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ABSTRACT

This report presented the final evaluation of a Bilingual-Bicultural Program in a community school in the Bronx, grades one through six. The project was designed to increase the spoken English language comprehension of elementary school age children who were found to be below the 20th percentile on the Language Assessment Battery. Ten educational assistants worked closely with 168 target youngsters in activities that ranged from individualized instruction, to small group work, to testing, diagnosing, and prescribing interventions. The primary goal of these activities was to bring each participant to a higher level of competence in using and understanding English. The findings of the evaluation were that the major goal was not fully realized, in spite of very well coordinated, highly professional effort on the part of project staff members. Only 47.1 percent (short of the 65 percent goal) of the students participating in the project gained the expected 10 percentile ranks needed to satisfy the project objectives. The project was recommended for continuation, however, with some modifications. (Author/JM)

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EVALUATION REPORT

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Bilingual-Bicultural Program at C.S.77

1975-76

James J. Hennessy

An Evaluation of Selected New York City Umbrella Programs funded under a Special Grant of the New York State Legislature performed for the Board of Education of the City of New York for the 1975-76 school year.

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I. Program Description

Bilingual-Bicultural Program at C.S.77

The Bilingual-Bicultural Program at C.S. 77 in District 12 (South-Central Bronx, N.Y.) was designed to provide remedial instruction in oral English to a specially selected group of students in grades 1-6 using a group of specially trained educational assistants. The participants were to receive instruction in the basic skills of listening and speaking for the purpose of attaining automatic control and fluency in oral English. It was expected that students participating in the program, who come from severely economically deprived homes, would benefit from instruction in English by carrying their newly developed skills into content subject areas, especially mathematics, social studies, and science where low levels of oral English fluency can be handicaps to subject mastery. It was expected that the students participating in the program would develop an appreciation of their cultural background through contact with instructional personnel who are bilingual.

The Language Assessment Battery for rating a student's ability to speak English was used to determine eligibility for participation in the Bilingual-Bicultural program. Those students who scored below the 20th percentile on the LAB were eligible for the program. From a total enrollment of 2,224 students, 398 have been identified by the LAB as being below the 20th percentile. From this group of 398 students, a group of 168 students were selected for participation in the project. Twenty-eight students from each of the six grade levels in the school were identified as the target population who were to receive the special services of this project.

Each student participated on a daily basis, working with the educational assistants during regular instructional periods. The educational assistants worked with individual students and with groups of two to four students. Their tasks included helping students learn the structural patterns of both oral and written English, recognizing sound-symbol relationships in English, and comparing word order in English and Spanish. The assistants used a variety of means to accomplish these tasks, including text books, the facilities of a learning, audio-visual aids, small group discussions, individual tutoring, and field trips designed to enhance the language skills the participants were developing. The educational assistants also assisted in the testing and diagnosing of the students, assisted in maintaining student records, assisted the teaching staff in the selection of appropriate cultural materials, and translated materials whenever necessary. The outcome of these activities were expected to be reflected in student performance on the LAB post-test.

All students were given the Language Assessment Battery prior to entering the program and again during the month of April. It was expected that students would raise their pretest percentile ranks at least ten percentile ranks on the post-test. The program was in operation from 9/1/75 and will continue through the end of the school year.

The specific objectives of the project, as they were originally developed were:

1. Sixty-five percent of the target population in grades 1-6 who scored below the cutoff score in the Language Assessment Battery and attend 70% or more of the program sessions

would advance from Category 2 to Category 1 as measured by the LAB.

2. Fifty percent of the grade 1 and grade 2 participants in the program attending 70% or more of the scheduled program sessions would improve in reading ability from grade 1 to grade 2 as measured by the Stanford Early School Achievement Test.
3. Sixty percent of the pupil participants of grade 3 to 6 inclusive, attending 70% or more of the scheduled sessions, would achieve mastery in 7 of 12 Prescriptive Reading Inventory reading behavioral objectives, that they were deficient in upon entry into the program.
4. The programs, as actually implemented, would coincide with the programs as described in the proposal and any subsequent modifications or addenda.

On 10/15/75, the following changes in objectives were approved:

1. Sixty-five percent of the target population in grades 1-6 who scored at or below the 20th percentile on the English version of the Language Assessment Battery, and attended 70% or more of the program sessions would advance ten percentile ranks as measured by the Language Assessment Battery.
2. Eliminated
3. Eliminated
4. The programs, as actually implemented, will coincide with the programs as described in the proposal and any subsequent modifications or addenda.

These changes were made because the project staff thought that a greater emphasis on the acquisition of language competency would be more beneficial to student participation in the project. The resources of the project could most effectively be channeled into this area, rather than attempting to stretch thin their resources by trying to cover too many goals. In addition, changes in the Language Assessment Battery dictated that percentiles rather than categories be used as data points.

Chapter II

Evaluation Procedures

Evaluation Objective #1: To determine whether sixty-five percent of the target population who scored below the 20th percentile on the LAB pretest, and who attended 70% or more of the sessions advanced ten percentile ranks on the LAB post-test.

- 1.1 Subjects: Those target students who attended at least 70% of the program sessions were the treatment group.
- 1.2 Methods and Procedures: The Language Assessment Battery was given to students to determine their eligibility for the program prior to the start of the program. It was administered as a post-test to all program participants in April 1976. Attendance data were used to identify students on whom data analyses were computed. The project coordinator assembled the pretest and post-test results on forms provided by the evaluator.

- 1.3 Data Analysis: The post-test percentile rank was compared to the pretest percentile rank to determine if the 10 percentile rank increase occurred. A distribution of these difference scores is presented to determine the percent of students who progressed 10 or more ranks. The project objective will be successfully satisfied if 65% of the students show this progress.

Evaluation Objective #2

The evaluator was to observe program activity, conduct interviews, and examine pertinent records to determine the extent of congruence between program proposal specifications and the actual implementation of the program; these data are included summarily in the final evaluation report.

The evaluator observed activity and interviewed key personnel to determine strengths and weaknesses of the program in order to provide recommendations for recycling, planning and staff development; these data are provided summarily in the final evaluation report.

In order to carry out the evaluation objectives, the evaluator visited the project site, met with the project director, coordinator, educational assistants, and students. Teaching staff working with the assistants were interviewed, as were the parents of several students participating in the project. On-site evaluation visits were made on March 18, March 30, April 8, and May 3, 1976. Pre and post-test scores were collected on May 24, the date on which the last on-site evaluation was conducted.

Chapter III

The Findings

The results of the evaluation activities are presented in this section following the format described in the preceding chapter. The two major evaluation objectives and the findings germane to each are presented in sequence.

Evaluation Objective #1: Sixty-five percent of the target population in grades 1-6 who scored at or below the 20th percentile on the English version of the Language Assessment Battery, and attended 70% or more of the program sessions would advance ten percentile ranks as measured by the Language Assessment Battery.

The first component of this objective was to determine how many students participated in at least 70% of the scheduled sessions. Attendance data and other information provided by the project conductor were evaluated to obtain these data. Table 1 contains a frequency distribution of the number of students at each grade level who met the 70% criterion, as well as distributions for those who did not. As can be seen, 148 students out of the targeted 168, completed the activities of the project. This represents 88% of the original group. Only 12% of the original group were not included in the data analyses that are presented below. Of the 20 students who were not included in the analyses, 11 were discharged from the project because they moved out of the area served by the school late in the school year (primarily in March and April). Three students were absent from school on the dates the LAB had been scheduled. They also were absent on the

Table 1
Frequency Distribution by Grade Level of Participants
Who were Discharged, Absent, and Tested at Termination
of Project

Grade	Discharged	Erroneous Data	Absent	Tested
1			1	27
2	2			26
3	2		1	25
4	1	3		24
5	2	1	1	24
6	4	2		22
Total	11	6	3	148

dates scheduled for make-up testing. Test data for six students were not included in the final analysis because the project staff believed that the pretest scores were spuriously inflated and thus could not meaningfully be compared to their post-test scores. These six students scored at or above the 20% on the pretest, even though they demonstrated very poor language skills in non-test settings. It was the judgment of the staff that these students be allowed to participate in the project even though, through some quirk, they exceeded the pretest cutoff scores. Over 75% of the students designated as eligible for participation at each grade level are included in the final data analysis.

In order to determine if the first project objective, that 65% of those students attending 70% or more of the scheduled sessions gained ten percentile ranks on the LAB post-test, the LAB post-test percentile rankings for each student were compared to their respective LAB pretest percentile rankings. The amount of gain was tabulated to determine if the anticipated gains had been achieved. The results of these comparisons are presented in Table 2. The first column of that table indicates the number of percentile ranks gained. The range is from no gain, for those students whose scores did not change, to a high of 21 points, for those students whose post-test score was above the highest percentile ranking provided in 1976 Language Assessment Battery Percentile Ranks Tables developed at the central board. The second column of Table 2 contains the actual number of students who gained the specific number of percentile ranks. Column 3 contains the percent of students who achieved specific gains and column 4 shows the cumulative percent of specific points gained.

Table 2

Frequency Distribution and Percent Distribution of Gains
on the Language Assessment Battery Post-test

Points Gained	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
21-	24	.162	.998
19 - 20	25	.168	.836
17 - 18	1	.006	.668
15 - 16	1	.006	.662
13 - 14	7	.047	.656
11 - 12	11	.074	.609
9 - 10	1	.006	.535
7 - 8	6	.042	.529
5 - 6	12	.082	.487
3 - 4	10	.067	.405
1 - 2	12	.082	.338
No gain	38	.256	.256
Total	148		

As can be seen in Table 2, 52.9 percent of the participants gained fewer than 10 percentile ranks, thus the project objective of 65% achieving at least 10 points was not met. Inspection of the table shows that 25.6% of the participants did not show any gain, whereas 33% gained 19 or more ranks. Thus the results are to some extent bimodal with large numbers of students gaining well beyond project expectations, and a smaller, though large, number not realizing any gain. Fourteen percent of the group gained between 10 and 19 points, and 27.3% gained between one and nine points.

In order to clarify the results of these results, an additional comparison was made. Since the criterion for placement in the project was a score below the 20th percentile, an indicator of the success of the project would be the number of students whose post-test score was above the cut-off. This information is needed since a gain of only a few points on the post-test may be sufficient to put a student above the cut-off. For example, a student whose percentile score on the pretest was 15, needed to gain only 6 points to go above the cut-off, and also to go above the tabulated data of percentile equivalents. His gain, while below the expected 10 points, would be a real gain, as it demonstrated a higher level of English language competence. The data in Table 3 show by grade level, the number of students who scored at or above the 20th percentile on the LAB post-test.

A total of 62 students, representing 42% of the total group, reached the cut-off level. As can be seen, there were wide discrepancies between grade levels with the highest proportion achieving this level at the first grade, followed by the second grade. For the other grade levels many fewer students reached the cut-off level.

Table 3
Number and Percent of Students Who Scored above the
20 Percentile on the Language Assessment Battery
Post-test

Grade	Number	Percent
1	24	.88
2	15	.57
3	7	.28
4	7	.29
5	2	.08
6	7	.32
Total	62	.42

These results indicate that early intervention may be much more effective than attempts at higher levels, and suggest that, if expected results are to be achieved with older students, a more intensive program will have to be developed.

The results of the analyses for the first objective indicate that the overall objective was not successfully met, as only 47.1% of the target group achieved at the expected level. This finding must be tempered by the finding of wide discrepancies between classes, since the first and second grades exceeded the expectations of the project.

Evaluation Objective #2: The programs, as actually implemented, would coincide with the programs as described in the proposal and any subsequent modifications or addenda.

Based on interviews and observations, it was found that the educational assistants functioned in all of the activities contained in the original proposal. Their work was coordinated by the TESL professional who functioned as project coordinator. Each assistant followed a schedule worked out by the coordinator. The schedule was developed weekly at conferences held with the coordinator. At these conferences, discussions of each student's progress were held, and work plans for the following week were developed. Based on several observations, it can be said, without hesitation, that the assistants were fully involved in the activities of the project. Several worked exclusively with one class and spent their time tutoring, working with small groups, and monitoring student progress. One assistant was assigned to a Learning Center where she worked on language skills

through reading instruction. Her work was closely supervised by both the TESL and Center professionals. Another assistant was assigned to The Gallery which is a multimedia science, art, and photography laboratory. The remaining assistants moved from class to class working with target children in their home classes or in the TESL room.

The major strength of the project is the close cooperation that exists between the assistants, teachers, administrators, and students. The assistants are essential staff members, not viewed as auxiliary staff. Each of the activities designated for the assistants, such as planning, testing, record keeping, translation services, were carried out at a high level of competence. Schedules were always available to the evaluator, even with no notice of a visit, so that the assistants could be observed in their work; test and attendance data were always up to date; and in-service activities were carried on weekly.

From the evaluator's point of view, the project successfully met this second objective with a high degree of effectiveness and efficiency. While the expected test gains were not fully achieved, the project seems definitely to be providing a very valuable service to children who need extra help in developing English language competence. The facilities in which the project functions, especially the TESL room, Learning Center, and Gallery are very appropriate, and facilitative for learning. The materials used, including commercially developed and staff developed, were stimulating and geared very specifically to the needs of the individual youngsters involved in the project.

Chapter IV

Summary of Major Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This report presented the final evaluation of the Bilingual-Bicultural Program in C.S. 77, District 12, Bronx, N.Y. The project was designed to increase the spoken English language comprehension of elementary school age children who were found to be below a cut-off score on the Language Assessment Battery. Ten educational assistants worked closely with 168 target youngsters in activities that ranged from individualized instruction, to small group work, to testing, diagnosing, and prescribing interventions. The primary goal of these activities was to bring each participant to a higher level of competence in using and understanding English. The findings of this evaluation were that the major goal was not fully realized, in spite of very well coordinated, highly professional effort on the part of project staff members.

The major findings were that only 47.1% of the students participating in the project gained the expected 10 percentile ranks needed to satisfy the project objectives. The goal was that 65% of the participants would achieve these gains, thus the project fell short of its goal by 17.9%. The methods used to calculate these data, however, must be considered when interpreting these results. It must be borne in mind, first of all, that the tables of percentile equivalents did not show percentile scores above the 21st percentile, so that students who had pretest scores above the 12th percentile, could not show the expected gain. This, in fact, occurred, for about 13% of the participants, so that the percent of "successful" partici-

pants may actually approach 60%, rather than 47%. As was shown in Table 3, 42% of the group scored above the 20%ile, and thus no longer qualify for inclusion in the project. Secondly, it was found that children in the first and second grades out-performed children at higher grade levels, suggesting that early intervention is the most effective way of helping youngsters develop competence in spoken English.

An alternative interpretation to the early intervention recommendation would be to allocate more of the resources and staff of the staff of the project with fourth through sixth grades, since they are in greater need of large scale intervention. If these youngsters are to grasp the requisite English language skills before progressing on to secondary schools, a more intensive program will have to be developed for them.

In terms of project management and implementation of the program described in the proposal, it was found that this was an excellent program. All of the activities outlined were carried out at a high level of efficiency and competence. Staff relations, training procedures, and instructional activities were all implemented in a highly professional manner. The coordination activities of the TESL professional were executed in a very competent manner, as was the overall supervision provided by the building administrator who served as project director.

It can be concluded that, while falling short of its intended goal, this project has been effectively implemented, and was at least partially successful in meeting its major goal. Based on this evaluation, it is recommended that the project be continued next

year, with some modifications. These modifications are made below in the realization that fiscal realities may prevent their implementation.

1. Greater emphasis be placed at the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade levels so that more of these students can obtain a higher level of proficiency in spoken English.
2. The TESL professional be given more time to coordinate and supervise the assistants, and also be available to devote more time to highly individualized prescriptive activities with students who scored below the 10%ile on the LAB. The combined efforts of the TESL professional and assistants may result in a higher percentage of students attaining the desired goal.
3. Since reading is a key to grasping language skills, the NYC Reading test scores should be included in any future evaluation. The effects of the project treatment may show themselves in higher reading scores.
4. A more complete technical manual be prepared for the LAB so that percentile scores beyond the 21% can be computed and used in evaluating project outcomes.