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ABSTRACT

This booklet aims to help educators make informed decisions about which students need special language services, what kind of services they should receive, and how well the students and the language program have succeeded. It focuses on the following issues: (1) how the larger social context affects teachers' decisions and students' success; (2) the diversity of limited English proficient (LEP) students; (3) which instructional models and curriculum designs appear to be most effective, with an emphasis on transitional bilingual programs; (4) the necessity of integrating staff development and supervision for teachers of LEP students into the mainstream of the school; and (5) methodological difficulties in assessing student progress and evaluating program effectiveness. Conclusions and recommendations are included, as is a list of references. (PS)

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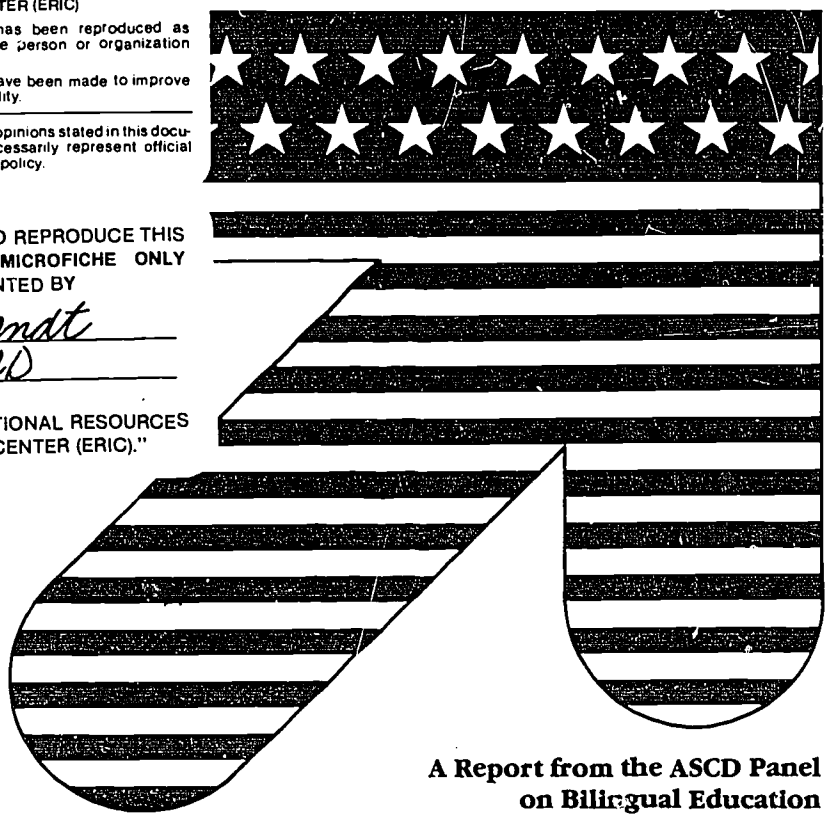
BUILDING AN INDIVISIBLE NATION: Bilingual Education in Context



A Report from the ASCD Panel on Bilingual Education

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April 1987

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This report does not necessarily reflect the official positions of the organizations represented by the panel members.

Introduction

WE ARE A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS. GENERATION AFTER GENERATION, men and women from other countries have bundled up their hopes and dreams and brought them to the United States, seeking better lives for themselves and their families, and indelibly enriching the very fabric of our society in the process. Yet we have not always accommodated these newcomers as hospitably as we might. Today, in fact, education for their children—for students with limited English proficiency—is so controversial a subject that some educators hesitate to speak out on it.

That hesitation partly reflects the heightened emotions with which many Americans view the unabated flow of new immigrants—both legal and illegal—into the United States. Many fear the country will be splintered along linguistic and ethnic lines if recent trends are unchecked. Indeed, seven states (California being the most recent) already have passed laws declaring English their official language, and constitutional amendments to the same effect regularly are introduced into the U.S. Congress (Hayakawa 1986).

One focal point of these larger social concerns is the provision of dual-language instruction for students with limited English proficiency, or, as it is often imprecisely called, "bilingual education" (see **A Note on Terminology**, below). Do dual-language instructional programs really help children learn English? And if so, which of the many instructional approaches is the most effective? The debate on these questions continues.

What is more, a survey of urban curriculum leaders conducted by ASCD in 1986 reveals additional stumbling blocks. Among these problems are diminishing funds, a lack of qualified teachers, and an increase in the number of unschooled immigrant children. As if these problems were not complex enough, the current administration has adopted a skeptical stance toward dual-language instruction, arguing that instruction in a student's native language is no more effective than other instructional models, such as English as a second language and immersion.

Despite the controversy, school officials must make daily decisions about which students need special language services, what kind of services they should receive, and how well the students and the program

have succeeded. To help educators make informed decisions, we will focus here on such critical issues as

- how the larger social context affects our decisions and students' success;
- the diversity of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students;
- which instructional models and curriculum designs appear to be most effective, with an emphasis on transitional bilingual programs;
- the necessity of integrating staff development and supervision for teachers of LEP students into the mainstream of the school; and
- methodological difficulties in assessing student progress and evaluating program effectiveness.

We believe our newest citizens can impart a vigor and breadth to our nation. We believe our understanding of their languages and cultures is critical to our future economic success. But for that exchange to occur, students with limited English proficiency must receive a successful, high-quality education that enables them to contribute to our common future.

A Note on Terminology

To professionals in the field, "bilingual education" refers to a range of instructional models available for teaching students whose proficiency in English is limited and who share in common some use of their native language (see **Instruction**, below). Similarly, the students whose needs we are addressing here have been identified in various specific ways (see **The Students**, below). In this paper, we will use the most common identifying term for these students: limited English proficiency, or LEP.

1

The Social Context

WHEN PEOPLE TALK ABOUT "BILINGUAL EDUCATION," THEY TEND TO restrict their exchange to matters of language. After all, since bilingual education is defined by the use of students' native language in instruction (the alternative being the exclusive use of English), language is central to how the educational program is conceptualized. For example, proponents of bilingual education argue for the importance of native-language development as a foundation for the acquisition of English. Opponents, on the other hand, emphasize the importance of learning English and see the native language as an unnecessary crutch that should be done away with as quickly as possible. Yet both positions clearly fail to take into account the social and cultural meanings associated with language (Cummins 1986).

Language is not just a cognitive skill around which mental activity is organized; it also embodies social identity and is a marked characteristic of ethnicity (Gumperz 1982). Indeed, the term "bilingualism" is often used as a catch-all that embraces a variety of concerns about the division of society along ethnolinguistic lines. Thus, conversations about bilingualism tend to drift away from bilingual education to bilingual ballots and questions about the role of ethnicity in American society. These larger social concerns fuel the debate on bilingual education, and unless they are considered, it is difficult to understand why the matter consistently raises such emotional heat. Strictly linguistic concerns can be—and have been—addressed by cognitive developmental research on bilingual children (see Hakuta 1986). Nevertheless, these concerns often are ignored in policy decisions because the debate is fueled by other concerns, such as the symbolic value of language.

A Lesson from History

Apprehensions about bilingualism in American public schools can be traced back well into the last century, when German was used in many public schools, primarily in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania (Schlossman 1983). Social alarmists warned of isolated enclaves of German speakers, stubbornly resisting assimilation into American society. At the turn of the century, the same alarms were raised about immigrants from South-

ern and Eastern Europe, who made up an increasingly large proportion of immigrants to the United States beginning in the 1880s (Jones 1960).

Consternation over linguistic ghettos persisted, but the new generation of alarmists, such as Carl Brigham (1923), was fortified by data from the newly developed intelligence tests, which purportedly demonstrated the inferior genetic quality of the new wave of immigrants. "These immigrants are beaten men from beaten races, representing the worst failures in the struggle for existence," wrote one merciless commentator. "Europe is allowing its slums and its most stagnant reservoirs of degraded peasantry to be drained off upon our soil" (quoted in Ayres 1909, 103). Although bilingual education was not available to these groups, bilingualism came to be regarded as a hindrance to school performance, a mental handicap that muddied straight thinking and had to be overcome (Hakuta 1986).

Such present-day movements as U.S. English and other organized efforts against bilingual education (and almost anything bilingual) are direct heirs of this tradition. The mainstream of American citizens has always suspected that foreign newcomers will not assimilate. They sing the praises of previous waves of immigrants who leapt willingly into the melting pot, but they firmly believe the current crop won't do the same—despite overwhelming evidence that Spanish is being lost over current generations just as rapidly as Italian, German, and French were lost by previous cohorts of immigrants (Veltman 1979).

Even though the expressed goal of programs for LEP students overwhelmingly is to teach English, and even though only a small proportion of those programs aims to maintain the native language (Development Associates 1984), program personnel constantly must defend themselves against charges that they are failing to teach children English and condemning them to linguistic ghettos. Even minimal accommodations to those who do not function well in English—sending school notices to parents in their native language, for example—are publicly criticized and targeted for eradication (Trombley 1986). In California, the recent passage of Proposition 63, the "English-only" initiative, will attempt to put an end to such accommodations.

In fact, however, the preeminent status of English in this country is not threatened by bilingualism. The alarmists' fears are as unfounded now as they were at the turn of the century. But they persist, and their persistence must be understood.

Public Misconceptions

One reason for these unfounded fears is that many people simply do not believe what educators say. This lack of trust points up an important difference between today's bilingual education and previous attempts to educate immigrant children: Personnel in current programs often belong to the same ethnolinguistic group the program serves. Indeed, at its inception, bilingual education was seen as inseparable from bicultural education, and a linguistic and cultural match between student and teacher was considered key to the success of the program. The legacy of the 1960s—particularly the civil rights movement and ethnic revivalism—is clearly part of bilingual education.

Bilingual education is widely perceived as affirmative action extended along ethnolinguistic boundaries. In fact, much of the controversy over bilingual education can be attributed to concern over loss of jobs and access to control over schools (Paulston 1977).

In bilingual education programs, language represents a major route by which linguistic minorities may gain access to the education power base. Cummins argues that the concept of empowering minority students provides an important framework for understanding the success and failure of programs for those students. As Cummins notes, the most successful programs for minority students are those in which empowerment is high and the language and culture of the minority student are valued within the system, with teachers and counselors acting as powerful advocates for the students. Using the same framework, some resistance to bilingual education within the educational establishment can be interpreted as a reaction by members of the majority group to the fact that linguistic minorities are encroaching on their power base.

Perhaps the social context explains the persistent questioning of the "bilingual" method of instruction in the press toward a bottom line of evaluation of effectiveness. Rather than emphasize research that might give insights to teachers on effective classroom practices and how they might help LEP students, much energy has been expended on research of questionable quality and validity that asks "Has it worked?" Such simplistic questions ignore the complexity of bilingual education and serve to fuel a divisive debate between "us" and "them." In this process, we lose sight of the wondrous complexity of the needs and resources that immigrants bring to this nation.

2
The Students

STUDENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY ARE THE TARGET OF a glaring but common misconception: Many believe these students are members of a homogenous group, enough like one another to warrant using the same instructional approach with them all. In fact, these students have few features in common—not even their degree of proficiency in English. Their diversity should not be surprising: Any group of more than a million people is bound to be varied, and these students are no exception.

Language Background

The students whose needs we are addressing span the language continuum from a complete command of English to none at all. The U.S. Office for Civil Rights (1975) has classified these students into five groups, according to language use:

A. Monolingual speakers of a language other than English; that is, those who speak a non-English language fluently and exclusively.
B. Those who speak a language other than English predominantly but who speak some English.
C. Bilingual speakers; that is, those who speak both languages with equal ease.
D. Those who speak English predominantly but who speak some of the other language.
E. Monolingual speakers of English; that is, those who speak English fluently and exclusively.

Generally, students in dual-language programs have limited or no proficiency in English (categories A and B), but the programs also can include students in categories C, D, and E. Students in the different categories may be in the program for different reasons, however. For example, those who speak no English at all need to develop sufficient skill in English to survive not only the school curriculum, but life after graduation. Those who speak predominantly English but who come from language-minority backgrounds, on the other hand, might be in the program to develop skills in their home language (if this is, in fact, one goal of the program). Other students might be bilingual and want to

maintain this important ability, while still others who speak only English seek to learn a second language. The current federal legislation governing bilingual education, Public Law 98-511, Title VII, allows up to 40 percent of all students in bilingual education programs to be English dominant, but it is not clear how many students take advantage of this opportunity.

The categories established by the Office for Civil Rights are by no means the only classifications for these students. In fact, the field has spawned a virtual lexicon of shorthand designations for various groups, according to language use and background. Among the more commonly used designations are: (1) LEP students, or those with limited English proficiency; (2) those who speak predominantly either their native language (L1) or a second language (L2), as in "English-dominant" or "Spanish-dominant"; and (3) language-minority (LM), or students who come from homes where languages other than English are, or have been, spoken, or other-language (OL) students.

Identifying Students

How many limited-English-proficient students are there in the U.S.? Counting heads hasn't proved easy. A variety of surveys have been conducted, but differences in data sources, definitions, purposes, instrumentation, and methodology have led to wide disparities in the results. For example, Hakuta (1986) describes three different studies whose results range from a low of 1.2 million LEP students to a high of 6.6 million.

Official statistics, such as the U.S. Department of Education's estimate of the LEP population, also are cause for disagreement. Over the last few years, the department's headcount has dropped steadily, from 3.6 million in the late 1970s, to 2.6 million in 1984, to between 1.2 and 1.7 million in 1985. The decrease is due to a tightening of the definition of limited English proficiency. Formerly, students who scored below the 40th percentile on a national language proficiency test were classified LEP students; now, only those who score below the 20th percentile are so classified. The cutoff point was lowered because using the 40th percentile as a cutoff resulted in the classification of many monolingual English speakers as LEP students. Those who score below the 20th percentile, the government feels, are the children who are "most in need" of services. Not surprisingly, these figures—and this methodology—have met with opposition among some educators and policymakers.

The most current data base is the 1980 U.S. Census, which asked people whether a language other than English is spoken at home and, if so, by whom and how well. The results indicate that approximately 4.5

million of the nation's 47.5 million five- to seventeen-year-olds, or 9.5 percent, come from a non-English-language home. (Bear in mind, though, that a student who comes from a language-minority background is not necessarily limited in English proficiency and consequently is not necessarily in need of special language services.)

According to the census, language-minority students are most heavily concentrated in California, Texas, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Florida, each of which had more than 200,000 LM students in 1980. High concentrations of LM students also are found in Arizona, New Mexico, Connecticut, Hawaii, New Mexico, and Rhode Island, where they account for more than 10 percent of the total population of five- to seventeen-year-olds.

According to the Department of Education's *Condition of Bilingual Education in the Nation, 1984*, more than 950,000 LEP students were enrolled in state and locally funded bilingual education programs in 1983, with another 200,000 enrolled in federally sponsored projects. These students speak more than a hundred different languages, though the majority of them are Spanish-speaking. (In fact, approximately three-quarters come from Hispanic backgrounds.) And there are signs this population is growing: According to surveys described in the same report, the number of language-minority students in the U.S. increased by 20 percent between 1978 and 1982, from 2 million to 2.4 million, with the biggest increase being among Asian students. Further, a 1980 study by Oxford and others projected that the number of five- to seventeen-year-old LM students (not LEP students) would increase to more than 5 million by the year 2000.

Language Skills

The language a student uses chatting with friends is different from the language the same student uses writing a term paper, and the difference can be crucial. Cummins (1979, 1980) distinguishes between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skill (BICS), or the language used in face-to-face conversation, and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), or the language that leads to school success. LEP students, like their monolingual peers, develop conversational language to peer appropriate levels more quickly than they develop academic language. This makes them appear more fluent in the second language than they really are and leads to the misconception that they are no longer in need of special services (Ovando and Collier 1985).

Language proficiency testing should measure both of these aspects of communication—and quite possibly others as well. For example,

Silverman, Noah, and Russell (1976) identified twelve factors that should be taken into account in assessing language proficiency. The factors are divided into three categories:

1. *Linguistic structures*: pronunciation, grammar, meaning, and vocabulary.
2. *Social domains*: home, school, community, and peers.
3. *Language skills*: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Academic Skills

Students with limited English proficiency, like any other students, vary tremendously in academic performance. But information from a variety of sources indicates that academic performance for these students as a group—especially in math and science—is well below that of their mainstream peers.

One of those sources is the longitudinal study High School and Beyond, conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics and reported in *The Condition of Bilingual Education in the Nation, 1984.* This study showed that proficiency in English and Spanish is positively related to school achievement but that frequency of use of the Spanish language is negatively related to achievement. The study also found that Hispanic seniors are much more likely to be two or more years older than their classmates. Moreover, Hispanic students are significantly more likely than white students to drop out of school, and fewer Hispanics than either blacks or whites expect to graduate from college.

Family Background

LEP students come from families at all points on the scale of socio-economic status (SES). There is evidence, however, that many of these students come from low-SES homes. Consider the comparisons drawn among groups of students in the High School and Beyond study, for example. The proportion of Hispanic students whose fathers had a college degree, although higher than that for blacks, was considerably lower than that for whites. Moreover, the porportion of students whose fathers have not completed high school is higher for most Hispanic subgroups than it is for either blacks or whites. And finally, Hispanics, as a group, have a significantly lower average family income than do whites.

Such factors have contributed to the mistaken idea that LEP programs are compensatory programs for poor students. It is important to recognize the danger in overgeneralizing the SES factor: Many LEP students have well-educated parents; many come from families who

impart a great respect for schooling; many belong to families who have lived in this country for decades or even centuries. Just like other students, in other words, these students can come from a variety of family backgrounds.

That variety is evident in the list of family background variables provided by Ovando and Collier (1985), who say LEP students can differ along such dimensions as immigrant or native-born status; reasons for emigration; length of residency in the U.S.; existence of relatives in the home country and frequency of visits there; position and responsibilities within the family; socioeconomic profile and parents' aspirations for themselves and their children; rural versus urban tradition; nature of student's and family's previous academic experience; and parents' expectations of the schools.

Obviously, LEP students do not make up a homogenous group, and their education should reflect their diversity. Educators should bring to these students the same concern for individuality and unique potential that they bring to all other youngsters.

3

Instruction

A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT PROGRAM DESIGNS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED for teaching students with limited English proficiency. The most common instructional models are the following

- *Transitional bilingual education.* Instruction in the content areas is offered in the students' native language for a limited time (usually two or three years) while the students are learning English. As soon as they're judged ready to be taught in English alone, they are placed in mainstream classrooms with native English-speaking students.
- *Maintenance bilingual education.* Even after students are judged able to profit from English-only teaching, instruction in both content areas and language skills continues in the students' native language and in English. The ideal program in this model includes K-12 bilingual instruction, but local conditions and available resources generally temper that ideal.
- *Two-way enrichment bilingual education.* Classes include native English-speaking students as well as native speakers of another language. The English speakers learn a second language at the same time its native speakers are learning English.
- *English as a second language.* All bilingual programs include instruction in English as a second language (ESL), but some provide specialized instruction in English with little or no native-language support for content-area instruction. Such ESL programs are most common in schools and systems in which students speak several different native languages. Often, these students are assigned to mainstream classes and taken out of class one to three periods a day for ESL instruction. Sometimes, new immigrants or international students receive short-term (up to one year), intensive ESL instruction in a special "newcomer" school or center.
- *Structured immersion.* Students are assigned to specialized English-language classrooms in which content-area instruction is adapted to their level of English proficiency. Supplementary tutoring in their native language sometimes is provided for the first year or two, either by a teacher who speaks the students' native language or by a bilingual aide.

Choosing a Model

Selecting the appropriate model out of this diverse group is a complex matter involving many variables. Chief among these are the following

- *Goals and emphases*. Learning English is one of the major goals of all programs for students with limited English proficiency. But will primary emphasis be placed on teaching English language skills first, and then on teaching academic content through the English language? Or will primary emphasis be on teaching academic content in the native language first, giving less emphasis to English-language skills? What attitude do the majority of the parents hold as to the primary approach?
- *Linguistic homogeneity or heterogeneity*. Do all or most of the LEP students in the school, school district, or state speak the same native language, or are many languages represented? What percentage of the total population speaks a language other than English? Are they evenly distributed throughout the population or concentrated in certain areas? Such factors as these affect the degree of mix between LEP and mainstream students and the potential functions of native language use in home, school, and community.
- *Teacher attitudes and training*. How competent are teachers in the students' native language and in English? Is their primary training in mainstream curriculum and instruction, or in teaching a second language? What are their attitudes toward their own ethnicity and that of students? What are their attitudes about the value of bilingualism?
- *Staffing patterns*. Will the class be taught by a single teacher, with or without bilingual aides, or by a team, one teacher using only English and the other using only the students' native language? Or will students be placed in a "regular" classroom and receive native-language and/or ESL instruction on a pull-out basis?
- *Amount of time allocated to special language programs*. Programs vary from pull-outs of 30 minutes a day to full-day instruction. This not only has instructional implications, but it also has a direct impact on staffing requirements.
- *Use of the languages of instruction*. How are English and the students' native language used in relation to each other? Some bilingual programs use an "alternating" approach, in which teachers switch back and forth between English and the second language in a single lesson. Others use an "alternate-language" approach, in which the two languages are used for different subjects or at different times of the day or week or by different teachers in a teaching team. Still others use a

"preview-review" approach, in which the teacher introduces the lesson in one language, teaches the body of the lesson in the other, then reviews the lesson in the original language. (See Ovando and Collier 1985 for a description of these models.)

- *Amount of native language use.* How much of the instruction should be carried out in the native language? Even some so-called "bilingual" programs make little or no use of students' native language for instruction, while some ESL or immersion programs actually provide a significant amount of instruction in the native language.
- *Literacy acquisition.* Will initial literacy be developed in the students' native language, in English, or in both languages simultaneously? In some programs, the native language is used only orally and reading is taught only in English. In some, literacy in the native language is postponed until some level of oral proficiency in English has been reached, while in others, oral and written skills in the native language are an integral part of instruction from the beginning.
- *Administrative support.* Does the school administration fully support the program's goals and practices? Or does it actively subvert them by redirecting resources? Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for special service programs to be isolated both physically and socially from the rest of the school, with little administrative support for integrating personnel or curriculum and little evidence of commitment beyond the current funding period.

Finally, like other school programs, programs for LEP students will rise or fall on the quality of instruction. This point might seem obvious, but it is worth repeating: Selecting one instructional model over another does not automatically guarantee better teaching. Indeed, all of the same factors that influence the quality of instruction for native English speakers will make a difference for those with limited English proficiency, too.

What Research Says

Research on bilingual instruction indicates that some of these variables may promote better education for LEP students than others.

Consider, for example, the amount of native language used in instruction. Preliminary reports indicate that the more extensive the instruction in the native language, the better students may do on English-language tests in reading, language arts, and math (Hakuta and Gould 1986). The same finding was reported by the General Accounting Office (1976) and by Altena and Appel (1981) in the Netherlands (though this population differed from the U.S. population). At first hearing, this appears to run counter to expectations. But it makes sense if we assume

that teaching students in their native language helps them learn the content, which can then be transferred to English. Conversely, bilingual advocates say that the more English is used in instruction, the less the students understand (Troike 1983).

There is evidence that the longer students remain in a bilingual program, the higher their academic achievement as measured in English is likely to be (Leyba 1978, Vorih and Rosier 1978, Gonzales 1977). Studies of native speakers of Spanish and Navajo show that students who remain in a bilingual program for five or six years may reach or exceed national norms in achievement. Bilingual instruction thus appears to have a cumulative effect.

One of the most common misconceptions about bilingual education is that using a student's native language as well as English retards the development of English. This view has not been supported by research (McLaughlin 1985, Cummins 1986). Having a strong foundation in the native language makes learning a second language both easier and faster (Cummins 1981). Moreover, there is general agreement that knowledge transfers readily from one language to another, so that students do not have to relearn in a second language what they have already learned in a first (see discussion in Hakuta 1986, 218-219). In fact, it is clear that the ability to transfer to English what is learned in the native language applies not only to content-area subjects like science and math, but also to skills in reading and writing—even when the orthographic system is quite different from the Roman alphabet (Saville-Troike 1984, Koda 1986).

Many bilingual educators believe initial literacy should be developed first in the students' native language, but there is also evidence that initial literacy can be developed successfully in the second language instead. Introducing reading in both languages at the same time is open to serious question, however (Cohen et al. 1975).

Also questionable is the common practice of postponing English reading a year or more in favor of an extra year of oral English instruction for LEP students. This extra year, usually a pre-first grade, ranges from a year of concentrated language study with specially prepared teachers and materials, to a year of unstructured activity. While students might make some short-term gains in English-language skills during the extra year, the arrangement retards them chronologically in school, making subsequent behavior problems and dropouts more likely. And in one study, students who had an extra year of prereading instruction actually tested well below similar students who didn't have the extra year—even though they were older (Commission on Civil Rights 1971).

There is no consensus on what patterns of language use are most effective in instruction, but consistent alternating use of two languages by the same teacher, repeating the same content, appears less likely to develop student proficiency in the weaker language. Sensitive and appropriate switching of languages for clarification, on the other hand, or native language use by peer tutors and in cooperative learning activities, can significantly enhance student comprehension. The question of language use should be tied to program goals and priorities.

It is clear from research that ESL is more effective if it is closely tied to the overall school curriculum than if it is given autonomous status. As Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares conclude, "ESL programs which are correlated to the mainstream program in organization and curriculum objectives facilitate the transition of LEP students into mainstream programs" (1985, 37). It follows that this would also hold for other program models.

The research also yields a picture of the effective transitional bilingual education teacher. The Significant Bilingual Instructional Features Study, conducted by William Tikunoff and summarized in Chamot (1986), involved exceptional transitional bilingual education teachers who were nominated by their peers and supervisors. According to the study, effective teachers in transitional bilingual education programs are like effective teachers in regular classrooms in being

- *Active*. Effective teachers let their students know what is expected of them and convey confidence that the students can succeed. They keep students involved in significant learning activities, don't waste time, and provide appropriate clarification and feedback.
- *Organized*. Effective teachers match instructional objectives to district curriculum objectives and ensure that students understand what the objectives are.
- *Effective and confident*. Effective teachers make students feel they are in capable hands.

In addition, the most effective teachers use the students' native languages to mediate instruction whenever possible—not merely for simple translation, but to clarify and monitor students' understanding. These teachers understand the students' cultural backgrounds and can use that knowledge to bridge the distance between home and school. And finally, they can integrate English-language development across the curriculum.

Integration is also clearly needed among the different teachers and programs the student encounters in the course of the school day.

The Context of Instruction

Although they're often thought of as self-contained, educational programs for LEP students do not exist in isolation from the school, school system, or community in which they are found. In fact, any one of these larger contexts may have more effect on a program's outcome—for good or ill—than efforts in instruction, curriculum design, or materials development. Ogbu's (1978) argument that schools reproduce the social status of ethnic groups in the larger society is sadly borne out by the consistent stratification of whites, Hispanics, and blacks on achievement tests (as reported by Troike 1984).

But the larger school and social contexts are not the only factors that determine a program's success. Research on school climate and educational leadership shows, for example, that the principal's attitudes and behavior can affect academic results for the entire school. Moreover, the "Pygmalion effect"—the fact that teachers' expectations can affect their teaching styles and students' achievement—may play a powerful but unrecognized role.

Direct research in this area is limited, and debate continues on both sides of the issue, but in an analysis of 23 programs, Willig (1985) found that bilingual education had significantly more positive effects on school achievement than ESL or regular classroom placement for all but one program, which had undergone severe administrative disruption. In addition, in a study of Colorado programs, Adcock (1986) found that strong bilingual programs were characterized by positive district attitudes and significant involvement with parents and the community.

The recent school effectiveness research (Rutter 1983) has found that overall conditions in a school may profoundly affect achievement in the school, a finding that is reflected in reality in schools in Tucson, Arizona. Students in a bilingual program at one school were found to be performing at or above national averages, while comparable students in another were performing well below national and district norms, even though the programs were the same. When possible reasons for the discrepancy were sought, it was found that the lower achievers' scores in the second school were not confined to the bilingual program, but pervaded the entire school.

Finally, Moll's research (1986) has documented the consequences of the "Pygmalion effect" for students in a bilingual program, where a positive learning environment and skilled performance in a Spanish class were replaced by a negative environment and poor performance on the part of the same students in an English class.

All of these findings reinforce the importance of integrating the bilingual or ESL program into the rest of the school program. Administrators and teachers should work together to strengthen links between home and school and to involve parents and other community members as active partners in education.

4
Curriculum

MOST PROGRAMS FOR LEP STUDENTS INCLUDE AMONG THEIR GOALS enhancing academic achievement and improving "communicative" competence in English, but programs differ as to which of the two is given the highest priority and which comes first in the curriculum sequence. Although it is not ultimately necessary to choose between these goals, both priority and sequence have important educational effects.

Those whose first priority is developing English-language skills for social communication may assume these skills are all a student needs in order to profit from English-language instruction in the content areas. In reality, however, the language skills developed for face-to-face conversation are quite different from those required for academic purposes (Cummins 1979, 1981, Snow 1983), and the distinction is critical. Peer-appropriate conversational skills often can be acquired within a relatively short time (perhaps two years), but it may take another three to five years before students have acquired the academic language skills they need to succeed in English-only classes. The earlier development of conversational skills often misleads educators into thinking students are ready to be moved out of programs that provide appropriate language support when in fact they are not.

Furthermore, when the curriculum sequence begins with an emphasis on developing English-language skills, placement and instructional content often are based on the students' level of English proficiency, rather than their cognitive development and prior learning in their native language or the "normal" instructional content of the school. The result can be a separate and unequal curriculum track for LEP students that is often discriminatory in effect, if not in intent.

Another barrier to achievement for LEP students may be "reductionist" concepts of language and learning that are implicit in the curriculum. Cazden (1985) defines the danger of reductionism as "fractionating complex tasks into component parts that, no matter how well practiced, can never reconstitute the complex whole." While this is a potential problem for all education, it is of particular concern where language learning is a significant goal. And as computers are used more widely for instruction, the potential for reductionism grows: LEP students

are more likely to use computers for drill and practice in the mechanics of language, rather than to create actual texts or develop thinking skills.

Materials

Commercial ESL materials are widely available, but most are inappropriate for elementary or secondary school students. One reason is that most of the materials were developed primarily for adults, or are adapted from adult lessons; as a result, the topics and methods often are inappropriate for younger learners. However, a new generation of texts, geared to grades one through twelve, has been developed in the last three years.

A second reason many materials are inappropriate is that they often are developed by linguists or language specialists who have little knowledge of instruction or curriculum in elementary or secondary schools.

Locally produced materials generally are preferred over commercially produced materials (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares 1985). Samples of locally developed materials can be found through ERIC or may be obtained from state offices of bilingual education or regional Title VII Multifunctional Resource Centers. Local program directors are generally quite willing to exchange materials and guides.

Commercial materials also are available for native-language instruction in reading and the content areas, but those imported from other countries often do not fit into the mainstream curriculum and sometimes include concepts and values that are not compatible with those of the family, community, and school in the United States.

One of the major gaps in commercial native-language materials is the lack of materials that emphasize "top down" reading for meaning (as opposed to "bottom up" decoding), extensive creative writing, or other approaches that are widely used for language development of native English speakers. Another gap is in transition materials that articulate native-language skills with second-language skills.

An encouraging trend is the emphasis on content areas in several new ESL series, which give appropriate attention to academic language skills and to developing vocabulary for such content areas as math, social studies, and science.

5
Staff Development

A VARIETY OF FACTORS MAKE STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN PROGRAMS for LEP students particularly challenging

- The term "limited English proficient" encompasses a broad range of students and programs, and staff development for these programs is equally varied in content, format, and intent.
- Inservice programs must take into account the larger educational context—including development activities designed for the rest of the staff.
- Programs for LEP students have their own specific training requirements.
- Theory plays a more crucial role in staff development for teachers of LEP students than in staff development in general.
- Staff development must address the needs of a variety of individuals, including teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and parents.
- Staff development *about* programs for LEP students should be provided to educators who are not directly involved in such programs.

Designing Staff Development

Because there are so many models of instruction for LEP students, no single model of development exists. A number of factors should be considered in planning staff development around a particular program. These factors include program goals, community expectations, teacher preparation, the extent to which the program uses the students' native and English language, and the relationship of the program to the larger educational context.

For example, a program that features extended use of the students' native language requires more extensive staff development in teaching L1 than does a program in which L2 is introduced relatively early.

Different program models, in other words, call for different staff development approaches. If LEP students are in the same classroom with other students, training in small-group instruction and related classroom management skills is crucial. Similarly, if more than one native language is represented among the students, teachers need specialized training in dealing with such differences. If the program employs teachers who are on temporary permits rather than certificated, a portion of their inservice

training should be on the fundamental principles of the program. And if students spend part of the day in mainstream classes, the staff development should clarify the roles of the bilingual and nonbilingual teachers. Tailoring staff development to the program not only focuses the training but may result in a clearer understanding of the program itself.

Mainstream Staff Development

In the early days of education for limited-English-proficient students, training sequences designed for members of the specialized staff often excluded them from training provided for the school system's other staff. The need for specialized training and the limited time available for staff development may mean that this practice is still followed.

It should be reconsidered: The training offered the rest of the staff often is equally valuable to the specialized staff—especially in such areas as lesson design, discipline and classroom management, developing students' self-concept, prevention of child abuse and neglect, learning theory, student motivation, and retention of information. In some cases, such training should be adapted to fit the unique aspects of bilingual education.

Specialized Staff Development

Staff development in education for students with limited English proficiency—like staff development geared to the needs of any special population—must include certain specific areas of training. Chief among them are the following

- *Language proficiency training.* In programs that use the children's native language as a medium of instruction, language training for teachers and other personnel is critical. Because most members of the program staff may not have been educated in the students' native language at the elementary level, and only minimally so at the secondary level, they may require training in speaking, reading, and writing that language. .
- *Intensive linguistic training.* Education for LEP students, by its very nature, implies linguistic differences, and a knowledge of psycho and socio linguistics is therefore crucial to program staff.
- *Cultural training.* As our schools increase in cultural and linguistic diversity, an understanding of the customs, values, and artistic contributions of the students' native culture becomes an essential part of all educators' repertoires.
- *Specialized teacher training.* Pedagogical competence takes on a specialized meaning in education for LEP students, where knowledge of the art of teaching includes understanding the learning process as it

relates to more than one language. Among the important staff development topics here are the nature of second-language learning and teaching; the degree of L1 usage that is necessary or desirable; the differences in presenting literacy skills in L1 and L2; the selection of appropriate curriculum materials; and the assessment of student progress.

- *Specialized support for new teachers.* Even when new teachers have received excellent preservice training, they will have many questions and concerns. Staff development for new teachers of LEP students should include orientation to the program's goals, information on available resources and materials, and help with time management.
- *Growth opportunities for master teachers.* A well-stocked resource library and opportunities to meet with other master teachers to share ideas, techniques, and materials are indispensible for the continued professional growth of outstanding experienced teachers.
- *Collaboration with parents.* Teachers of LEP students should be encouraged to work with parents in a noncondescending partnership role. Staff development should focus on encouraging educators to adopt a role definition that includes collaboration with parents.

Second-language Acquisition Theory

Because they are engaged in the day-to-day business of instruction, most teachers are more interested in practical, "how-to" information than in theory. In programs for LEP students, however, instruction must be guided by a basic understanding of sound principles, and for that reason, second-language acquisition theory is an important part of staff development.

Teachers and other staff members must have a firm belief in the efficacy of the program before they will devote their time and energy to it. They must also have a real regard for the language spoken in the students' homes and communities. And in addition, they must have a clear understanding of theories of language acquisition, as well as methodology. Without an understanding of how students acquire a second language, even well-meaning educators may fall into the trap of making assumptions about teaching that are correct only in monolingual instruction, thus undermining their own efforts.

Staff Members and Parents

Teachers, of course, are the largest group for whom this staff development is designed, yet training is necessary for a number of other individuals as well.

For example, the program may require the use of paraprofessionals in the classroom. Ordinarily, these staff members lack the extensive preservice preparation teachers have, yet they play an important role in the program. Specialized training should be designed to meet their needs.

Administrators and supervisors of programs for LEP students also require specialized staff development. These individuals make important program decisions and must be familiar with program goals, classroom implementation, and the needs of staff members and students.

Finally, parents of students in the program need help understanding the program's purpose and practices. Research on effective schools has underlined the crucial role parents play in their children's education. Parents may be suspicious of native-language instruction, especially if the language is not valued by the community at large and is associated with an underprivileged group. Clearly, support at home is vital to the success of the program at school.

The Larger Context

However well-intended, planned, and practiced it is, a program for LEP students stands little chance of success if it must struggle for existence in a context of uninformed or even hostile attitudes on the part of the larger school community. For that reason, many individuals who are not directly involved in the program need to be informed about the theory and practice of teaching these students. These individuals include

- *School board members*, who make crucial budget and staffing decisions.
- *Curriculum directors*, who determine content and either select or develop study guides, course outlines, and instructional materials.
- *The total student population*, which needs to accept and understand its LEP classmates.
- *Speech therapists*, who must distinguish between L2 learning problems and pathological disorders.
- *Special education practitioners*, who must differentiate between the "normal" LEP student and the student who is handicapped.

These individuals profoundly influence both the effectiveness of the program and the lives of its participants. They must understand the program itself and the unique characteristics of LEP students if the program is to succeed and the students are to achieve their maximum potential. Each of these participants in the educational process must serve as an advocate for equitable treatment of LEP students (Cummins 1986).

6
Supervision

JUST AS THERE IS NO UNIVERSAL BLUEPRINT FOR EDUCATING THE limited-English-proficient student, so there is no universal blueprint for the supervision of such programs. Like staff development, supervision must be tailored to fit particular instructional models. Certain overall considerations apply regardless of the model, however.

The Supervisor's Role

The supervision of all programs for LEP students requires knowledge of and sensitivity to the field. That knowledge and sensitivity should go beyond a narrow view of one particular culture; such cultural tunnel vision will needlessly limit the program's effectiveness and its acceptance.

In addition, the supervisor needs a deeply internalized understanding of the philosophy and rationale of the particular program being implemented, as well as a clear knowledge of the curriculum, the appropriate instructional techniques, and the needs and abilities of the staff. This knowledge is an absolute requirement for the effective supervision of a program for LEP students; the program will be consistently successful only when its supervisors possess such expertise.

The Principal's Role

Depending on the local situation, the principal's role can range from total administrative responsibility to playing the part of an informed (and, preferably, supportive) generalist. Often, if the principal does not support the program and make it part of the larger school context, no one will. Sometimes, however, members of the support staff who have highly specialized skills will be able to shoulder some of these responsibilities.

When the responsibility rests solely with the principal, it is vital to provide the kind of staff development outlined in the previous section. When support staff share the responsibility, the principal still needs a working knowledge of the program, but the depth of this awareness is not as critical.

The Support Staff's Role

Support staff whose duties include supervision need specialized skills, including language skills. Adherence to the overall educational

goals of the program may be ensured by nonbilingual specialists, and those responsible for second-language instruction do not necessarily need to speak the students' native language. But in the case of bilingual programs, unless some supervisory staff members are proficient in the native language of the students, credibility will suffer and so will the program.

Supervision implies assisting with effective classroom instruction in order to improve student achievement. When more than one language is used for instruction, that assistance must relate to both languages.

Effective supervision must deal with methodology, content, instructional materials, and professional development—all of which are highly specialized for different languages and different cultures. For that reason, if possible, it is important to have one or more supervisory specialists who are familiar with all the languages used in the program.

Planning for Supervision

The role of the supervisor in a program for LEP students is, of course, determined to a large extent by the characteristics of the program. A program that employs large numbers of relatively unprepared teachers and paraprofessionals, for example, requires a considerable amount of direct, structured supervision. A program in which second-language instruction is emphasized early on may make effective use of nonbilingual supervisors who are knowledgeable about second-language learning and teaching. And a program in which the dialect of the native language spoken in the community differs from that taught in the program requires supervisors who are sensitive to cultural and linguistic differences.

As these few examples suggest, planning is crucial. No amount of enthusiasm, funding, or staffing can compensate for poor planning. The structure of the program, the makeup of the staff, the materials used, and the staff development and supervision models implemented—these and other factors can vary widely from program to program. But if they are rooted in expert planning, these various approaches all can be successful.

7
Student Assessment

ASSESSMENT IN PROGRAMS FOR LEP STUDENTS BEGINS WHEN A CHILD is referred for services. This is the so-called "entry" decision. At this time, program specialists decide whether the child can benefit from a mainstream classroom or whether, because of a lack of English proficiency, a special program is indicated. If the child is placed in a program, the next decision is the appropriate instructional level for that child. This decision should be based both on the child's English proficiency (or lack of it) and on academic status. While the child is in the program, the teacher should regularly monitor English-language and academic progress. The final assessment decision is whether to "exit" the child from the program into a mainstream classroom.

These assessment decisions require clearly articulated program goals and the means to measure progress toward those goals. Unfortunately, it is rare that both these conditions are met. Indeed, the assessment of LEP students is unduly complicated. Part of the complication stems from conflicting program goals, and part stems from the paucity of methods available for assessing the progress of LEP students.

Conflicting Goals

Education for students of limited English proficiency has two goals: to teach the students English, and to maintain their academic progress. These dual goals often conflict and are the grounds for heated debate. One argument says that the sooner students learn English, the sooner they will enter the mainstream. The opposing argument maintains that the best way to continue students' academic progress is to teach them in their native languages.

It is unclear which approach is better. What is clear, however, is that the most visible sign of progress for LEP students is their increasing ability to speak English. In fact, proficiency in English—a primary factor in entry decisions—is often the sole measure used for placement decisions. And all too frequently, English proficiency is the sole benchmark for exit decisions as well. But simply knowing how to speak English does not mean that students have kept up academically or that they will benefit from a mainstream classroom. The reverse situation has a similar effect: Without sufficient English proficiency, the students will not benefit from

a regular classroom setting even if they have kept up academically. Maintaining balance between English proficiency and academic progress calls for clear curriculum objectives that advance the dual purposes of education for LEP students.

Too Few Measures

By far the most difficult assessment problem is measuring where students stand in relation to program objectives. There are simply too few measures in languages other than English that suitably reflect the curriculum of a U.S. classroom. Moreover, tests that are valid and reliable for English-speaking students are invalid and unreliable for LEP students because, by definition, the LEP child lacks sufficient English proficiency to respond meaningfully to the questions on the test.

This problem is more or less serious depending on the purpose of the assessment. For entry decisions, which are based primarily on the child's ability to speak English, test reliability and validity are less important. Fairly good measures are available, and the issue becomes, instead, the cut-off point: How low must students score to be considered so limited in English that they cannot profit from a regular classroom setting? There is no universal agreement on where the cut-off point should be set, but many school systems prefer to err on the high side (considering available resources and statutory regulations) in order to guard against denying services to children who need them.

Placement within a program is more problematic. Placement should lead to instruction that meets the student's academic and language needs, and that requires accurate measurement of the student's status in the various subject matter areas. Because few measures are available in languages other than English, placement often depends solely on the teacher's judgment, which, in turn, is based on experience. Of course, the more information teachers have to go on, the better decisions they will make. But all too often, placement follows a hit-or-miss routine of assigning students to a particular instructional level, monitoring their progress, and changing their placement if need be.

Exit decisions also depend heavily on the teacher's judgment. In some cases, additional criteria are used, but even then the teacher's opinion is solicited and weighed heavily in the decision.

Making Better Decisions

Basing assessment decisions on teacher judgment is inefficient, but the situation is unlikely to be relieved by test developers any time soon. Given the scarcity of valid, reliable standardized tests, teacher judgment

continues to be virtually the sole basis for important assessment decisions. Teachers cannot wait for test developers to relieve them of this burden, but they can follow a few basic guidelines that will make their judgments more accurate.

First, sound judgment is based on the collection of plenty of information by well-informed people. Teachers should assess their students often and use the information to tailor their instruction.

Second, cooperation and sharing of student information among faculty members is crucial. This means that the mainstream teachers who will receive LEP students into their classes should be fully informed of the program's goals and curriculum. By the same token, teachers of LEP students should be equally familiar with what is going on in the mainstream classes their students will eventually enter. Feedback on how well their graduates are doing in mainstream classes will help these teachers make timely and accurate exit decisions.

Finally, teachers need training in when and how to assess student progress, as well as in the areas outlined in the section on staff development. And it is important that this training not be restricted to teachers of LEP students. All members of the faculty who will have former LEP students as their charges should be aware of the unique assessment techniques these students require. It is critical that assessment of LEP students be considered a school program, not just the project of a few overworked teachers.

8
Program Evaluation

THE EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS FOR THE LIMITED-ENGLISH-PROFICIENT student has been as problematic as the assessment of individual students within programs. Much of the evaluation to date has been plagued by methodological problems; as a result, the findings are equivocal. There has been an emphasis on summative evalutaion, with less attention to the formative evaluation that is so valuable at the local level. What is the overall impact of LEP programs, and which instructional method is most effective? The answers to these basic questions continue to elude us for a number of reasons.

Does Bilingual Education Work?

To find out whether transitional bilingual education has a positive effect requires comparing a group of students who receive bilingual instruction (the treatment group) with a group of students who do not (the control group). Both groups must be monitored for a specified length of time—say two years, the average stay in a bilingual program—and their performance compared on such outcomes as English proficiency and academic achievement. If the treatment group performs significantly better, bilingual education has a positive impact.

The difficulty arises in forming the groups. For the comparison to be valid, the two groups of students should be drawn from a common pool and randomly assigned to one group or the other. Students in both groups must be comparable from the outset in all educationally important respects—and, when it comes to bilingual education, that includes limited English proficiency. However, once a child has been identified as an LEP student, he or she is legally entitled to bilingual services. Thus, every student in the common pool would receive bilingual services, virtually eliminating the "no treatment" control group.

Local school districts with bilingual programs have coped with this problem in various ways, such as using quasi-comparison groups and inferring the impact of their own program without making any direct comparison. Their interest, of course, is in the impact of the specific service they offer. But these local findings are too contradictory to allow a simple yes-or-no answer, on the national level, to the question, "Does bilingual education work?"

Which Approach is Best?

The related issue of which instructional approach is most effective has been investigated with similar results. Again, researchers have encountered the problem of comparing groups. They also have encountered the problem of defining instructional models consistently: What is called transitional bilingual education or English as a second language in one school system is not necessarily the same in another. One reason for the variation is that different situations often call for different strategies even within a single instructional model. Another reason is that good teachers make poor research subjects: Rather than slavishly following a specific model for the sake of comparison, good teachers draw from a repertoire of instructional strategies, doing whatever is necessary to meet the needs of their students.

This lack of consistency from classroom to classroom and school to school blurs many of the critical differences between models when data are aggregated and instructional methods compared. As a result, it is difficult to sort out the relative effects of different methods.

The federal government is now engaged in a major bilingual education evaluation effort that includes extensive classroom observations. The goal of this effort is to identify the critical characteristics of bilingual programs and their relative effects on academic achievement and English-language development. The results will be used to set funding policy: If there is "one best method" of educating LEP students, then funding criteria for local bilingual education programs should reflect this finding. If not, then exemplary instructional strategies should be identified and described. These descriptions should be complete enough to allow local school systems to make informed decisions about such program characteristics as the homogeneity of the language group or groups to be served, the status of the native language, the make-up of the teaching force, necessary parental support, and available resources.

Summative Evaluation

The type of evaluation discussed so far is called "summative evaluation"; it is used primarily to measure the impact of a program and as a basis for decision making. In addition, summative evaluation is required of school systems receiving federal grants under the Title VII program. On the basis of this summative evaluation—which shows how well a program has met the school system's stated objectives—the federal government decides whether to continue funding the program. Similarly, at the local level, school boards often use summative evaluation results in deciding whether to continue a bilingual education program.

How the program's impact is measured is crucial in summative evaluation at the local level. Nationally normed tests are commonly used, but they often fail to reflect the program's curriculum adequately, and they seldom are available in languages other than English. Moreover, standardized tests are normed using groups of students who are fundamentally different from the students enrolled in bilingual education programs. In fact, the norm group may not even reflect the general school or district population from which bilingual students are drawn—especially in places where there are high concentrations of language minorities. It makes good sense, therefore, for local school systems to develop their own norms wherever possible. The impact of a special program is best judged in relation to local standards.

But even local norms are based on tests that may not fully coincide with the bilingual curriculum. For that reason, local tests may have to be developed and other pertinent information, such as attendance and graduation rates, collected. In addition, the participation of LEP students in school activities should be part of a complete evaluation. Often, these students do not feel as though they are an integral part of the school—especially if they are in a self-contained program. A well-designed program takes steps to overcome this feeling of isolation and strives to make the students part of the regular school milieu.

Parents of LEP students, like their children, often are reluctant to involve themselves in school because of perceived cultural differences and language barriers. A complete bilingual education program is likely to include efforts to increase parent participation or, at least, to increase positive contact between parents and school personnel.

Formative Evaluation

Even more important than summative evaluation are evaluation efforts that lead to program improvement. This kind of evaluation, referred to as "formative evaluation," requires the usual achievement data and other data collected for summative evaluation, but it also calls for genuine communication among faculty members. Teachers who are assigned to the program should work among themselves in an effort to improve instruction; that is, they should assess their students and themselves, not only to gauge their status, but for diagnostic purposes as well.

Program faculty also should gather information from other school faculty on how their instruction might better meet the goals of the mainstream classroom and enable their students to make smoother transitions into other classes. Building administrators and district staff should seek feedback on how materials and curriculum might be improved to meet

the needs of the students. And everyone should strive toward reaching mutually agreed-on objectives and goals.

Given the rather shaky state of the art in evaluation of programs for LEP students, it is doubtful that the important questions of program impact and "one best method" will be answered soon. What is certain, however, is that these students need help if they are to take full advantage of the educational system in this country. Any evaluation of their programs should provide information that works toward that goal.

9

Conclusions and Recommendations

OUR ANALYSIS OF THE EDUCATION OF LIMITED-ENGLISH-PROFICIENT students has focused on a number of critical issues and addressed some common misconceptions about this politically and emotionally charged subject. In addition, we have looked at what research says about bilingual education. In this context, we offer the following conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusions

Social Context

The controversy surrounding education for LEP students is tied to the larger social issues of ethnic identity and minority access to employment and other societal resources. Those responsible for the education of LEP students must understand the context in which the debate is conducted and separate fact from fiction. Little research evidence points conclusively to the effectiveness of one instructional approach over another, but this much is clear: Effective programs can be built only on a foundation of sound knowledge and reasoned judgment.

Student Characteristics

LEP students are as different from one another as members of any other group of students are. Their facility in their native language—and in the second language—varies widely. Similarly, these students vary widely in academic ability. As a group, however, their academic performance is low, a fact that is related to limited English ability, with limited educational opportunity, and difficulties in assessment, rather than to lack of intelligence.

Although the majority of LEP students come from homes at the lower end of the socioeconomic scale, it is dangerous to make too much of this characteristic. Indeed, these students can, and do, come from a variety of SES levels and family backgrounds. In addition to language and cultural factors, they may differ on such important family character-

istics as length of residency in the United States, aspirations, previous academic experience, and educational expectations.

Instruction

The diversity of LEP students is reflected in the different instructional approaches designed to meet their needs. These approaches vary in a host of ways—including the amount of instruction in the students' native language, the language in which initial literacy is attained, and staffing and scheduling patterns.

Some research suggests that the more time is allotted to instruction in the native language and the longer students are in the program, the better they do academically. There is little evidence to support the notion that use of the native language in instruction retards development of English. On the contrary, some studies suggest that learning in the native language makes the transition to English that much easier.

Another lesson from research is that programs for LEP students work best when they are well integrated into the overall school curriculum instead of standing alone. In fact, a number of contextual factors that affect the education of LEP students—including school climate, instructional leadership, teacher expectations, and the involvement of parents and the community—indicate the importance of integrating programs for these students with the mainstream curriculum and encouraging cooperative planning among teachers of LEP and mainstream students.

Finally, research shows that good teachers of LEP students in transitional bilingual programs, in addition to having specialized language ability, are like good teachers in any classroom. They are actively involved with students and clear about what they expect of them; they are organized and confident that their students will learn. They are able to use different languages to achieve understanding across all academic areas, and they know how to help bridge the differences between home and school.

Curriculum

The most important curricular effect in the instruction of LEP students is the balance that is struck between two primary goals: English proficiency and academic achievement. Those who overemphasize English acquisition should not mistake skill in face-to-face conversation with the kind of language proficiency required for academic success. This misunderstanding sometimes leads to inappropriate placement decisions and faulty entry and exit criteria.

Instructional materials produced for LEP students by local educators

generally are more effective than those sold commercially, although several new series suggest an encouraging trend for the better in commercial texts. Materials published outside the United States, however, often do not mesh with the mainstream curriculum and may include concepts that are incompatible with family and community values and customs in this country. All materials, regardless of origin, should be examined carefully to make sure regional language differences have been taken into account.

Staff Development

The design of staff development activities for programs for LEP students depends largely on the program model being used. Teachers in a transitional bilingual education program, for example, need different in-service training than those in an ESL-only program. To ensure that the program is accepted and made an integral part of the school, it is often necessary to conduct staff development activities *about* the program for other school personnel and community members.

Supervision

Clearly, supervisors of bilingual or ESL teachers are more effective if they understand the characteristics of LEP students and are themselves trained in the methodology of first and second language acquisition. While the role of the supervisor is largely determined by the nature of the program, cooperative planning between supervisor and teacher is crucial regardless of program design.

Student Assessment

In assessment, as in instruction, the balance between the twin goals of English proficiency and academic achievement is critical. Although the most visible evidence of progress is skill in English, it is also the most problematic, for it is often the sole measure used for entry, placement, and exit decisions. However, the ability to converse in English is no guarantee of academic success. Similarly, without English proficiency, academic success will not guarantee success in a regular classroom setting.

The problem is exacerbated by the lack of reliable tests, either in English or in other languages. As a result, most critical decisions on program placement are made on the basis of teacher judgment. For that reason, teachers of LEP students need specialized training in assessment techniques, and they are advised to assess students often and use the

results for diagnosis and tailoring of instruction. Finally, sharing information among all faculty members is critical.

Program Evaluation

The most common question people ask about any programs for LEP students is, "Does it work?" Unfortunately, there is no simple answer to that question. The diversity of the student population, the complexity of program goals, the multiplicity of curricular designs, and the range of teacher skills have made it difficult to evaluate these programs using traditional research methods. More promising are ethnographic evaluations, in which skilled observers try to capture the critical instructional characteristics of a classroom or school.

In addition to achievement data, a variety of other indicators should be used in program evaluation, such as locally developed and locally normed tests, rates of attendance, graduation, involvement in school activities, and parent participation.

The tendency has been to emphasize summative evaluation over formative, but evaluation should always relate to program improvement. That requires measurable objectives, an evaluation design that include frequent data collection, and genuine communication among faculty members on the impact of instruction. The persistent pressure to be accountable on a bottom-line basis should not lead us astray from the goal of using information to serve the needs of individual children.

Recommendations

1. Educators should bring to students with limited English proficiency the same concern for individuality and unique potential they bring to other youngsters. These students represent a valuable national resource that, if properly developed, can add immeasurably to society.

2. Whenever appropriate, students' native language should be used in instruction. Although the research is inconclusive, there is some indication that native-language instruction can lead to both academic achievement and English proficiency. Whether or not it is appropriate to use the native language in instruction, all programs should be carefully developed with regard to assessment, instruction, and evaluation.

3. Programs for students with limited English proficiency should be an integral part of the school in terms of the curriculum, instructional design, staff development, and supervision.

4. Nationally developed curriculum materials, assessment instruments, and evaluation designs frequently are inappropriate for local

needs. School systems must often rely on their own products and procedures. The first step toward effective instruction, assessment, and evaluation is common agreement on measurable goals and objectives, followed by frequent collection of data that are clearly tied to instruction and programmatic goals.

5. The controversy surrounding education for LEP students is enmeshed in larger social issues of citizenship and employment. School authorities should be aware of these issues, yet refuse to let emotional arguments dictate instruction, relying instead on sound documentation compiled during carefully planned evaluations.

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