain student characteristics and the district's prediction about the probable degree to which these match, or are compatible with, the school environment and its programs. This scheme also described the projected intensity of assistance needed for each category. Six categories depicted the student characteristics with a corresponding "probable match" ranging from Almost Perfect Match to No Match. The description of student characteristics with each category included (a) when the students learned English, (b) English oral-literacy proficiency, (c) Spanish oral-literacy proficiency, (d) parental educational background and socio-economic status, and (e) nationality-residency. The Student Categories then acted as an informative tool to provide school district planners a visualization of what their student population was like, and helped them establish

program priorities, that is, to determine which programs needed to be implemented and for whom.

These Student Categories compare to other definitions of language proficiency levels, in that they have beginning, intermediate and advanced levels. For example, students with limited formal schooling (LFS) are generally recent arrivals to the United States, whose backgrounds differ significantly from the school environment they are entering. The reasons for these students' interrupted schooling vary and relate to war, poverty, patterns of migration, and remote rural settings. These students' characteristics include (a) "pre or semi-literacy in the native language, (b) minimal understanding of the function of literacy, (c) performance significantly below grade level, and (d) lack of awareness of the organization and culture of the school" (TESOL, 1995).

Using both informal and formal assessment procedures described above, sixty middle school students (grades 6, 7 and 8 ages 12-16) participated in the program. Specifically, if students fell into Category 6, "No Match" (that is, having little to no English oral language skills but two distinct levels of Spanish language skills as a result of schooling experiences in their home country), then they were subcategorized into Dimension I and Dimension II students. Dimension I students had little or no Spanish academic skills, while Dimension II students possessed varying levels of Spanish academic skills which were deemed sufficient to benefit from a more accelerated instruction in Spanish.

Curriculum, Instruction and Materials. Dual language instruction provided all Dimension I and II students with a three-year instructional plan to help each group develop skills at their proficiency levels. This three-year plan for Dimension I and II students included (a) an integrated, disciplinary curriculum with a whole language philosophy, (b) instructional strategies and materials with specialized instruction in both Spanish and English in reading, language arts, and writing, with a content-based model for mathematics, science and social studies, and (c) a culture component integrated across the curriculum.

For example, the curriculum incorporated throughout the language areas the use of whole language principles to form a foundation for instruction in English and Spanish literacy. Emphasis was given to oral skills and emergent literacy in English and in Spanish (Heald-Taylor, 1989; Perez and Torres-Guzman, 1992). Other instructional features of

literacy development included (a) the integration of reading and writing, (b) literature-based activities, (c) read-aloud techniques, (d) process writing, (e) journal writing, (f) sustained silent reading, (g) a talk-environment to integrate oral skills, culture and social oriented activities, and (h) a classroom assessment and monitoring process which included observations and informal reading inventories. Some instructional materials such as the MacMillan's basal reading program and a *High School Spanish-Speaking Students' Guide* (New York City Board of Education, 1982) were used for Spanish and English literacy development. In the content areas, the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) provided a content area model to teach learning strategies to students who had some English skills and who were ready to participate in English content instruction (Chamot and O'Malley, 1986). Instructional features for content area instruction in mathematics, science, and social studies included (a) development of key vocabulary for each content lesson, (b) use of sheltered techniques to assist in the reading of text, such as the Survey-Question-Read-Recite-Review (SQ3R) strategy, (c) integration of study skills such as note taking, organizing and sequencing, and (d) incorporation of the four language skills into content lessons. *Finding/Out Descubrimiento* (DeAvila et al., 1987) instructional material was used in Spanish and English for science and mathematics instruction which supported cooperative grouping and student discourse exchanges. Social studies activities also integrated relevant cultural topics and readings, especially ones familiar to the *profesoras*.

For a smooth transition between Spanish and English reading and writing skills, attention was given to the linguistic and cultural differences between both languages. Reading and writing' literacy activities to ease transition included instructional techniques to bridge Spanish to English reading through (a) a gradual increase of word recognition reading strategies beginning with transferable skills such as similar phonetic sounds and positive cognates, (b) comprehension strategies for higher level thinking skills, (c) integration of study skills, and (d) materials used in mainstream language arts classes to develop and reinforce traditional reading and writing instruction.

For English oral language skills, ESL classes were grounded in the second language acquisition philosophy supported by Krashen (1992).

Krashen's philosophy incorporated the natural approach (Terrell, 1977) which provides comprehensible input and communicative activities to teach students at the beginning levels of English. Cooperative learning (Kagan, 1986) and Curran's Counseling Language Learning Method (Hadley, 1993) were also used to emphasize meaningful student-teacher discourse and classroom interaction. Activities with a theme-oriented focus, using topics specifically familiar to students and linked to their cultures and community experiences, were a central part of this ESL instruction. Some instructional materials used for oral-literacy development and content area instruction included state-adopted Addison-Wesley *ESL Learning Systems Grades 6-8* and Santillana's *An Ant About Town* and *Bridges for Communication*.

Each campus team then delineated this curriculum and instructional strategies for implementation. The instructional responsibilities were divided between the teacher-*profesora* teams: Spanish instruction in mathematics, science and social studies areas and Spanish reading and language arts were delivered by the *profesoras* and supervised by a certified ESL/bilingual teacher; English instruction was implemented by the certified teachers. Both *profesoras* and teachers attended staff development training and learned how to apply instructional strategies and informal and formal classroom assessment procedures to monitor instructional progress and adjust instruction to move students from one difficulty level to another in both languages and in content area instruction, and from one language to another.

Dimension I. This instruction was for students who had little or no English oral-literacy skills, had limited Spanish literacy skills, and were below the sixth grade in Spanish. This group fit the Student Categories description, "No Match." In year one of the three-year plan students' basic instruction included ESL, mathematics, and Spanish reading and language arts by the *profesoras* and teachers. They also received intensive English language development through the natural approach and Spanish reading and language arts. Spanish instruction in mathematics, science, and social studies was integrated into the literacy activities. Since Spanish language literacy skills were few, content area instruction was basic, focusing on exposure to core concepts and vocabulary. Additionally, Dimension I students received basic Spanish reading and native language arts instruction using portions of the *Open*

Court basal Spanish reading program for word recognition and phonetic skills and using whole language literacy techniques, such as read aloud and guided writing. Spanish instruction then built a foundation from which students would use to eventually transfer to English reading and language arts skills and strengthen students' native language and culture. In years two and three, Dimension I students' basic instruction included ESL, Spanish reading and language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies classes. ESL instruction was extended from oral language to include instruction in initial reading and writing and basic content area concepts and the English Macmillan basal was introduced. Spanish instruction extended into additional reading and writing skills, and to mathematics, science, and social studies. Additional instructional modifications for content areas were in English for low levels of reading and writing to support the emergent literacy skills of Dimension I students. English language arts instruction included transitional strategies for those students who were ready to shift to English language arts as taught to mainstream English students. *The Ant About Town* instructional materials had controlled English reading and writing activities and were used to support the ESL, mathematics, science, social studies and electives classes. Once they demonstrated competent literacy levels as tested by the *Language Assessment Scales-English, Reading and Writing*, the students were able to transition into on-level instruction in either sheltered or mainstream classrooms.

Central to instruction was the incorporation of materials and topics into lessons and activities that related to the students' immediate world, their immigrant experiences and cultural background. This was attempted in both English and Spanish. The teachers employed cooperative learning groupings, peer tutoring, and classroom management techniques such as the use of positive reinforcement of behavior and academic performance and clustering desks together in small groups to facilitate the interactive, communicative type of instruction called for in the teaching approaches embraced by the program. With Dimension I students' academic and literacy limitations in both languages and formal schooling experiences, the work within groups and scheduling in and out of groups were often more teacher-mediated. The intent was that by the third year, Dimension I students would have attained higher levels of cognitive academic

language proficiency in their literacy skills in both languages and some skills in mathematics, science and social studies comparable to mainstream English students, even if these were in another language.

Instruction for Dimension I students was a unique aspect of this design. Typically, secondary instruction for adolescent limited English proficient students does not address the students' academic and literacy needs, and has English (not native) language development only at a very basic oral language level, with little or no support for transition into English orality and literacy and academic development across the curriculum. Indeed, a traditional secondary instructional model for these students generally has shown limited use of these concepts and strategies for instruction.

Dimension II. Dimension II students had little or no English skills, had literacy skills in Spanish, and were above the six grade level in Spanish academic development. This group also fit the Student Category, "No Match." Because of Spanish literacy skills, these students proceeded to acquire English literacy, oral skills, and content area knowledge faster. Modifications and pacing of instruction from Spanish to English instruction were more accelerated. In year one of the three-year plan, like Dimension I students, these students received intensive English language development using the natural approach. English instruction was also extended from oral language to include initial reading and writing which integrated content-based concepts and skills. The academic and literacy levels of English for mathematics, science, and social studies instruction was tailored to beginning/intermediate English proficiency levels to support the emergent literacy skills of the Dimension II students. Unlike Dimension I, Dimension II students were taught Spanish content areas in order to ensure that Spanish academic literacy skills developed in preparation for mainstreaming. Since the students possessed native language literacy skills, content instruction incorporated more CALLA learning strategies. Specifically, they integrated reading and writing activities such as process writing with related literature for mathematics, science, and social studies instruction. Spanish literacy skills were taught using whole language and other literacy techniques. For example, students read more advanced literature texts independently, were involved in journal writing, read aloud, and sustained silent reading. As with Dimension I

students, Spanish instruction was included primarily to enhance their literacy foundation from which to eventually transfer to English reading and language arts. Students also attended elective classes such as physical education, music, and art taught by mainstream teachers, totaling six one-hour classes.

In years two and three, English instruction continued to extend reading and writing using problem solving, meaningful situation topics, and cooperative learning grouping patterns. Dimension II students' Spanish instruction extended reading and writing skills by using whole language strategies with authentic literature, shared reading, and peer grouping. English language development included more transitional strategies, for those students who were ready, to help make the eventual shift to English reading and language arts as taught in mainstream classes. At the same time, Spanish instruction in mathematics, science and social studies decreased while English instruction increased, in the effort to mainstream students. To gradually decrease Spanish instruction, teachers modified instruction using CALLA strategies in English and used Spanish to translate concepts for comprehension. Instruction also incorporated more opportunities for group work with materials and topics that related to the students' immediate world, immigrant experiences, and cultural background, in both English and Spanish. The intent was that in year two, Dimension II students' literacy skills in Spanish and English reading would increase, and that mathematics, science and social studies skills would be comparable to those of mainstream English students.

Dimension II students' instruction added the same unique aspect of design found in instruction for Dimension I students: it addressed academic needs and English language literacy skills, both with the use of the native language. Similarly, this dimension used traditional learning strategies to facilitate transfer of knowledge from one level of English to another, and from the native language to English. Dimension II instruction assumed that students with more advanced literacy skills could work relatively more independently and advance more readily with an existing schema of academic and literacy skills.

Staffing. A unique program feature was the arrangement of program staff into campus teams and the use of *profesoras* or teaching assistants. Each campus team paired a teacher and *profesora* to deliver English and

Spanish instruction in reading, language arts, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. The *profesoras* were teachers from Mexico, hired as assistants to teach Spanish language development and to assist in other ways to implement the district's bilingual/ESL program. *Profesoras* were licensed Mexican teachers with credentials and degrees mostly from Mexican teacher preparation schools, the *Escuelas Normales*. Since teaching credentials from Mexico are not equivalent to the baccalaureate degree needed to acquire teaching credentials in the United States, these professionals were only eligible for employment at the teacher assistant level. They were hired as non-credentialed staff (not teacher aides) to provide a valuable resource especially because of their strong Spanish skills. The *profesoras* were responsible for teaching Spanish language development, a role guided and supervised by the bilingual/ESL teacher on their team. The *profesoras* strengthened the teams by teaching the content areas in Spanish and by integrating knowledge of student's culture across the curricula. Staff development exposed the *profesoras* to the pedagogy of Texas schools and facilitated in the alignment of their previous teaching experience.

Overall, the *profesoras* were an asset to the program because of their Spanish skills, familiarity with the students' culture, professional training, and previous teaching experience.

Staff Development. The program's staff development for year one provided initial training by national, regional, and local consultants to the teams in the instructional approaches employed by the program. More intense three to four monthly training sessions were incorporated in the first four months of the school year using one to two day or three to four hour training sessions after school work hours. Specifically, the training included knowledge on (a) the natural approach and second language acquisition, (b) whole language philosophy, (c) CALLA, (d) the Counseling Language Learning Method, (e) transitional reading techniques, (f) process writing, (g) adaptations of key approaches for Spanish instruction, (h) cooperative learning and grouping patterns, (i) classroom management for lesson planning and positive behavior modifications, (j) instructional lesson planning, (k) strategies to integrate culture into the classroom, and (l) informal assessment techniques. The program director facilitated a follow-through of the staff development training to guide teachers on how to plan lessons for students with

different language and academic literacy levels. The program director also provided orientations to district curricular materials and state adopted textbooks and parental training on such topics as acculturation, roles of parents, and school procedures. [See Parent Involvement Section for details.]

Staff development training also aimed at a more in-depth understanding of the student's culture and the pedagogy of the home country and of the United States. The staff development allowed for Texas and Mexican teachers to adopt the best of each other's instructional practices. In addition, through staff development, Texas teachers attempted to perfect their Spanish skills, discovered the content of Mexican academic programs, and deepened their knowledge of Mexican culture. Further, the *profesoras* began to learn English and the policies and practices of Texas schools, and to align their philosophy of teaching with Texas schools and to apply methodologies based on this philosophy. They specifically learned how to implement strategies unique only to Texas schools such as, to work with small groups, guide interactive tasks, and employ a variety of instructional media and resources. Staff development also encouraged the *profesoras* to pursue a Texas bachelor's degree in teaching by recommending and paying for courses for university credit.

Parent Involvement. Parent involvement linked parent concerns and their needs for helping their children in school. Even though all students did not always live with their parents in this community—some lived with relatives and friends—the district still understood the importance of this component and the need to involve extended family members living in the community. The school established a communication system to assess their needs and concerns through phone conversations, take-home notes in Spanish, after-school programs, and visitations by a full-time parental liaison. Parent training sessions included (a) orientations on strategies to help their children with academic studies at home and in school, and (b) strategies for parent-teacher conferencing. The parental liaison's role and responsibilities included (a) providing for work on behalf of the recent immigrant students' parents, (b) helping parents understand the school and the program, and (c) advising parents about school resources such as the school nurse, counselors, and student organizations.

Summary

The Literacy program for Recent Immigrant Students, a dual language secondary level program designed by a south Texas school district, contained these characteristics not typical in other secondary programs for limited English proficient students:

1. Instruction which incorporated relevant theories of second language learning and literacy;
2. Instruction which incorporated state and federal laws and regulations relevant to bilingual education and ESL program requirements;
3. Instruction which addressed students with beginning levels of English oral-literacy proficiency and two levels of native language proficiency;
4. ESL instruction which focused on oral language development skills needed for transition to literacy and language arts instruction;
5. Literacy and language arts instruction which addressed both Spanish and English skills, and transitional instruction focusing on similarities and differences between languages;
6. Mathematics, science and social studies instruction which used both languages;
7. Instruction which infused students' cultural backgrounds and immigrant experiences into cultural activities throughout the curricula as a way to facilitate acculturation;
8. Instruction which relied significantly on state-adopted bilingual and ESL curricula and which encompassed recent and innovative language and literacy methodology;
9. Current supplementary materials and resources which supported the curricula;
10. Staff development which provided training in key instructional methodologies, enhanced staff skills in the two languages, and deepened pedagogical issues, such as literacy, second language acquisition, and integration of language and content; and
11. Parent involvement and support services which assisted parents to understand the school's role in educating their child and how they could help in this process.

Reflections on Design Success

This program design was implemented for one year with financial support from the state and now continues with local support. The state funds for the first year were granted to accomplish both program design and implementation. The most significant accomplishment was the program design.

The district's ESL and bilingual education director worked with instructional and evaluation consultants to conceptualize this design. Their thoughts about the appropriateness and viability of the design went beyond the one-year state support. The district's vision of this program design proved to be an asset for the immigrant student populations, even though implementation of the program, then and now, has had its fluctuations with constant problems of insufficient monies, teacher shortages, untrained personnel, and challenging state requirements. The design is also considered progressive, with its incorporation of current theories, methodologies and curricula, and is one that could work in districts with similar student populations.

The program implementation during the year of state support was evaluated, as required by the state, using the assessment instruments indicated in the Identification, Assessment, and Placement Section: an external evaluator assessed the five program components to determine significant change in student performance. Although the outcomes were not conclusive because of the program's one year duration, the outcomes did provide some support for the program design's success. In brief, test assessment results showed some quantitative gains in Spanish and English achievement. Comments by teachers, students, and parents about the program indicated that the program was well-received by students, teachers and administrators. In particular, the students felt they were learning in school, wanted to attend classes, and were liked by their peers.

Critical Comments and Recommendations

Today, as districts plan for this growing population of students with limited formal schooling, three critical challenges are identified to meet the academic and literacy needs of these students. Critical challenges

include (1) monies and legislation, (2) qualified bilingual teachers, and (3) state graduation requirements.

Monies and legislation. The first challenge, monies and legislation, fluctuates as frequently as student enrollment. Recent federal legislation, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1993, has alerted Texas-Mexico border communities to the continued governmental efforts to bridge relations between the two countries, pointing to a growing number of newcomers in their schools. A recent study (Robledo-Montecel, 1994), contracted to the Intercultural Development Research Association by the Texas Education Agency, supports the realization of increased enrollment in Texas public schools. This study reviewed existing immigration trends and education patterns, through data analysis and interviews with school administrators, to indicate five major areas that impact these students' success in school. These areas included student identification, student educational program placement, transition and follow-up, comprehensive support services, and family educational development, all of which were addressed in this program model.

With the expected 7.5% to 14% annual growth of the U.S. Mexican immigrant population with the implementation of NAFTA, it is expected that within five years Texas public schools will have 75,000 to 150,000 additional persons (Robledo-Montecel, 1994). Hence, federal and state regulatory requirements will need to match the continuation of services to these students. Additional monies are needed to meet the ever-changing state and federal requirements, especially if districts are to meet the academic and literacy needs of recent immigrants. International border towns, in particular, are faced with daily, rapid increases in student enrollment making them more vulnerable to critical shortages in resources, facilities and teachers.

One recommendation is to adopt state legislation and policies for these students. One Texas legislation, Chapter 89. Adaptations for Special Populations Subchapter A. State Plan for Educating Limited English Proficient Students (TEA, 1993) requires (a) implementation of special language programs for limited English proficient students, (b) development of an identification, classification and placement process, (c) use of trained and certified bilingual and/or ESL teachers, (d) modification of instructional methodologies, (e) use of state adopted

instructional materials, and (f) a comprehensive yearly evaluation. Yet, though Texas mandates monies for use with these students, not all states do. Additional regulatory measures are needed to provide an avenue for quality programs to continue. Districts need to understand how to manage multiple programs, to integrate services and academic programs, and to combine funding sources so as to develop quality programs for recent immigrants.

Qualified bilingual teachers. The second challenge, qualified bilingual teachers, drives districts to compete with each other to hire these teachers. The search for bilingual teachers with state approved teaching credentials often strains the district's pool of teachers and expands the teacher shortage. Additional state support to initiate creative ways, such as the one this district innovated, to recruit, train, and retain qualified bilingual teachers from other countries, states or regions, is needed. Training teachers cannot be achieved alone.

Two recommendations include (1) collaboration between school districts and teacher training universities which have bilingual programs, or who wish to develop one, and (2) creating recruitment plans. The first recommendation, in particular, can be for university teacher educators to design their curricula to combine theory and practice and integrate field-based experiences. Courses, for example, can be created with an alternative schedule using blocked credit hours to allow additional time to lecture in Spanish, integrate disciplines, and provide opportunities for students to use Spanish in formal lectures, lesson planning, and teaching experiences within a district's bilingual program. Even though most bilingual teachers trained in the United States are proficient speakers of Spanish, usually neither native Spanish speakers born in the United States nor non-native speakers have been schooled in Spanish. This, in turn, translates to a strong academic language in English rather than in Spanish, giving more reason to conduct as many bilingual education university courses in Spanish, as possible.

A second recommendation requires that districts devise a recruitment plan to search for teachers from Spanish speaking countries, knowing they will have complete control of the demanding academic language in Spanish to teach subjects such as world history, biology, algebra, and other mathematics, science, and social studies content areas. Districts must understand that these teachers' strengths may be in

Spanish, but not necessarily in English nor in US pedagogical philosophies and current second language instructional principles, thus necessitating ongoing inservice staff development. These differences imply the need to coordinate district needs with university teacher training programs.

For example, training the *profesoras* on linguistic and cultural differences between Spanish and English could be conducted through a comprehensive staff development plan, in addition to university courses, that emphasizes (a) acculturation and assimilation process for them and their students, and (b) awareness and sensitivity to the unique features of the bilingual communities along the Texas-Mexico border.

State graduation requirements. The third challenge, state high school graduation requirements, can often be a roadblock for these students. In Texas, the passage of a three-part state English/reading, language arts/writing, and mathematics examination, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), and 21 credit hours in an approved core curriculum demands a command of English. Yet, for Texas, or any other state, to make its high school graduation standards achievable, joint efforts involving institutions of higher education, public schools, and state governments need to be considered. Two recommendations that can help us improve students' success and their ability to meet state requirements are (1) that minimum competency tests "be closely tied and thoroughly integrated into the curriculum" (Geisinger, 1992: 59); and, (2) that a comprehensive learner-centered outcomes process be established (Hewlett-Gómez, 1992).

The first recommendation focuses on "curriculum alignment." In order to do this, "districts must have learner-centered outcomes, think broadly, and align an assessment process in curriculum and mastery standards. Instructional modifications and remediations can be integrated into the curriculum for each discipline as deemed necessary for mastery (Hewlett-Gómez, 1992). Choosing assessment alternatives, such as portfolios, end of unit or course tests, self-monitoring/self-evaluation learner strategies (Chamot and O'Malley, 1986), and informal inventories would be an important step to this alignment. The second recommendation, developing learner-centered outcomes, would involve four steps: (a) defining who would be eligible, that is, determining which students should or should

not take competency tests; (b) training teachers in curriculum and assessment issues, integrating this training with district and state efforts to align curriculum and revise competency requirements; (c) training policy and decision makers in a similar fashion; and (d) identifying assessment alternatives for limited English proficient students (Hewlett-Gómez, 1992).

Today, teachers and policy decision makers have limited knowledge on how to assess students' academic progress, much less their language proficiency, or how to interpret test results, or how to design and implement an aligned curriculum with an appropriate instructional program. In order for graduation to become a reality for these students, districts need to (1) coordinate and integrate instruction within and across disciplines, (2) identify instructional needs in both languages, (3) develop a communication system between parents and community, and (4) integrate staff development with curricula and teacher needs. With these innovations, schools can readily begin to address these students' desire to learn and stay in school. For districts, such as this one, which have begun to meet these challenges, their recent immigrants will have a better chance to graduate from high school in a timely manner.

The realities of a rural community facing the challenges to provide a "meaningful" educational program for newcomers vary with students' degrees of formal schooling. Each newcomer, however, that enrolls in a school hopes to achieve his or her "ideal-American" dreams—to learn English and to receive a high school diploma.

Final Questions and Reflections

This South Texas school district offers a dual language instructional program believing it possesses instructional and organizational features which facilitate the linguistic and academic development of these students. Expert consultants think the design is a viable one for other districts with similar populations. To generalize this design to other schools, some important issues and questions must be addressed related to (a) technical aspects of the design, (b) research support for the design, and (c) acceptance of the design by school personnel.

Technical aspects. Does the design match present staffing and organizational characteristics of secondary schools? Does it meet state requirements and guidelines, for ESL and bilingual education as well as secondary education?

Research support. Are there other designs that have been effectively implemented elsewhere? Is there research evidence for the effectiveness of such instructional methods at the secondary level, particularly the dual language method? Is there evidence supporting the use of professionals from foreign countries in United States K-12 schools?

Acceptance of design. Can this design be implemented by secondary personnel who typically have resisted both native language use in the classroom and innovative strategies for integrated language and content teaching? Can this design be implemented locally when traditionally only special outside funds have induced teachers to try out innovations?

These questions, though few, are ones which districts, policy makers, and consultants must ask, as they seek to improve instruction for secondary school students, who are recent US immigrants with limited formal schooling.

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Appendix

Student Categories

Probable Degree of Match: Observed Student Characteristics

1. *Almost Perfect Match:* These students (a) have learned English in preschool years, (b) have sufficient English to participate in grade level, mainstream instruction independently, (c) have varying degrees of communicative Spanish developed at home and community, (d) have college educated parents with average to high socioeconomic status, and (e) are US-born and schooled.

Need: Can function in the system with little or no assistance.

2. *Good Match:* These students (a) have learned English in preschool years, (b) have sufficient English to participate in grade level and mainstream instruction independently, (c) have varying degrees of communicative Spanish developed at home and in the community, (d) have high school educated parents with average socioeconomic status, and (e) are US-born and schooled.

Need: More assistance than first group.

3. *Fair Match:* These students (a) have learned English during their preschool years, (b) have sufficient proficiency in oral English skills but have difficulty with school work, (c) have learned communicative Spanish simultaneously with English, (d) have parents with less than a high school education and with average to low incomes, and (e) are US-born and schooled.

Need: Significant amount of assistance.

4. *Very Limited Match:* These students (a) have just begun to learn English, (b) have poorly developed language proficiency in English and have difficulty with school work in English, (c) have learned Spanish as a first language and are proficient in communicative Spanish, (some students have some academic Spanish equally as low as academic English while others have some basic academic Spanish skills), (d) have parents with less than a high school education with low socioeconomic

status, and (e) may be US-born with strong roots in Spanish or are immigrants with three years or longer in the US.

Need: Substantial assistance to succeed.

5. *Almost No Match*: These students (a) have just begun to learn English, (b) have limited to no proficiency in English and can not use it for school work, c) often are more comfortable orally communicating in Spanish, (d) have parents with no education and low socioeconomic status, and (e) may be US-born with strong roots in Spanish or are immigrants with three years or longer in the US.

Need: Substantial assistance to succeed.

6. *No Match*: These students (a) have not begun to learn English, (b) have no proficiency in English and could not use it for school work, (c) have learned Spanish as a first language and are orally proficient in Spanish. Some students have none or very little written or academic Spanish, while others have basic academic Spanish skills (d) have parents with little to no education and low socioeconomic status, and (e) are recent immigrants with two years or less in the US.

Need: Substantial assistance to succeed.