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WHAT DO MAINSTREAM TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
BILINGUALISM IN THE CLASSROOM TO SUPPORT ESL STUDENTS?

by

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts in English as a Second Language

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To my family, who have been there to support me all the way.

To my husband, Corey, thank you for being my rock, for your unconditional support and pushing me when I needed a lift. Thank you for your patience through this process and encouragement. To our dog Sulley who stayed by my side late at nights and comforted me during stressful times.

To my mother-in law, Cathy and father-in law Michael, thank you for your support, care, love and most of all your guidance in helping me become a teacher.

To my parents Rosa and Manuel, thank you for your love, care and support. Thank you for making the sacrifices you did to provide me and my siblings with a better education. I know those sacrifices weren't easy to make but that has showed me that dreams do come true. Those sacrifices you have made, has pushed me to do my best. Thank you for teaching me that hard work pays off and that the American dream is possible.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

Background

Being born in Ecuador and having lived there for ten years gave me a great command of being fluent in Spanish. Having moved to Minnesota when I was ten also gave me great advantage to learn English quickly. I remember when I had arrived here, my parent's goal was for me to learn English as quickly as possible so that I would be able to help them translate letters and conversations. However, as I got older I started to realize that I was also losing my Spanish. Spanish is my first language, so it should have stuck with me, but that was not the case. The more English I learned, the more difficult it was to have a normal conversation in Spanish with other adults. I often had to pause and think about what I was going to say next, filling in the gaps with a lot of "umms". When I was in high school in the suburbs, I remember that there were only five other students that were Latino, and I found myself hanging out with friends who only spoke English. In high school I barely spoke Spanish because I did not have friends who spoke Spanish.

I thought going to college at Saint Cloud State was going to change my Spanish skills once I met others who also spoke Spanish. However, it was the same; I barely saw other students of my own background. I remember that I used English 80% of the time and Spanish 20% of the time. I would only speak Spanish with my family when I would

visit them on the weekends or holidays. I came to realize the extent to which I was forgetting my Spanish when it was difficult to have a full conversation with my parents and I would forget what a simple word in English meant in Spanish. When this happened, I decided to enroll in Spanish classes right away at Saint Cloud State. I tested out of the beginners' level and started in the intermediate class. Through the continuing years at Saint Cloud State, I continued taking Spanish classes and decided to major in Spanish. Taking those classes helped me not to forget my Spanish. I started seeing a difference and I was able to communicate fluently with others. Being able to do this helped me become bilingual.

In my career life, I am frequently asked if I speak more than one language and I always say yes, because I do. Speaking more than one language has been a great advantage to me as it has helped me stand out from other interviewees. Being bilingual has helped me in every job that I have had in the past. In my most recent career as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, I have worked with students from a lot of different backgrounds. When I was student teaching fourth and fifth grade I had the opportunity of working with Latino students. While teaching them I noticed that almost all of the students were not fluent in Spanish, they spoke Spanish, but it was an informal Spanish. The students did not know the academic language in Spanish; they did not know how to write or read in Spanish at their grade level. I was not as surprised as I should have been because this is something that I have seen both in my siblings and in students of other backgrounds. . These observations brought many questions to mind, and seeing that a lack of academic knowledge in a first language could potentially hinder students

from being fluent in both languages led me to my research question: *What do mainstream teachers need to know about bilingualism in the classroom to support ESL students?*

Language

Over the last years, there has been an increase in families who speak a language other than English in the United States. According to the center for Immigration Studies (2014), in the United States, one out of five people speaks a language other than English. There has been an increase of foreign language speakers through the years, and it is expected to continue to increase, “The number of foreign-language speakers increased 2.2 million between 2010 and 2013. It has grown by nearly 15 million (32 percent) since 2000 and by almost 30 million since 1990” (Center for Immigration Studies, 2014). However, this does not show whether people are fluent in two languages. Many of us are monolingual, bilingual or multilingual but the main thing that we have to remember is that acquiring a language is something that happens over time and something that we have to continue practicing over our lifetime. It is like any other learning; if we stop practicing we forget, and it will take time to get back what we learned, the same goes for language.

There has been an increase in the importance of learning more than one language because of the diverse culture that we see in the United States. From what I have seen, what makes it difficult is that most students tend to have better command in one language rather than both. Learning a new language is not easy, and in this case, it is even harder for ESL students, these students are under stress of learning English when they barely know their first language such as Spanish, Hmong, Chinese, Karen or Somali. Parents can also add additional stress. Without knowing, parents push their children to learn

English as quickly as possible. Parents put pressure on their children because their children are the ones who help their parents translate. By doing this, parents do not realize that this is something that has hurt our younger generations where most ESL students are learning English but are forgetting their first language. Take me, for example. I knew Spanish but realized that because I was not communicating in Spanish constantly at home and school, I was starting to lose my first language. Because of my personal experience, and what I have seen at school with ESL students, I want to be able to provide information that will help teachers and others be better prepared to help ESL students succeed as bilingual learners.

Bilingualism

Bilingualism means being able to speak two or more languages fluently by an individual. Students who come from households whose first language is not English usually don't tend to become bilingual when they live in a society which communicates primarily in English. Being bilingual gives an individual the great advantage and opportunity to use either language with great command when needed. Being able to learn a new language can take place anywhere from when the child is an infant to later in life. There are two common types of bilingualism. The first type of bilingualism is called the dominant or balanced bilingualism. Baker (2000) defines balanced bilingualism as being able to have similar proficiency levels in both languages like that of a native-speaker. Being a balanced bilingual individual means that both languages are equal in the way that the individual shares or expresses ideas. This also means that he or she can switch back and forth between languages when needed. The best way to test if an individual is a balanced bilingual is by seeing how fluent they are in writing, reading, listening and

speaking. Most times this can be hard to obtain, as most times there is usually one language that is more dominant than the other.

The second type of bilingualism is called subtractive bilingualism. Subtractive bilingualism “The acquisition of a second language at the expense, or ultimately at the expense, of the first, e.g. that of English by many immigrant communities in North America or Britain.” (Matthews, 2014). Usually, the individuals that fall under this category are individuals who are English language learners. Most of the students that I have worked with fall into this category because they have not fully mastered their first language and are having to learn English at school. Subtractive bilingualism can lead students to focus on English only since that is the main goal, to achieve where they are speaking mostly English at home and school. This then leads ESL students to use their first language less frequently causing them to forget it later down the road. The issue with the sequential bilingualism is that even though students have heard their native language at home most times, they are not learning the academic language that is equivalent to that of English which they do learn at school. This is what causes issues among ESL students, the first language that they have learned is not the academic language but the social language that students use among friends or relatives. This type of language can be described as an informal first language causing them not to be fully fluent in writing, reading, listening and speaking. This is what I had seen with my students in fourth and fifth grade; I noticed that they were not able to read or write in their native language and at their grade level.

With the way the world has changed over the years, there has been an increase in learning different languages. However, to the immigrants who arrive at the United States,

their main goal is for their children to learn English and get assimilated with the culture and fit in as much as possible at school or work. While parents think is important and that this may help their children be successful in a country where English is the dominant language, it can also be a disadvantage. While parents want their child to be successful in school, I think that it is important to let them know of the advantages and the importance of bilingualism. Not only by having their child learn a second language along with their native language but of how this will help them be successful in the long run when they are applying for jobs and even in school. Based on the work of Ellen Bialystok, “initial findings were that bilingual children are better at “metalinguistic” skills” (Prior and Gollan, 2013 p. 624). Also, according to Prior and Gollan (2013) they stated that bilingual children separated meaning and grammar at an earlier age than did monolinguals when asked to judge if sentences were grammatical or not. Being able to have children tap into their first and second language can provide them with more experiences depending on the subject. Because of this, it has been nice to see that more schools have immersion programs that can help students with their native language.

Through this research project, I want to learn about bilingualism resources that can be helpful for mainstream teachers. Resources that teachers can use in their classroom to help ESL students. I want to find resources that can provide methods that can help students speak both languages equally well instead of putting the importance of one language over the other. I also want to make sure that parents understand that it does not hurt their child to learn their first language when learning English, that instead when their child has a better grasp of their first language, it becomes easier for him/her to learn English. I want parents to know that they should not have educational fears when it

comes to their children learning their native language. I have seen where parents do not want their child to learn their first language because the parents feel that their child will get confused between languages. Parents feel that because they are living here in the United States, their child should only learn English to be successful.

Conclusion

Do to my past experiences with my first language and because of my recent work with ESL students I want to be able to provide teachers with resources and information that can help them understand bilingualism. I want to make sure that students are not losing their native language while continuing to learn English. In my research project, I will answer the question of *What do mainstream teachers need to know about bilingualism in the classroom to support ESL students?* Doing this research, I will be able to provide important information that can help teachers know the importance of bilingualism and ways that they can help ESL students be successful in school.

In chapter one, I introduced my research question by establishing the background information and the motivation that lead me to this research question. I also stated the importance of and need for this research question. In chapter two, I will review and present literature that is significant to bilingualism, and the importance of bilingualism. This literature will help provide the background information for my research question.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction.

In chapter one, I discussed my background knowledge and interest in bilingualism. I also discussed how being bilingual is important for ESL students and how it is important to help students continue learning in their first language. I discussed what lead me to my question and how I want to find information to help better support teachers and parents. The purpose of this analysis is to help discover how bilingualism can become part of the mainstream classroom. Being able to incorporate bilingualism in the classroom can open doors to communication and increase in student participation which can lead to student achievement in the classroom. In this chapter, I will be reviewing the research to help answer my question *What do mainstream teachers need to know about bilingualism in the classroom to support ESL student?*

This chapter will begin with an explanation of language and literacy development and how this plays a role in bilingualism. This topic will also provide significant research into social and academic language background and phonological awareness. This will provide more insight into understanding bilingualism and why this is important to help support ESL students. Another component that this study will look at is code-switching how this can help ESL students in the mainstream classroom. This chapter will also

include research about bilingualism and education along with bilingualism in the classroom. The research will also focus on the advantages and disadvantages of each of these topics. These are the major components of the research that can help answer the question of: *What do mainstream teachers need to know about bilingualism in the classroom to support ESL students?*

Language and Literacy Development

Background. Language is the means by which individuals communicate. It can be oral or written, and it is structured conventionally. By the time students start school, they know how to communicate with others whether it is in their first or second language or both. Language and literacy development are needed for students to be successful in the classroom environment. According to Wang (2015) language and literacy skills are the basis for content learning. There are times when students have difficulty learning a content area, this means that they are also likely having difficulties processing information. If the language and literacy are not developed, then students could struggle to comprehend what the teacher is saying or understand a written text. There has been much research done about the way children learn a language. Knowledge of how language works is an important factor for teachers to know along with literacy development. Proficiency in a language plays a major part in being able to communicate effectively with others. As it was identified by Watts-Taffe & Truscott (2000) that oral language use is only one subset of proficiency and that oral language use in social situations is yet a smaller subset. Although language plays an important role in communication, other parts play important roles as well. All of this needs to be taken into consideration when teaching students of diverse backgrounds.

BICS and CALP Language. When students are learning to communicate, they learn two types of languages with which they can communicate. This language does not refer to the students' first language or their second language. It refers to learning the basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and the cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), which were introduced by Cummins in 1984. Basic interpersonal communication skills refer to the social language that students use to communicate with other students outside of the classroom. This could include talking about their weekend during recess or playing a game. "This type of communication is often informal and is usually augmented by facial expressions, gestures, and body language" (Watts-Taffe & Truscott, 2000, p. 259). While cognitive academic language proficiency is the language used in the classroom, this is different from the social language. The cognitive language is also called academic language because it requires the students to think academically about the content that he or she is learning in the classroom. In contrast, according to Watts-Taffe & Truscott (2000) unlike social language, academic language is sometimes *context-reduced* in that gestures, body language, and facial expressions that could facilitate the communication process are reduced or completely gone. It is important to know the difference between academic and social language skills, because it makes a big difference when students are learning. Knowing the difference also helps in knowing if students are understanding the academic language that is needed in the classroom to communicate effectively. If a student is not able to use academic language, this could mean that the student lacks some literacy skills.

These two types of languages play an important part for ESL students, many times when ESL students start school they only know the social language to

communicate with their peers. The social language is not enough to help ESL students understand the academic content taught in the mainstream classroom. ESL students learn the academic language in school from their teachers. It does not mean that an ESL student is going to be able to learn the academic language right away; it may take some time. According to Halbach (2012) there is indication about the number of years it takes an immigrant student to develop the two kinds of proficiency. It is said that it can take up to 2 years for BICS and between 5 and 7 years for CALP. The time provided here, does not mean that it takes this time for all ESL students; some students do tend to learn faster than others. However, it is also important for teachers to keep in mind that even though an ESL student is speaking in their first language, it does not mean that the student knows the academic language in their first language. Most times students will only know the social language in their native language. "Individuals commonly acquire BICS in their native language by the age of five" (Myhill, 2004 p. 411). Meaning that when ESL students start school they are just acquiring the fluency of social language. When ESL students are learning the academic language in English, students are not able to translate that into their first language. Students can not translate to their first language, because they do not have the skills to do so, and because they are not fluent in their first language. Due to this, many students who are learning English tend to forget their first language and have a better command of English. It is important to make sure that when ESL students start school, they continue learning the academic language in their first and second language. Providing classrooms where students are welcomed to use their first language can help students become bilingual. As this provides a window of opportunity for students to communicate with other students in their native language.

Literacy Skills. When children start school, they need to understand the sounds, words, language, and books before they can learn to read and write. Teachers and parents play an important role in helping children develop their literacy skills. Literacy skills are the skills needed for a child to be able to read and write. According to Segarra (2012), there have been several studies that have found that literacy training in the first language can assist in the skill development of the second language. There have been many times when parents prefer their child speak only English, this way the child will learn the language faster. What parents do not understand is that if the child continues to learn in the first language, he or she will be able to pick up the second language more easily. When a child can learn the first language, everything that the child has learned will be able to transfer to the second language. Having students practice both their first and second language can help students become bilingual. “Recent research has shown that, for English language learners, phonological awareness in the native language (L1) predicts successful literacy acquisition in both L1 and a second language (L2)” (Ford, 2005 p. 1) There has always been a focus placed on the importance of having students master the English language to near native-like qualities, but because there is much pressure on students, they tend to forget their first language and become fluent in English only. The overall goal is to help students foster their first language while learning a new one. This can be difficult to attain in a classroom where students can only communicate in English. Being able to incorporate the students first language will provide students more success not only in learning their first language, but also a way of expressing their content knowledge.

Many schools serve students with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences

that they bring to the classroom. All these students speak different languages; they come from different social groups, cultures, and ways of living. According to MinnPost's by Hirsi (2015):

“In Minnesota, about 500,000 of the state's 5 million residents speak a language other than English at home. Of those, a plurality — almost 200,000 — speak Spanish. Behind Spanish are Hmong and Cushite (a language family that includes Oromo and Somali), followed by German, with more than 24,000 speakers”

With the increase of diversity, teachers cannot assume that all students are going to learn the same way. All students come from different backgrounds, and because of this, literacy development in the first language is an important aspect to keep in mind. It is a tool that can be used to help students be successful in the mainstream classroom. Being able to incorporate the students' first language in the classroom helps them communicate with other students and opens doors for participation and motivation to learn the content.

Phonological Awareness. Another aspect for teachers to keep in mind is the importance of students' phonological awareness, because this is what helps students make connections between reading and writing. “Phonological awareness, or the ability to recognize and manipulate linguistic sounds apart from their meanings, is a crucial skill in learning to read” (Branum-Martin, Tao, & Garnaat, 2015, p. 111). Phonological awareness plays an important role with ESL students as it can help guide how successful students are going to be with their literacy development. As research described by Ford (2005):

“It is particularly important to recognize the role that phonological awareness plays as children with limited English proficiency (LEP) learn to read, both in

their native language (L1) and in their second language (L2). Characteristically, these children exhibit both unique strengths and unique deficiencies in this area” (p.1).

Phonological awareness is important for bilingual students as this helps them develop their first and second language. It has been known that phonological awareness in the first language can help with the phonological awareness of the second language with ESL students. Even if the student is not fluent in their first language anything that the student has learned or is learning the student will be able to transfer to their second language. This overall then helps with the literacy development not only in the first language but the second language as well.

There can be some advantages to the transfer of phonological awareness. One of the greatest advantages is that any skills developed in one language can transfer to the other language. It is also important to keep in mind that if the student does develop the wrong phonological awareness, this too can be transferred to the second language which can cause a disadvantage to their learning. The closer the phonologies of the first and second language are, it is more than likely that the phonological transfer is going to be positive. Research by Bialystok (2002) has shown that the closer the phonologies of the first and second language, the greater the likelihood that transfer of skills will be positive rather than negative because children are more adept at manipulating the sounds and patterns that exist in their native language. Students with languages that don't share similar phonological characteristics are going to have a harder time trying to develop phonological awareness skills that can transfer between the two languages causing a negative impact in their second language. This is why it is important for teachers to

encourage ESL families to continue providing support of literacy skills at home in the first language. Many times, parents do not know how important it is to help their child continue learning in their first language and how that is going to have a positive effect on their child learning English. Having ESL students continue learning in their first language not just at home but in the classroom as well, will have a big impact on them being able to be bilinguals. Another important aspect for teachers as Helman (2004) describes:

“Teachers can also use knowledge of the primary language to understand their students' development. If teachers can familiarize themselves with the basics of phonology and spelling in their students' first language, this will help them to better understand their students' literacy development in English, and they will be better prepared to help students develop both English literacy skills and oral language proficiency”. (p. 457)

Being able to incorporate the first language in the classroom is not only helpful for students, but it can also be helpful for teachers. Having the background knowledge of the primary language can be an advantage to teachers as this will help students be successful in their literacy development in English.

Many factors that play big roles in language and literacy development. It is important to know how each of these factors affects the learning of ESL students and how these factors can also help ESL students become long-term bilingual learners. Students who become bilingual will have many advantages not only in school but in the workplace as well. Being able to provide students with the right tools to enhance their literacy skills in the first language will help students have great command over both languages. Being able to transfer information from one language to the other can also

help ESL students with their cognitive skills. It is important to keep in mind that knowing the importance of language and literacy development is an advantage to both students and teachers.

Code Switching

Code Switching and Bilingualism. Over the last 10 years, there has been an increase in individuals speaking more than one language. Individuals who are bilingual or multilingual tend to switch between languages during conversations. Code-switching “refers to the use of several languages or dialects in the same conversation or sentence by bilingual people” (Gardner, 2009, p. 4). Students who are bilingual tend to code switch between languages to get a better understanding or to grasp the material. Code-switching is something that can be an important part for ESL students in that it can help them navigate between two languages even if they are not fluent in both. Code-switching gives bilinguals a way of being able to express themselves in different situations socially. At times code-switching has been looked down upon, in part because the individual who is code-switching does not want others to know what he or she is talking about in a conversation. As described by Fachriyah (2017) the use of code has a value of naturalness for particular speech events within the community of bilingual speakers. There are many reasons why an individual would use code-switching, and there have also been many theories as to why individuals use code-switching. The one explanation that was given by Heredia and Altarriba (2001) as to why bilinguals code-switch is because they do it to compensate for lack of language. The argument is that bilinguals code switch because they do not know either language completely. This can be partially true, yet even students who are fluent in both languages can still use code-switching depending on the

social environment they are in. Code-switching can be a way of communication between two bilinguals or multilingual students. According to Fachriyah (2017) in the process of bilingual education, code-switching is more managerial. This means that in the learning process, code switching acts more as a tool to manage and facilitate interaction and learning. Code-switching can be an important part and should be part of the mainstream classroom. Another important role is that students have an advantage to be successful in their learning, whether they are fluent or not. Students can activate their learning in either language with code-switching.

Effectiveness. Most times there are factors involved for individuals who use code-switching. There has been much research done to see if code-switching helps in the classroom and how students feel about code-switching. It was found by Nordin, Ali, Zubir, & Sadjirin (2013) that most of the ESL learners have positive attitudes towards code switching. They also found that ESL learners believed that code switching facilitates them in understanding the target language. This shows that code-switching can help students learn in the classroom. This also shows that it is important to be able to have students input; as this helps the students own learning in the long term. According to previous research, some scholars thought that:

“Code-switching should not be allowed in second language classrooms as it may hinder learning process. This is based on the argument that learners may depend too much on teachers’ code-switching. They may lose their eagerness to learn and the ability to guess and infer in new linguistic environments of the second language. Secondly, it might cause confusion and fossilization and internalization of errors in learners” (Nordin et al., 2013 p.479).

There are always two sides to a story; there are going to be researchers who say that code-switching is beneficial for teachers and students; while other researchers will say that it is a disadvantage to have in the classroom. However, there are many ways in which students learn a language, and it is always best to keep in mind what is going to work best for them. The main goal is to help ESL students learn the content needed for them to be successful in the mainstream classroom. Being able to incorporate code-switching in the classroom that is bilingual can help students achieve the goal of being successful in their learning. Most times when a bilingual speaker is trying to remember both languages, they try to simplify grammatical categories and try to transfer forms or meanings from their L1 to English and vice versa.

“Bilinguals develop other strategies aimed at easing the challenge of having to remember and use two different linguistic systems. In the use of Spanish, they regularize forms, develop phrasal constructions to replace complicated words with inflectional endings and frequently switch between the two languages” (Silva-Corvolan, 2004 p. 218).

In this case, code-switching is recognized by the bilingual community as a means to fulfill several functions. This helps open doors not only of communication but participation, motivation and student engagement in learning and mastering the content. Both students and teachers can benefit from having a classroom that encourages code-switching.

Some researchers see code-switching as a disadvantage in the classroom, mostly because students are going to be using their first language to communicate. This may scare some teachers because he or she may not know the language, “Due to the presence

of the mother tongue (L1) within in a code-switched communication, some teachers and researchers allege that it shows incompetence and lack of credibility” (Horasan, 2014 p. 32). However, if ESL students can use their first language in the mainstream classroom, they are going to feel welcome. Students are going to feel like they do belong in the classroom. Students will also be able to communicate with peers of the same first language and share their knowledge without fear. As described by Skiba (1997) code switching may facilitate language development as a mechanism for providing language samples and may also be utilized as a teaching method for teaching second languages. Being able to incorporate code-switching in the classroom can have benefits that can help students become successful in learning.

In the Classroom. Incorporating code-switching in the classroom can also help increase student engagement and participation among peers and with teachers. Code-switching can also help students continue learning both their first and second language. Incorporating code-switching in the classroom can lead to support multilingual practices. According to Sampson (2011) bilinguals have more developed metalinguistic awareness than monolinguals, it encourages teachers to harness the first language knowledge in order to perform contrastive analysis between the first language and English. Being able to incorporate code-switching in the classroom can provide students with the highest-quality learning opportunities possible in a bilingual classroom. Because of the increase in ESL students most schools have turned to immersion school programs. The immersion program is not only beneficial for students but teachers as well, as the teacher can check the students’ understanding and learning progress. There are different ways in which

bilinguals can communicate through the process of code-switching. Students may use one or more than one function to communicate their point across depending on the situations.

In conclusion, code-switching can be a beneficial part of learning for ESL students. Code-switching can be part of the classroom to help ESL students gain learning success. Code-switching can help ESL students learn the target language, but also gives students the advantage to be able to communicate with their peers. A great advantage of code-switching is that it opens the opportunity for ESL students to learn the content taught in the mainstream classroom. Code-switching overall helps with bilingualism in the classroom, helps students achieve learning and opens the door to communication.

Bilingualism and Education

In the past, all schools promoted the standard variety that there should only be one language spoken in the classroom and that language should be English. According to the Texas Education Agency Bilingual/ESL:

“1920s to 1960s English immersion or “sink-or-swim” policies were the dominant method of instruction of language minority students. Few or no remedial services were available, and students were generally held at the same grade level until enough English was mastered to advance in subject areas” (Anonymous, 2004)

While this has changed in some schools over the years, some schools have changed to immersion schools, many other schools still carry this standard. With the increase of students whose first language is not English, the transition can be difficult for ESL students who are new to schools. Not only are the students trying to adjust to a new culture, but the students also have to adjust to a language that is unknown to them.

Education is an important part of every child's life, and it is important that every child gets the best education possible. Many students that go to school speak more than one language even if they are not fluent in both; they may still be considered bilingual. Due to this, there is the high importance of incorporating bilingualism in the education. Not only does this help students continue learning their first language but also helps ESL students who are learning English. Bilingualism has been a hot topic according to Pease-Alvarez and Hakuta (1992), since the passage of the Bilingual Education Act in 1968, bilingual education has been surrounded by controversy and debate. Bilingualism has become an important part of education because there has been an increase in diverse languages spoken in the United States. Since the high increase of ESL students in the United States, some states have adopted the value of dual language-immersion school programs. Although there has been an increase in dual language-immersion, there are still schools that have the standard of English only schools.

“Bilingual education as it is practiced in the public schools of the United States means teaching non-English-speaking students to read and write in their native tongue, teaching them content in their native tongue, and gradually transitioning them to English over a period of several years” (Rossell, Baker, 1996, p.7).

Both the dual and English immersion programs provide different strategies for teaching ESL students. Neither is right or wrong, but both play important roles in trying to achieve one goal which is the success of students learning and mastering the academics.

Dual Language Programs. Overall the number of dual language immersion schools has increased over the last couple of years. According to (Maxwell, 2012) the numbers of dual-language immersion programs like this one have been steadily growing

in public schools over the past decade or so, rising to more than 2,000 in 2011-12.

Maxwell also explains that the increase in demand for dual-language immersion programs has increased because there is a higher demand for bilingual workers. With the increase of bilingualism, it is important to find ways that are going to help ESL students reach their full learning potential for a better future. Dual language immersion schools have created a new way of learning not only for ESL students but English-speaking students as well. Having different options for students also helps bridge the educational gap between ESL students and non-ESL students. Research found by Valentino and Reardon (2015) shows that on average, English learners (ELs) perform far worse than non-ELs on academic tests. Part of this can be because of the lack of academic language that ESL student doesn't have. Based on this information it is important to decide what the best and most effective instructional method is for ESL students.

Debate. There has been a lot of debate on whether bilingual education is beneficial for ESL students and if it does help with their academic achievement. As it was described by Valentino and Reardon (2015) they found that some data and theory suggest that ELs benefit most from being immersed in English-only classrooms. This means that putting ESL students in an English only classroom will help students learn the language faster. This is because the students will constantly get to practice the language in the classroom. But, there is also evidence that states that for children to be able to learn a new language, they first require a fundamental literacy base in their first language. Being able to continue the development of their first language will help the transfer to the development of the second language. ESL students who continue learning their first language will be able to transfer what they know to English.

Some argue that bilingual education is better than English only instruction as it was discovered by Goldenberg (1996), he mentions that if students are immersed in English-only instruction but have not developed a minimum level of competency in English, there is going to be a discrepancy between what is taught and what is understood by the student. Goldenberg goes to say that children need a knowledge base to be successful readers and writers. If students can learn in the language that they are familiar with, they will pick up the knowledge faster and will be able to expand on it. This leaves ESL students in the sink-or-swim method, in which most cases ESL students are going to sink. This is because ESL students don't know the language and can't comprehend what they are being taught. This also leads to ESL students falling behind and trying to catch up with their peers but doesn't always happen. Based on the research done by Valentino and Reardon (2015) they found evidence that immigrant students with 2 to 3 years of initial schooling in their country of origin tend to perform better academically than those who start their schooling in a new country. This shows that having ESL students in a bilingual environment will help them be successful in their academics. This goes back to the literacy and language development if students can continue learning in the first language they can transfer that to their second language. Being able to include bilingualism in education can help close the achievement gap and help ESL students learn more content in their first language. Bilingualism can help ESL students continue achievement in oral and written language development.

To conclude, bilingualism has been part of the education system for a few years. Still, a lot more research needs to be done to see if English only or bilingual programs would work best for ESL students. Because of the increase of students whose first

language is not English, the incorporation of bilingualism has become an important factor when teaching. Bilingualism is opening the door to ESL students who don't know English be part of the classroom. It is giving ESL students the power of learning content in their first language which then later they can transfer to the second language.

Bilingualism in the classroom

Background. There has been an increase in the population of students who speak more than one language. As stated by the National Center for Education Statistics (2011), over the past 30 years, while the overall population of school-aged children increased by approximately 10%, the population of children speaking a language other than English at home more than doubled. The student population has changed over the years; there has been an increase in ESL students, students whose first language is not English. This is important to keep in mind as many of these students who are new to schools come from different backgrounds. These students at times tend to feel the pressure to learn a new language and some can learn English quickly, but others don't. ESL students tend to struggle in the mainstream classroom, where they are not able to show off their knowledge because of the language barrier. Their engagement is not as high, and they tend to stay quiet for fear of sounding wrong. According to Minaya-Rowe (2008) mentions that some students tend to stay quiet and shy and they tend to learn by listening and watching but will barely speak because they don't want to make mistakes. Being able to provide students with options of communication could open up the doors to more engagement, pride, and motivation for participation in the classroom.

Pull-out Method. When ESL students are provided ESL services, there are different ways in which this can be done. There is the "pull-out" method in which

students are taken out of their mainstream classroom into the ESL teachers' classroom anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour. Using this method, the ESL teacher pulls out the ESL students every day or every other day depending on the need for English. One of the advantages is that the ESL student is with a group of ESL students in an environment where they all feel more comfortable communicating in their first language. One of the disadvantages that the pull-out method has is that when students are being taken out of the classroom for ESL learning, they tend to miss on other important information from subjects like math, history, literature or other subjects. According to Santana, Scully, & Dixon (2012), the time that students spend away from their regular classrooms, coupled with a lack of collaboration between mainstream teachers and specialists, places English learners at risk for higher incidence of missed material and poor performance. Having ESL students miss important information is a big issue, when they go back to class they have to ask their peers what they missed or copy down notes from them without being able to have the background knowledge that was provided by the teacher. This not only leads to ESL students missing a lot of content material but can lead to poor performance in the long run.

Pushed-in Method. The second method is the "pushed-in" method, the way that this method works is by having the ESL teacher co-teach with the mainstream teacher. Both teachers share the room; they take turns teaching. This helps not only ESL students but also mainstream students. One of the benefits for ESL students is that they don't have to leave the classroom as in the "pull-out" method. ESL students get to learn along with their classmates and don't lose any learning time. Using this method both teachers can teach content and language to ESL students. Information found by Santana, Scully, and

Dixon (2012) shows that the main goal is for students to benefit from having two teachers who work together and are mutually accountable for the success of all students, not just the ELLs. Although there are many advantages to the “pushed-in” method, there can also be some disadvantages. One of the major disadvantages that can happen is if the mainstream teacher does not want to participate in co-teaching. There have been some instances in which co-teaching has caused disagreements between teachers. There are times when ESL teachers are not given equal opportunity to teach, or equal leadership in the classroom. There are also times when mainstream teachers are set in their ways and have a difficult transitioning into co-teaching. Other reasons may be that there is not enough space for two teachers to be able to co-teach this can make it a difficult transition. Although there has been a lot of movement towards co-teaching and some teachers have found it easy and useful, there are teachers who are still struggling to find ways in which they can work together.

Linguistically-Inclusive Classroom. Every year there is an increase of ESL students, and schools need to be ready on how they are going to help students achieve learning success. Many schools still function with the “pull-out” or “push-in” method. There are advantages and disadvantages to both but what if there was something more. There is the possibility of creating a linguistically-inclusive classroom, a learning environment that promotes bilingualism. “ELL students are required to learn subject matter while they are also acquiring English language skills, making it difficult for them to keep up with both academic and cognitive tasks” (Carrasquillo, Rodriguez, 2002 p.62). It is difficult for ESL students to be able to do all of this in a short period. Being able to have students use their first language in the classroom could help with this. Encouraging

bilingualism in the classroom would welcome students to use their first language, this can help open many doors to the success of ESL students and would also help with student engagement. ESL students could use code-switching to help between the two languages. This can also lead to student motivation, as ESL students will be motivated to learn the content because they will be able to understand in their first language.

“Educators in mainstream classrooms should not discourage the use of the native language at home or in the classroom. On the contrary, its use should be encouraged so that parents and children have the opportunity to communicate using language for effective communication” (Carrasquillo, Rodriguez, 2002 p. 64).

It is beneficial to have ESL students use their first language, as stated it opens the door for communication between peers who speak that same language. Students can continue learning their first language and learn to transfer that knowledge into the second language. This opens the door for classroom engagement for ESL students; even if they are not able to speak English, they could communicate their knowledge in their first language.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the research that helps explain my research question of *What do mainstream teachers need to know about bilingualism in the classroom to support ESL students?* First, I examined information about language and literacy development. I described literacy skills that ESL students need to learn a new language. Also explained how phonological awareness plays a role in the language transfer and how this can be beneficial for students. Next, I explored the importance of

code-switching and how this can be an effective method for ESL students in the classroom. I also discussed the advantages and disadvantages that go along with code-switching. Then, I described bilingualism and education, providing research information on the importance of bilingualism. I also discussed the debate between dual language and English-only schools. Finally, I evaluated information about how effective bilingualism can be in the classroom to help ESL students be successful.

Having the background information from this research, will help me in creating a project that will provide strategies that can help answer my research question of *What do mainstream teachers need to know about bilingualism in the classroom to support ESL students?* In the next chapter, I will describe my project and how I will provide resources for teachers to help ESL students be successful in their classroom.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the methods and the design of the project that will address the question, *What do mainstream teachers need to know about bilingualism in the classroom to support ESL students?* This chapter will provide detailed information about the project and how the project will take place. First, I will provide information about the description of the project, how this project will help mainstream teachers and their ESL students. Followed by research information of why the project will be delivered the way it is and why this will be most effective for teachers. Then, I will also describe who the targeted audience is for this project and how the audience is going to benefit from the website. Also, I will provide information about how I will measure the effectiveness of the project. The final section will provide information about the timeline for completing the project.

Description of project

Do to the increase of students whose first language is not English in the mainstream classroom, it is important to know information and ways that teachers can help support ESL students. The intent of this project is to develop a website that can reach more than just a few teachers at any one particular school or particular time. It is

meant to reach as many teachers as possible in different districts, areas or even states where there are high populations of ESL students in the mainstream classroom. The website was created to provide teachers with background information about bilingualism and to provide teachers with resources that they can use in their classrooms. These resources are links to online websites or readings provided by a variety of authors. Another reason for creating the website is because it can also provide information to parents if they want to learn more about bilingualism and how this could help their child.

To create the website, I took the information that I had gathered for chapter two and decided to condense the information, I decided to break up the information into two separate sections. I wanted the information in the website to be easy for teachers to follow. I had to make sure the information I was providing was going to be clear and to the point. The main categories that I decided to focus on are information and resources that teachers can use in the classroom, information and resources about phonological awareness. I felt that these two categories were most important for teachers because these would help support ESL students.

Link

The website address is <https://bilingualismandell.wixsite.com/resources>.

Features of the website

Creating the website was not an easy process, there are a lot of components that took place. First before starting a website, there was research that I had to do about the cost of a website and what website platform to use. I knew that I didn't want to pay too much if any when it came to creating my website. I searched a few places where I could

create sites and while most of them were free to create a website, some were a bit complicated. One site that I was trying to use was WordPress.com which offered a free website but the layout for me was a bit hard to follow and a bit confusing. Then the next one that I tried was Wix.com, I really liked the way this website was set up and the functionality of it. I felt more at ease and felt that I was going to be able to be more creative with what I wanted to do. Wix.com offers the options of creating a free website or the option to pay for one. I decided to go with the free website, this does include advertisements, but it does not take away from the presentation of the site.

The homepage section is designed to provide teachers with a brief explanation of what the website is and what it provides. The website has six tabs at the top of the page making it easy for teachers to navigate. The layout of the website is simple. It is well organized to make it easy and efficient for teachers and other professionals to navigate. The information gathered from chapter two has been divided into two sections. The first section is about information for in the classroom, which then is broken down to two subsections which are, linguistically inclusive classroom and code-switching. The second category is about phonological awareness, this section also has two subcategories which are, making connections between the first and second language and using bilingual books for literacy. Each page that was created for the site provides background information for the teacher as to why it is important. Since each section has a subcategory, I made sure that the subcategory can be clicked on and take the visitor right to that page. This feature is for all resources that are provided as links.

Another aspect of the site is that I included a page where teachers can look at the references that I used to create the site along with some of the references that I used from chapter two. In this section I also included a feedback box where teachers can leave feedback on what they thought about the site or the resources provided. The feedback that I receive from teachers will help me to better my site and make any changes that need to be made in the future.

Research Rationale

The research is going to be provided through a website, that is going to provide background information and resources that can help bilingual and ESL students. Creating the website means being able to provide content that is going to be easy to follow for teachers. The website will have four sections each focusing on different areas of bilingualism. Each section of the website will provide background information of that section along with links to articles, books and other websites that can be helpful. The website needs to have a clean layout that is easy for teachers to follow. As described in the United States Department of Health and Human Services, (2006) “other studies have reported that content is more important than navigation, visual design, functionality, and interactivity” (p. 2). It is important to have content that is going to be relevant for teachers, content needs to be interesting and engaging. Even if the graphic and the design of the website are great, if the content is not right, the website will not attract a lot of teachers. It is important to keep in mind what teachers want to learn and take back what they learned to their classrooms. With this in mind, I have to make sure that the website provides the right content for teachers. That the information provided is information that they will be able to use.

Project Audience

The project will take place online. The reason for creating the project online is because this will help reach out to more teachers on their own time. Instead of being able to reach only a certain number of teachers at one particular school. Through the online process, I will be able to reach out to teachers from different districts and states where there is a high population of ESL students in the mainstream classrooms. Being able to provide the information online helps teachers who have a busy schedule. Teachers can visit the website on their own time; they can take breaks when needed. Teachers are learning on their own time without becoming bored. The information provided can be accessed at home, work, and school making it easy for teachers to visit the website. Overall the audience that the project is geared towards is mainstream classroom teachers from all grades who want to learn more about bilingualism in the classroom. The website will be open to teachers from all over the world, anyone who wants to learn more about the effectiveness of creating a bilingual classroom for ESL students.

Measure of Project Effectiveness

Along with providing teachers the background information about bilingualism through the website, teachers will be provided with resources that they can use in their classrooms. The website will have a section where teachers will be able send their feedback. This feedback can be about the overall information of the website how easy it was to navigate, if the information provided was helpful to the teacher. Teachers can also provide feedback about what worked and what didn't work in their classrooms. Having teacher feedback will help with providing research information about what changes could be made to the resources or what could be added to make those resources better. The

feedback that is provided by the teachers will also be about the overall learning experience.

Timeline

The project was broken down into sections. The first step was to finish the first three chapters and complete the research required to provide the best information for the website. The first step took place in August, as this is when chapters one through three were done. The second step took place between September and October; this is when the designing of the website started along with research information for the resources being provided. The last step took place in late November; this is when the website was done. During this time a draft of chapter four was started. In December all chapters were revised and once everything was done the final capstone is to be submitted.

Conclusion

This chapter describes why and how I decided to design a website that helps answer my capstone question *What do mainstream teachers need to know about bilingualism in the classroom to support ESL students?* I described why a website is best suited for the information and resources that I want to share with teachers. I also describe the information that I put together for the website. In the next chapter I will provide information about what I have learned from this experience.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

Introduction

As I reflect on this project and my question, *What do mainstream teachers need to know about bilingualism in the classroom to support ESL students?* I look back at my own experiences when I was learning English and how the research that I found would have been helpful to me as a student in the mainstream classroom. Having experiences as an ESL student provided me with a lot of guidance as to what would be helpful for teachers who interact with ESL students. Throughout the research process I was able to gain more information about bilingualism and how it can be an important part of education for ESL students. The research that I was able to find provided me with a lot of support to be able to create the website. Through this research I was able to create my own site that could provide teachers resources to help them in their classrooms with ESL students. This chapter will provide information about the process that took place while creating the website. The research helped me put together resources for the website and what I anticipate for the future.

Process

Creating a website was not an easy process, there were many components from choosing and narrowing down what information to include. A website was the best way

for me to get my information and resources across to other teachers. My main goal for the website was to make sure that I could reach as many teachers as possible. Another reason why I created a website is because there are resources that are easily provided through links. Teachers don't have to memorize resources that would be provided at a presentation nor they didn't have to take time away. I wanted to make sure that the website was going provide background information about bilingualism and how it can help ESL students in the mainstream classroom. I knew that providing the background information of the research would help teachers understand the importance of bilingualism and how this can be an important tool in the classroom. The site helps to show how the categories I included help ESL students in achieving success in the classroom. This also helps providing teachers guidance on how to interact and what to expect when working with ESL students.

Creating the website, provided me with a lot of insight on resources that I didn't have before. I also learned a lot of information and helpful resources through links that I was able to find for my site. One of the websites that I included provides a lot of information along with resources is Colorin Colorado. This site is used by ESL teachers and provides a lot of information. There are sections in the website that go to different links of Colorin Colorado. This website is one that I have used in the past and will continue using for references and information. Another link that I know I will use in the future with my own students is the one that provides a list of bilingual books. It is always hard to try to find books that are bilingual, and this site provides the names of the books, making it easy for me to go purchase one or visit the library.

When creating my website, I wanted to make sure that the information and resources that are being provided were able to be viewed by anyone but mostly teachers. Most of the resources and information that is provided in the website applies to the needs of elementary school students. However, some of the information and resources can be used for secondary teachers.

Research

Through creating this capstone project, I see how valuable research can be. I see that it is important to have research that can help back up what one is trying to say. The research that I found provided me with great amounts of information that I was able to use for my website. It helped me narrow down on what I felt was valuable for a teacher to know about bilingualism and ESL students. This research helped me provide background information about how bilingualism can be used as a tool to help ESL students in the classroom and how this is beneficial. I not only had to research information that can help answer my question, but I also researched about how to create a website. For this I used the United States Department of Health and Human Services. (2006). This book provided a lot of research-based web design and usability guidelines. The book gave me a lot of information about how to create and develop a website. I gained research not only on about my question but also about creating websites.

As research shows, it is important for teachers to know that a student's first language is part of their identity. Recognizing their first language and welcoming all languages in the classroom helps create a positive and safe environment not only for ESL students but all students. This is something that I was able to pass along through my website, I want teachers to know how important a student's first language can be and how

it can benefit the student in the classroom. Being able to let ESL students know that they can use their first language to continue learning and growing as students and as individuals helps build that relationship between teacher and student. As an ESL teacher I want to make sure that I continue finding resources that I can use with my own students.

Insight gained and future

Bilingualism has been a hot topic for discussion in education. Creating this capstone has provided me with more insight as to how bilingualism can be helpful for students. Bilingualism is not only used to help ESL students with language but also a way for them to not forget part of their identity. Being bilingual will help students in the future especially with work. There is always demand for employees who speak more than one language.

Looking ahead I would like to continue with my website and continue adding resources and information that will continue helping teachers. There is always going to be new research and as I continue my work as an ESL teacher I want to make sure that I am up to date with information that will benefit not only me but other teachers. My main goal was to create a way to show the importance of bilingualism and how it can help ESL students. I hope that in the future I can continue adding more information and more resources to help classroom teachers.

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