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DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE RESOURCES TO MAINTAIN THE TARGET
LANGUAGE OF A DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM

By

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts in Teaching

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Research Question

Dual Language Immersion programs have become popular in education. Many schools want to have them and many parents want their children in them. Dual Language Immersion programs (DLIPs) teach children subject matter in a non-English language for at least half of the elementary school day. The quantity of time spent in a second language changes as students transition to middle school and then high school. DLIPs aim to achieve bilingual proficiency and academic achievement. Although many programs have the same goals they have different approaches and strategies in achieving them. Educators often notice that different districts and schools handle their daily school structure in different ways, but is there a resource that can help all students in DLIPs be better prepared as they move through their education journey? The hope for most families when they send their children to DLIPs is that they leave being bilingual and achieve academic success, but the reality is that this does not always happen. Many students begin DLIPs in elementary school and do not continue their immersion education as they enter higher grades. This causes a majority of these students to lose all of the progress they made in a second language, as well as feel behind when moving into a traditional English speaking environment. Additionally, schools are not in session year round and students have summer breaks where their second language practice takes an impactful hiatus. With that being said, it is important to give all teachers the right resources and training to allow students to do their best, although each school has the flexibility to structure DLIPs as they wish. Throughout this capstone project I want to address the

question: *What supports can teachers put in place that students can use when they are not directly in a dual language immersion program?*

Background of Dual Language Immersion Programs

In the United States, the term dual language education is used to describe programs that stick to the principles of additive bilingualism, biliteracy and cultural pluralism (Christian, Fortune; T. W.; Tedick, D. J., 2011). There are different types of dual language programs around the world, but the most commonly seen program throughout the United States is the bilingual immersion program. These two-way (bilingual) immersion programs, initiated in the 1960s and differ from others primarily in the student population (Ovando, 2003). These dual immersion programs bring together language minority and language majority learners to be instructed in and to learn each others' languages and work toward immersion goals of additive bi/multilingualism and bi/multiliteracy, academic achievement and cross-cultural understanding (Christian, Fortune; T. W.; Tedick, D. J., 2011).

It is important to establish that for a program to be considered a dual language immersion program at least 50% of instruction needs to be done in the immersion language (IL). This applies from elementary school until the end of secondary school. While some postsecondary programs do exist, there are not many guidelines to specify how much time the immersion language has to be used for subject-matter instruction at this level (Met & Lorenz, 1997). From my experience, schools choose how they distribute that 50% or more of the instruction in the IL. Some schools choose to keep the model of 50% of instruction done in the IL while others choose to use the IL 100% of the time. The latter typically applies for lower elementary grades such as kindergarten and first grade. Knowing this, it is important to create a resource that can help students

maintain what they have learned throughout their immersion program journey. Specifically when there are breaks in their learning or when their DLIPs come to an end. The goal is that they reach the primary goal of bilingualism, but how can we expect that of students if that structure falls through once they move past secondary school or there are large gaps in their learning?

Personal Journey

As an English learner myself, learning the importance of maintaining and practicing the target language to achieve success was clear to me. When I moved to the United States, I was just a little girl from Venezuela that spoke no English and had minimal exposure to different cultures. By being immediately immersed into a new language the minute I started school in the United States my perspective changed. I was being taught in a language I was unfamiliar with and had maybe an hour a day of instruction in my native language. When I went home I watched TV shows in English, my parents also continued to practice English with me when I came home from school, and within months I was already holding conversations in English. I saw first hand the hard work and dedication it took from everyone around me to help me learn. Thinking back now there was a lack of resources that were engaging and helpful in practicing a new language. It was difficult to find trusted resources that were safe for me to watch as a young student, especially with parents that also spoke very little of the new language. It was also very helpful for me to be exposed to more casual resources, such as television shows, music and even peer conversations, that I found to be more engaging than a more formal structured lesson.

Additionally since beginning my career in education I have been exposed to different types of DLIPs. I first started in an early childhood education center where care

and instruction was fully given in Spanish and I saw all of the benefits those children were reaping. They were becoming well rounded individuals that were starting to understand another language as early as just one year old. Throughout this experience I did notice that students that started the program from birth, practiced at home and continued their education in Spanish when leaving the center were the most successful. There were many families that would mention their older children that had gone through our immersion program had lost most of the language they learned. Many of these students later went to Spanish Immersion elementary schools where they continued to practice Spanish, but afterwards moved on to partial instruction in middle school and no Spanish instruction at all in high school so they lost all of the skills they had worked hard to gain. It was so sad for me to see their hard work go to waste. My bilingualism is of great importance to me as an adult and this is why it is important to me to create a resource where I can help situations like the one described happen less.

Benefits and Disadvantages of DLIPs

There is research about DLIPs that shows their benefits and their disadvantages from all around the country and even the world. Below I have explained what I see to be the most important benefits and challenges presented by DLIPs.

Benefits

Arguably one of the biggest benefits of DLIPs is the potential of achieving bilingualism. Personally, my ability to speak two languages has opened many doors for me. I have been hired to 3 of my last 4 jobs partially because I have the ability to fluently speak Spanish. I have been able to deal with more clients than my counterparts because of it. I am now able to teach in a DLIPs because of it, and many other opportunities.

Furthermore, bilingualism is said to develop your brain a little differently. Some research

shows that different lobes of your brain are enhanced due to the ability to code switch from one language to another (Bialystok, 2011).

Another benefit is the potential of higher academic achievement. Data from around the country shows that students randomly assigned in DLIPs outperformed their peers. For example, in Portland Public Schools students outperformed their peers on state reading tests by 13 percent in grade 5 and by 22 percent in grade 8 (Steele, et al. 2017). And in Palm Springs, California students in DLIPs are exceeding state testing standards at a similar or better rate than students in traditional English education with about 33 percent of students in DLIPs versus 29 percent of students in traditional English ed meeting or exceeding English language arts standards in their state standardized tests (Horwitz, 2022). It is important to mention that students that are placed in DLIPs usually come from families that have done research about the benefits and are supported academically at home. The involvement of their families and the familial importance of academics also impacts a students academic achievement.

The last benefit of DLIPs that I personally think is underrated and that I have seen most of in my DLIPs career is the multiculturalism aspect. These programs are taught nationwide by individuals that are from all different areas of the world and all come from different cultures. Some teachers have learned their second language from DLIPs themselves. Students are exposed to different cultures from their teachers and their peers. When I worked for a Spanish immersion early childhood center our curriculum was developed based on a different Spanish speaking country every month. We received presentations from educators that came directly from those Spanish speaking countries. The presentations would all be done in Spanish and they would incorporate all of the

foods, the music, the landmarks, etc. This allowed for students to learn and understand different cultures that in a traditional English learning environment they may not have been exposed to.

Disadvantages

One of the biggest arguments against DLIPs is the ability for it to affect the language skills of native English speakers and their level of academic success when they begin English instruction. This may sound contradictory to the benefit of higher academic achievement, but there is research that supports both arguments. In the school I currently teach Spanish in right now English instruction does not begin until 3rd grade. Students then begin to learn subject-matter in both languages. Up until this point those students are only learning reading, spelling, and grammar in Spanish. This can impact all of these things for students when beginning their English instruction. It can become difficult for them to catch up to a comparable level of proficiency in English when they have only been exposed to instruction in a different language.

Still today we lack adequate data on DLIPs. It is difficult to tell if these programs are effective and are worth the potential confusion. Students tend to code mix somewhat frequently in upper elementary grades, and they struggle to produce extended discourse, often producing only sentence-level utterances even after six years of immersion (Broner & Tedick, 2001). It takes time, practice and dedication to see the benefits of DLIPs, and sometimes it is argued that it may not be worth it.

Additionally do DLIPs increase achievement gaps between students of color and white students? Or low income students? Like I previously mentioned, in my experience parents that enroll their children in DLIPs have done research about the benefits of the

program, are involved in their child's education and value their hard work in a different language. At my current school we have our community school with only English instruction, a Spanish immersion program and a Chinese immersion program. Within the data of our school you can see the achievement gap between our community school and our immersion programs. Primarily this has to do with the population makeup of our community school. Our community school is a Title I school with a majority of Somali students of color. Whereas our immersion programs are made up of more white middle-class students. The involvement of parents in the PTO programs varies significantly as well. This is a challenge that DLIPs may be intensifying.

Professional Implications

The goal of this project is to move toward finding the best way teachers can implement a second language in a classroom where they can facilitate practice for students. Students can continue practicing a second language during long academic breaks and can continue learning when leaving DLIPs. They can meet the goals of achieving additive bi/multilingualism and bi/multiliteracy, academic achievement and cross-cultural understanding.

Overview

In this capstone project, I will analyze the benefits and disadvantages of dual language immersion programs. I will focus on creating a website that will allow for a more uniform way of tracking the progression of a student's journey through DLIPs that is user friendly for students. This is meant to allow students to continue their educational journey in a second language when the DLIPs structure weakens in the higher grades, and to also continue practice during academic breaks. Having background information on

DLIPs and investigating the advantages and disadvantages will allow me to develop a resource that is effective in helping students reach the actual goals of DLIPs.

Conclusion

In this chapter I introduced my research question: *What supports can teachers put in place that students can use when they are not directly in a dual language immersion program?* I gave some background information about what a dual language immersion program is, as it is important to understand for the remainder of the project. I discussed what I see to be the biggest benefits and disadvantages of DLIPs and why I want the website I create to be a resource for students to maintain and potentially strengthen their second language. I also mentioned the personal reasons why this project will be beneficial and important to me. Chapter 2 will be my literature review containing more data and information about DLIPs. Chapter three will then discuss the actual design and description of my project.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to answer the question: *What supports can teachers put in place that students can use when they are not directly in a dual language immersion program?* Throughout this project educators will be given the opportunity to learn about Dual Language Immersion Programs and also be given resources to help make the target language acquisition possible. In this literature review I will first discover what language acquisition is, then I will provide some history behind Dual Language Immersion Programs (DLIPs). I will include what frameworks helped me in the development of my website and the transferability of the languages offered in DLIPs. Then the chapter will discuss what staff member characteristics are needed for DLIPs, what are some materials and resources already found in DLIPs and what are some expectations required by schools to have thriving DLIPs. The next topic will discuss what motivates students in an educational setting. It will cover what motivates students in school all around and what can motivate students specifically when it comes to learning a second language. Finally I will present some data resources and other references found to show benefits of a DLIPs and further discuss other non quantitative benefits of a DLIPs. This chapter will conclude by discussing the conservation of the target language taught in the DLIPs, some challenges faced by DLIPs and finally a summary of everything covered during the research.

History and Science of Language Acquisition and Dual Language Immersion

Language Acquisition.

What exactly is language acquisition? The term language acquisition describes the process in which a person acquires a language (Fäcke 2014). There are a variety of different processes for a person to acquire a language. The term language acquisition generally relates to learning a new language regardless of what language it is or disregarding whether that is a first, second or foreign language. It is important to mention that a lot of different data needs to be used from a variety of fields to be able to study the different processes of acquiring language. A majority of language acquisition studies are rooted on findings from neuro linguistic or neurologic fields (Fäcke 2014). Many questions can be asked such as: How is the brain altered and influenced regarding its structure and functioning by means of “language”? The answers to these questions are important to explore, not only for studies where they research language acquisition as a whole, but also when moving on to studying acquisition of a second or foreign language.

In Fäcke’s study she discusses one of the first obvious differences between the acquisition of a first language and following languages. When a human begins to learn their first language their brain and memory are still in a “vacant” state. They begin to understand the importance of language when it relates to interaction and communication. This also explains why language acquisition and cognitive maturation are at least chronologically associated (Fäcke 2014). Lastly, it is important to note that some research also implies that second language acquisition is different from learning a second language. The availability of “space” in your brain and actual need for a new language plays a big role in this. Oftentimes in DLIPs they completely avoid the use of English

particularly because once students know an educator can speak and understand the language they are comfortable in their “need” to acquire a new language diminishes.

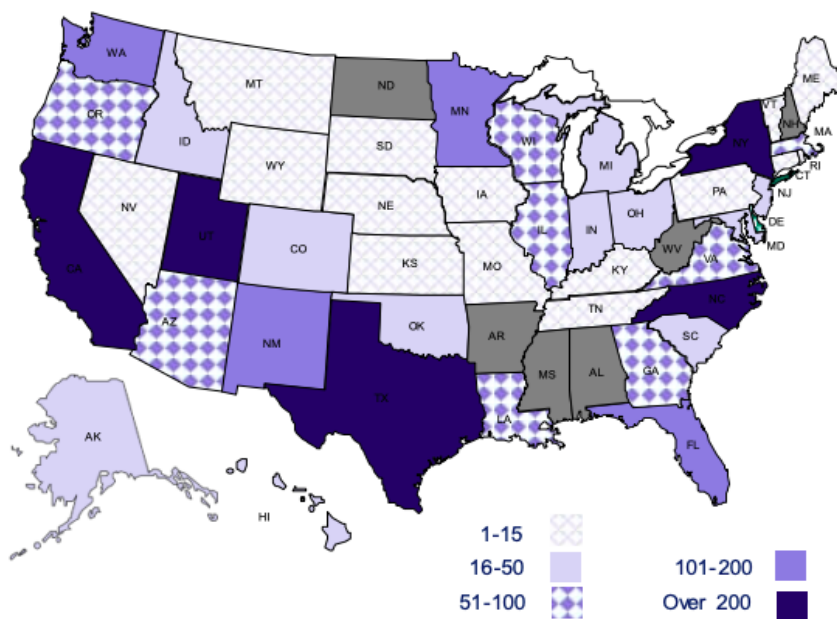
History of Dual Language Immersion

The 1960s was a period of a lot of change in North America; dual language programs in public schools were actually developed in the 1960s in the United States and in Canada (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary 2008). The development of dual language programs in countries such as the United States (U.S.) is said to have a relationship with more general worldwide concerns. Some of these programs were developed in response to social inequality and lack of institutional responses. Immersion programs were first seen in North America in the mid-1960s in Quebec because of social and linguistic inequities between the French- and English-speaking populations of Canada (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary 2008). Also DLIPs were beginning to be used to try to minimize the gap of cultures and languages throughout the continent and the world. That is one of the main reasons behind DLIPs that students can learn about different cultures and they can learn a second language effectively if it is used for significant periods of time and for the majority of communication in school – this is comparable to how most children also learn their native language at home (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary 2008).

There has also been a large political influence on DLIPs throughout the history of the United States. The socio-political history of DLIPs in the U.S. has been anything but simple, with bilingual education permitted in certain languages such as German, French, and Scandinavian languages in the 18th and 19th centuries in some states while instruction through any non-English language was outlawed in other states (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary 2008). For example, in 1998 the state of California approved

Proposition 227 which amended the state's constitution to outlaw bilingual education (Mitchell, D. E. et al. 1999). It not only outlawed bilingual education in public schools, which affects DLIPs, it also forced limited English proficient students to learn English with minimal (if any at all) support and funding. This Proposition has since been repealed, but that only happened 6 years ago in 2016. There continues to be mixed opinions about DLIPs in the U.S. especially in areas with rising concern regarding immigration.

Lastly, although the popularity of DLIPs seems to continue to increase, there are many states to date that do not have any DLIPs at all. This may suggest that students that live in more populated areas and in states with a large number of DLIPs are at an advantage. One of the goals of the structure of DLIPs is to continue to grow and be available to students all around the country. Below is a map of the United States that shows the number range of DLIPs per state as a helpful visual (Roberts 2021).



Map by Roberts, G. (2021). 2021 canvass of Dual Language and Immersion

Program Models

There are a variety of different models that relate to bilingual education and dual language immersion programs. Most DLIPs (except transitional bilingual programs in the U.S.) are also in favor of an additive bilingual approach to language learning. Meaning that the addition of a second language to a child's language skills is a personal, social, cognitive, and economic advantage that does not need to take place at the expense of the child's first language competence (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary 2008). Children are not meant to struggle with their first language because of their goal to acquire a new one. This then proposes that additive dual language programs aim for high levels of oral and written language achievement in both the students' home language and the second or target language of the program (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary 2008).

To clarify, there are two main types of dual language immersion programs. One is the two-way immersion language program which integrates a similar number of students that are English learners (or speak the target language fluently) and non English learners (native English speakers). The other model of dual language immersion is a one-way program. These programs also instruct students in two different languages but are for students of the same language backgrounds. Meaning that the classes would be made up of either all students that are English learners or all students that are native English speakers. Another important difference is the percentage of instruction in a target language. Some immersion programs give about 90% of their instruction in the target language and there are others that give 50% of their instruction in the target language. For a school to be considered a dual language immersion program it has to give its instruction in its target language for at least 50% of the time.

There are also a variety of dual language immersion programs that begin at different grade levels. Some begin as early as kindergarten while others wait until students have mastered the “local” or home language prior to introducing a new language. Lastly, there are schools that have school wide immersion programs and classroom based immersion programs. Meaning that common areas in a school may have visuals and resources only in the local language, in this case English. Or teachers that teach specialists and administrative staff are not required to speak the target language. These situations can create confusion within the students of a same school with different immersion programs within it.

Transferability of Languages

In the United States there are many different dual immersion programs that also have different target languages. These programs include language variations such as Spanish Immersion, others have teach symbol based languages such as Chinese Immersion. Some dual immersion programs teach Indigenous languages that are in danger of disappearing. This range of languages leads to finding some research that can explain the differences in learning some of the languages taught in DLIPs.

Table 1 Number of DLI Programs in US Public Schools by Language			
Language	Number of DLI Programs	Language	Number of DLI Programs
Spanish	2936	Polish	5
Chinese	312	Haitian Creole	3
French	182	Urdu	2
Japanese	37	Yup'ik	2
German	31	Greek	2
Portuguese	27	Lak'hóta	2
Hawaiian	27	Lushootseed	2
Korean	23	Makah	2
Russian	17	Diné	2
Italian	7	ASL	1
Hmong	7	Bengali	1
Vietnamese	6	Cherokee	1
Armenian	6	Yiddish	1
Arabic	5		

This chart from The American Councils Research Center in 2021 shows the number of DLIPs in the United States by language. These numbers clearly show that some languages are significantly more popular in the structure of DLIPs. Spanish programs account for about eighty percent (80%) of all programs followed by Chinese with a much lower percentage of (8.6%) and French (5.0%) (Roberts 2021). Additionally, the United States Department of State Foreign Language Training labels languages into different categories based on their difficulty and the time it takes to learn them. Spanish, which is an alphabet based language more similar to English, is a Category I language that takes approximately 24-30 weeks to learn (Foreign Language Training 2022). Where Chinese, a symbols based language, is labeled a Category IV language and takes approximately 88 weeks to learn (Foreign Language Training 2022). This data can also help understand why some languages are more popular than others when put in a DLIP structure. These language differences definitely play a role in the number of programs for that language since their difficulty also affects their levels of success.

Understanding What a Dual Language Immersion Program Is

As previously mentioned, dual language immersion programs have surfaced in the United States as effective ways to bring together language minority and language majority speakers in school settings with the goal of bilingualism and biliteracy for all (Martinez 2022). “These program models are variously known as dual maintenance bilingual education, dual or two-way dual language education, two-way immersion, dual immersion, and dual language immersion programs” (Martinez 2022; García and Kleifgen 2010; Howard, Sugarman, and Christian 2003; Howard et al. 2007). The student population in such programs can differ so there are a variety of different models created within dual language immersion programs to cover the needs of the specific populations. They include Developmental bilingual programs, where all students are native speakers of the partner language, such as Spanish. Two-way immersion programs, where approximately half of the students are native speakers of the partner language and approximately half of the students are native speakers of English. Finally, Foreign language immersion programs, where all of the students are native speakers of English, though some may be heritage language learners (Howard et al. 2007).

There are two most commonly used styles in how to go about teaching language in dual immersion programs. Like previously discussed in this chapter, there is a 90:10 ratio where the target language is used most or all of the day in the primary grades (80-90%). Then there is also a model where the ratio is 50%. This means that the target language is used half of the time for instruction. The actual ratio and model of a DLIPs can impact the outcome and success of the program (Howard et al. 2007). It can also impact the time it takes to acquire a new language. When schools are developing the

model type they will use in their DLIPs they need to learn and consider the needs of the community and it should be an informed decision for the best possible outcome of the students. Montecel and Cortez (2002) found that in successful bilingual programs, teachers and parents participated in the selection and design of a bilingual program that was consistent with the characteristics of the student population (Howard et al. 2007).

Staff in Dual Language Immersion Programs.

Most educators are spending about 4 to 5 years preparing to enter the teaching profession, yet many of them say that they learned more in the first half of their first year teaching than they did in the 4 or 5 years they spent in educational programs getting them ready for the profession (DuFour et al., 2016). Darling-Hammond (2000) states that the proportion of well-qualified teachers was one of the most important determining factors of student achievement at all grade levels. Actually effective dual language immersion programs require staff members with additional teaching and specific staff characteristics (Cloud et al., 2000; Day & Shapson, 1996; Met & Lorenz, 1997; Montecel & Cortez, 2002). Teachers that are a part of language education programs should be required to get appropriate teaching certificates or credentials, have good content knowledge and classroom management skills, and additional training specific to the language education model and appropriate instructional strategies (Cloud et al., 2000; Lindholm-Leary & Molina, 2000; Met & Lorenz, 1997; Howard et al. 2007).

Quality is important in achieving an effective program. Back when The No Child Left Behind Act was enforced in schools one main component mentioned that children are to be educated by high-quality teachers (Howard et al. 2007). This caused dual language immersion programs to be highly influenced by The No Child Left Behind Act

in the early 2000s. Regardless, there is data that shows that only one out of every three English language learners, another variety of language learner, in California is taught by a teacher trained in second language acquisition methods, and four out of five are taught by teachers that only speak one language (Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003). Teachers in DLIPs need continued professional development catered to their students' needs just like in any other “standard” programs. Guerrero & Sloan (2001) report that bilingual teachers also need professional development delivered in the target language to help them know how to deliver instruction in ways that will help students develop higher levels of language proficiency. It is difficult to clearly deliver what is expected of a professional development class when part of the job required is to translate the information received. Rigorous training and continued support must be provided for all teachers in second language acquisition and classroom differentiation, including those that are veteran teachers and considered experts in the matter (Soderman, 2010).

Materials and Resources Used Within the Programs. In language immersion programs the kind of material and resources provided can make a big impact. Often materials are difficult to find for a target language in locations where that language is not popular. This may also play a part into why some languages are more popular in a DLIP structure. An excellent and enriching curriculum is necessary in DLIPs, Garcia and Gopal (2003) have mentioned that substandard programs have led to high failure rates on high school assessments for language learners. Language objectives need to be incorporated into the curriculum planning (Lyster, 1990, 1994, 1998) and related language and literature should be developed across the curriculum (Doherty et al., 2003) to guarantee that students learn the content as well as the academic language associated with the

content. Bilingual books of many genres and a variety of types of materials (e.g., visual, audiovisual, art) are required to meet the goals of bilingualism and biliteracy (Montecel & Cortez, 2002). Also other research proves that incorporating technology in both languages also helps in meeting the needs of students and the goals of the programs.

Materials and assessments created in a specific language and later translated to be used in DLIPs often do not meet the needs of these language learners. Materials should be developed to work seamlessly when educators are providing instruction, rather than leaving it for educators to interpret and translate materials as they see fit.

How DLIPs Succeed. “In the early stages of second language acquisition, input of the language is done by: slower, expanded, simplified, and repetitive speech oriented to the “here and now”” (Krashen, 1981; Long, 1981). Opportunities need to be provided for teachers to use “real world” language and promote the use of it in their classroom space. An important term that further discusses this idea is called comprehensible input. Comprehensible input is an important concept for second-language development. It means that students should be able to understand the main idea of what is being taught to them. Language that is highly contextualized and is really difficult can create difficulties in an immersion setting. In the beginning stages of the language acquisition it requires a lot of simplified and repetitive uses of the language such as songs or visuals that are used over and over as a way to expose students to the new language (Long, 1981; Saville-Troike, 1987). Additionally, the natural approach to teaching a language further develops language skills for second language learners. This means students are given opportunities to learn using communication and language exposure over grammar and rules.

Some research reflects that there are other key features in dual language programs that help in achieving success. These key features include:

- Having sustained instruction in the target language for at least 6 years.
- Having at least 50% of instruction in the target language throughout the program, and Language arts and literacy instruction in both program languages by the upper elementary grades (Howard et al. 2007).
- Incorporation and cooperation of parent and community involvement and collaboration with the school (Berman et al., 1995; Marzano, 2003; Reyes et al., 1999).

The length of exposure and length of practice provided in a target language is clear to make an impact in the success of the acquisition. The amount of language students hear a day throughout a program also is a large influence. Lastly, when parents are involved, they often develop a sense of efficacy that is communicated to children with positive academic consequences—especially in the case of language minority children (Cloud et al., 2000; Met & Lorenz, 1997; Tizard, Schofield, & Hewison, 1982). Additionally, students receive continued motivation and practice when parents also use resources from the classroom at home. Parent involvement goes hand in hand with student success and their desire to want to continue to grow their education.

This project aims to answer the question: *What supports can teachers put in place that students can use when they are not directly in a dual language immersion program?*

Part of that requires readers to understand what a dual language immersion program is, what type of staff members teach within these programs and what is required of them, what are some materials and resources that are used already to achieve the goals of a dual

language immersion program, and what are the keys to success while in a DLIPs.

Effective dual-immersion programs need administrators, teachers, parents and students who consider bilingualism a positive attribute rather than a linguistic, cognitive and academic liability (Soderman, 2010).

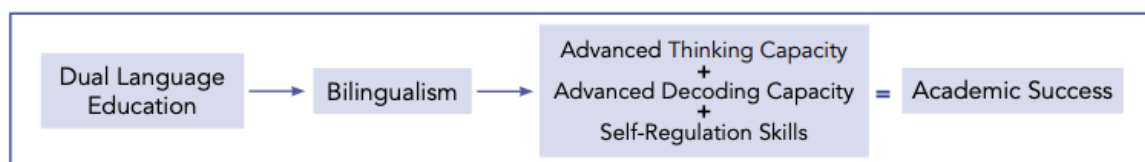
Benefits of a Dual Language Immersion Program

Studies of effective schools consistently and conclusively demonstrate that high-quality programs exist when schools have a connected, school-wide shared vision; clearly set goals that define the schools expectations for achievement; and an instructional focus and devotion to achievement and high expectations that are shared by everyone involved including students, parents, teachers, and administrators (Berman et al., 1995; Corallo & McDonald, 2002; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Gándara et al., 2003; Howard et al. Teddle & Reynolds, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 1998;).

Decisions about structuring and implementing these programs should always be made in the best interest of the students. Because of gathered research and many different studies, some researchers are sure that young children benefit greatly from bilingualism and multiculturalism in a variety of important ways (Soderman, Wescott and Shen, 2007; Soderman and Oshio, 2008).

Bilingualism. An immersion model provides the best opportunity for children to attain high levels of proficiency in a new language, in the case of DLIPs, a target language. This is only possible if children's everyday experiences are well constructed, engaging and developmentally appropriate (Soderman, 2010). Learning a new language does more than just learning new vocabulary and allowing students to have a conversation in a different language. Learning a new language allows for different skills

to be developed such as: problem-solving, learning a “knowledge-assembly” task in which children are required to pay greater attention to the context, interacting flexibly with others, and deciding over and over what is relevant and what is not (Cartwright, 2008; Soderman 2010).



(Dorner 2016.)

Lastly, there are advantages documented for executive control across the lifespan of a bilingual individual that seem to contribute to cognitive reserve. Cognitive reserve is the individual differences in how tasks are performed that may allow some people to be more resilient than others. This allows bilingual individuals to better cope with Alzheimer’s disease and can delay the appearance of its devastating symptoms (Bialystok, 2011).

Academic Achievement. Children that are bilingual are often driven to higher levels of cognitive flexibility than monolingual (only speak one language) children in educational settings (Soderman, 2010). Based on the skills that learning a second language provides, it is not surprising that research shows increased mathematical skill development in bilingual children as compared to monolingual children (Abbot, Caccavele, and Stewart, 2007; Soderman 2010). Some neuroscientists suspect that there may be a “neural signature” that develops in the makeup of a bilingual individual's brain (Kovelman, Baker, and Petitto, 2008; Soderman 2010). Meaning an actual biological change in the structure of the brain. Sometimes it is said that DLIPs can cause confusion

but, according to Soderman (2010) young children are fully able to handle bilingualism without becoming developmentally delayed in language or “language confused.” In the largest random-assignment study of DLIPs education to date, RAND partnered with the American Councils on International Education and the Portland Public Schools in Oregon (PPS) to estimate the causal effects of the district's DLIPs on student performance over time in reading, mathematics, and science, and on English learners' reclassification as English proficient (Steele, 2017). RAND is a research organization that develops solutions to public policy challenges to help make places around the world more prosperous. PPS students randomly assigned to DLIPs outperformed their peers on state accountability tests in reading by 13 percent of a standard deviation in grade 5 and by 22 percent of a standard deviation in grade 8. This data represents about seven additional months of learning in grade 5 and nine additional months in grade 8 (Steele, 2017). Policymakers should notice that the benefits of DLIPs, such as proficiency in two languages, did not affect the performance in mathematics or science (Steele, 2017). In Caldas' & Boudreaux's (1999) data they noticed that math scores decrease for all student categories as grade level increases, but they still noticed immersion students do better than non-immersion students at each grade level. Students in the French Immersion programs in the 13 schools included in their study did significantly better on both the state standardized tests in English language arts and math, than students in non-immersion programs (Caldas; Boudreaux, 1999). Furthermore, another study showed that in mathematics, immersion students outperform their peers by 12% to 31% of a standard deviation, depending on grade level, and in science, they outperform by 14% to

27% of a standard deviation (Steele; Slater, R. O.; Zamarro, G.; Miller, T.; Li, J.; Burkhauser, S.; & Bacon, M., 2017)

Multiculturalism and Social Emotional Benefits. To be able to read and write fluently in more than one language provides each of these children with treasures for the future: the ability to think and express themselves in more than one language, respect for differences in others, and the confidence to move fluidly from one culture to another (Soderman, 2010). Two major goals of DLIPs are that students become bilingual and learn a sense of biculturalism (Christian, Fortune; T. W.; Tedick, D. J., 2011). In a study addressed in Christian's and Tedick's (2011) work, students mentioned that they felt they were more culturally aware than their peers that did not attend DLIPs. Additionally, data at my place of employment shows that students in immersion programs are doing a better job expressing emotions and being empathetic to their peers.

Challenges

In Cummins (1984) research he finds that many children continue to experience academic problems after leaving immersion programs and moving to all English schools (Krueger, 2001). There is some data that shows that some students face challenges when leaving DLIPs that students that did not go through these programs do not have to face. Jong and Howard (2009) argue that, in the absence of a bilingual perspective that takes into consideration issues of differential language status and language acquisition contexts, dual language immersion classrooms may fail to increase language learning opportunities for all students, particularly for students in a language minority and learning in the minority language. Research by Hector Hammorly also states that immersion cannot work, since its theory of classroom second language learning is fundamentally defective

(Krueger, 2001). Hammorly seems to ignore the success that immersion has had for at least some learners, while he continues to believe the unrealistic expectation that immersion students should be able to acquire native-like fluency and accuracy in the foreign language, despite the limited exposure to the language (Krueger, 2001).

Another challenge DLIPs have to confront are the levels of student accessibility. Like shown in the United States map included in this chapter some states do not have any DLIPs at all. This means that many students do not have access to dual language immersion education. Schools that offer DLIPs are typically located in higher income areas or homogeneous neighborhoods (Dorner 2016). Some parents of different cultural backgrounds or socioeconomic status lack the resources to do thorough research. They are often not well informed about what DLIPs are and the benefits of DLIPs so they choose to opt out of them.

In DLIPs there is usually a lack of high-quality, authentic curricula in schools in various languages. Materials are often scarce mainly in DLIPs that are not taught in a “popular” language such as Spanish or Chinese. Districts do not have funds to supply all of the materials needed in the necessary language which sometimes results in teachers not using the best resources or having to do additional work. Many teachers create their own resources which can affect the quality of the materials. This also goes hand in hand with the lack of effective training for DLIPs educators. Many states do not have specific requirements for teachers of DLIPs and this can lead to teachers that do not have the proper training or skills to succeed within these programs.

The lack of structure to equitably engage all of the participating families is also a challenge that is often overlooked. “Despite attempts to integrate families and children

from different racial, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds, minoritized families report feeling marginalized at their children's DL schools" (Dorner 2016).

The last problem discussed in this research regarding immersion programs can also be the lack of structure that one has versus another. Different states in the United States have different opinions and requirements for DLIPs and this creates another form of confusion and lack of structure. There are also some politics that continue to show the preference of "English-only" instruction especially in the United States (Dorner 2016). Finally, there are also many different languages offered in DLIPs and this can lead to a lot of skill differences for learners when they leave their specific DLIPs.

Motivation

Students are motivated by a variety of different things. Throughout this literature review educators see what motivates students within a school environment, and what motivates them to maintain skills they have learned in school. Along with children's natural curiosity and their inclination towards learning about the world around them, what children learn during their first 4 or 5 years is not done by themselves; children need positive and guiding interactions and relationships with others that surround them (Mayers et al., 1998).

Motivation in School. "Motivation is a theoretical construct used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity, persistence and quality of behavior (Maehr & Meyer 1997)." The key motivational advice for teachers is to find out what your students want to learn about and what activities they like to do (Brophy 2004). Then build this into what you are teaching and you will have more motivated students. This in theory is true and can be a great way to motivate students, but it is also important to remember that research

shows people are born with different levels of motivational disposition (Brophy 2004). In the creation of this project this part of the research is particularly helpful in its development. Studying different student's motivation will allow for a website design that will engage most students.

Lastly, students are also motivated by peers, what they are participating in, and by their own success. Creating an environment where students can feel successful and supported is key to more motivated students and higher success (Brophy 2004).

Conservation of the Target Language

The number of DLI programs in the United States has grown considerably. According to Gregg Roberts, the director of dual language studies at the American Councils Research Center (ARC), there were 1,000 dual language schools in 2010. In 2021 more than 3,600 programs were reported by ARC (Roberts 2021). The majority of these programs are at the elementary level, as DLI programs in middle or high school are far less common. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), in 2015, there were eighty-two 13 middle school DLI programs and seventeen high school programs in the United States (CAL, 2015). Only a handful of studies have focused on students in secondary DLIPs. The development of secondary DLIPs is challenging due to the complexity of secondary school organization and the absence of vertical articulation of DLIPs across school levels (Christian, Fortune; T. W.; Tedick, D. J., 2011). Additionally, finding qualified teachers, developing appropriate curricula and addressing differences in student proficiency levels and motivation are additional factors (Christian, Fortune; T. W.; Tedick, D. J., 2011). However, students in a 90:10 model DLIPs perform at grade level in Spanish reading, language and math in middle school (Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

A study took place that asked high school students a variety of questions to address the disparities of DLIPs in secondary levels based on their own personal experiences. The questions asked were: Do high school DLIPs students still attending DLIPs consider themselves bilingual and bicultural? Why is remaining in the DLIPs important? And in what ways does the DLIPs design support the desired outcomes (based on their own perceptions) (Christian, Fortune; T. W.; Tedick, D. J., 2011)? All of the students in the study indicated that they were bilingual after being in a DLIPs since kindergarten. However, in terms of biculturalism, students felt more culturally aware yet not bicultural. It is interesting to note that one of the benefits of DLIPs is the ability to learn more about different cultures, but in this research students explicitly said that although they do conserve the language they have learned they still only identify and “conserve” their original culture.

Summary

Throughout Chapter Two I have found different research relating to dual language immersion programs (DLIPs) and answering the question: *What supports can teachers put in place that students can use when they are not directly in a dual language immersion program?* I have described what the definition of language acquisition is and how it differs from second language acquisition. I described where DLIPs originated and what the history behind them is. The chapter includes descriptions of different models of DLIPs that can differ in results and can also differ in the target language they are trying to achieve. In this chapter I also mention the staff members needed for a successful DLIPs and what materials are needed as well. I also present data that supports the reasons why DLIPs succeed and how they can continue to be successful. This chapter also outlines

benefits and challenges mentioned in different research relating to DLIPs. In conclusion, this chapter clarifies some reasons why students are motivated and how they can continue to be motivated and how these students can maintain the target language of their DLIPs even when they finish or leave the program.

This research helped me find supporting information for my project development. The benefits of learning a new language and resources that show why and how DLIPs succeed motivates me to create a website students in these programs can use to achieve conservation of the language. Research on how students best learn and what actually motivates students will also help me in creating something engaging and attractive to educators and students of all grades. In chapter 3 I will further explain the reasoning of why I want to create my website project, what my target audience will be, what website design research I will use to create something students want to use and continue using, and what the timeline for the implementation of my website project will be.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Throughout this capstone project I want to address the question: *What supports can teachers put in place that students can use when they are not directly in a dual language immersion program?* This chapter will be an outline of the project and its methodology. The capstone project is a website to be used by students. This chapter will explain why creating a website was important in answering the research question. It will discuss who exactly are the target users of this website. It will describe the research found to support the creation of an effective website. This chapter will also show how that research helped me in creating a website that will be used throughout dual language immersion programs (DLIPs). Lastly, it will describe how the website should actually be used and what benefits I hope to see from consistent use of this resource.

Rationale of Capstone Project

When doing research throughout my project about how you can effectively maintain a second language I saw that practice and the length of time in which you are exposed to the target language (Howard et al. 2007) are really keys to acquiring and maintaining your target language success. Often what we see when students leave DLIPs or have long breaks between educational experiences is that they no longer practice everything that they have learned and begin to lose their skills. The goal of the website is to make something that is engaging and interactive enough that educators can get their students to want to use, and also be a website engaging enough that students continue to use it long after they leave a DLIPs or when there is time off from school. It will be used

to provide ongoing practice, to find engaging materials and to connect with other students in similar journeys.

Similar to websites often used in schools such as Epic!, or Seesaw the goal is for it to have the ability to have student user accounts. For primary grades the website can be used as an interactive tool for the whole class while in a DLIPs. As students go onto higher grades and have access to devices the website can also be incorporated into independent learning time. The website will also be accessible from places outside of school with the use of a username and password. The idea is that the website is engaging enough where students will want to use it when they are on breaks from school or after completing a DLIP. Students will be able to connect with one another to encourage growth in the target language.

This project will not only be helpful to students, but it will also be a great resource for teachers to use. It can be a website they use to supplement their teaching. It can also be incorporated into a student's time when using technology in the classroom. Additionally, the website can eventually help teachers track how much a specific student is using it to practice and what progress they have made while using it.

In creating a website that will allow teachers and students to better track their progress when learning a second language this should facilitate the organization of data for teachers, as well as be a resource for students to continue to practice when they move to no longer be in a DLIPs or have long breaks from school. As an immersion teacher myself I see the lack of resources students have when it is time for summer break. Many students leave school fluent in the new language and spend 2 and a half months not practicing at all. They start the following school year having to relearn a lot of

information that my website will help in maintaining. It is a resource I am also hopeful to begin using myself as this is my first full school year in a Spanish immersion classroom. The website can also be something that I slowly introduce to the Spanish and Chinese immersion teachers of my school so they can further help me develop it and they can begin to use it and I can measure the actual benefits.

Theoretical Framework Behind the Website

When developing the idea of this website, discovering different theories that support how students best learn was critical. Comprehensible input and the natural approach to learning a language are theories studied by linguist and educational researcher, Stephen Krashen. The natural approach to learning a language aligns more with a “traditional” way to teach a language. The traditional approach of language acquisition refers to using language in a communicative way, more casual, without referencing grammar or language rules (Krashen 1998). The natural approach is usually used to support beginner learners. Students will learn and understand a new language using this approach and as they continue to practice the rules and grammatical structures will fall into place. The term natural was purposely used to represent the approach of learning and teaching a language because the theory arose from data taken in non academic settings (Terrell 1977).

The goal of my website is just that. Providing natural scenarios where students can be exposed to and continue to learn a new language. Students can use conversations with others in similar situations to further their knowledge and continue their practice. They can also find resources that appeal to their interests and are engaging such as videos, games, shows, music, and even podcasts.

Website Design Resources

Creating a successful website requires research in finding the best ways to help your website succeed. Using a popular website design resource, HostGator, I learned a lot about what makes a website engaging and more successful.

They discussed the following 7 ways to make a website interactive and more successful:

1. Encourage Social Sharing
2. Add Quizzes, Surveys, and Polls
3. Use Gamification
4. Suggest Relevant Links
5. Invite Conversations
6. Publish User-Generated Content
7. Run a Giveaway

These 7 different tips can be really helpful to consider when developing this website project. It is often difficult to find ways to engage teachers and students and these are great ways to create something that will continue to be useful in immersion classrooms and with immersion students.

From the seven tips given by host gator 5 of them are something that should immediately be implemented in the website development. Encouraging social sharing, adding quizzes, using gamification, inviting conversations and publishing user-generated content are all must haves in the creation of something engaging for schools to get behind and share with their staff members and students.

Right now we know that social media is largely used and extremely influential especially to a younger audience. We see websites and apps like TikTok or Instagram that

continue to be successful because of social sharing opportunities. When using the DLIPs website you will be able to share milestones and successes as you practice on the website. Ideally, other users can also interact with that content you are sharing and they are doing the same sharing their own materials.

Quizzes and the ability to share those scores if wanted is another feature present in the website. Similar to other language acquisition apps like Duolingo or Babbel, after you have completed a unit of information they check your understanding. This is meant to be fun and help develop what you will be learning next or see if you need any extra practice in certain areas. In the case of my website this can also assist educators in monitoring the progress of their students. It is not meant to be a grade in school, but more a fun way to continue practicing and also see where you are within the target language. Additionally, including surveys and polls throughout the use of the website can not only make your site more interactive, can also be used to understand the needs of your potential users and get feedback on how the website is doing (Balkhi, 2020).

Gamification is the application of typical elements of game playing (e.g. point scoring, competition with others, rules of play) to other areas of activity, typically as an online marketing technique to encourage engagement with a product or service. Games are a lot more appealing to students than asking them to use an educational website to continue doing schoolwork. Although that is exactly what the goal is, creating a website that has some gamification will be more fun and more successful in having students continue to use it. There can be instances where classmates can compete with one another or teachers can have challenges with other classes in their school as well. The more

students see this as a way to have fun and “play” the more likely they are to continue to use it.

Inviting conversations is another way to have an engaging product. This aspect of a website is one that I feel can really succeed when creating something that focuses on language acquisition and ongoing practice. Like I mentioned before, the leading cause of not maintaining a second language is the lack of practice. I have had conversations with many people before who have always confessed that they were better at speaking another language until they had no one to speak that language to. This aspect of the website I believe could be one of its biggest selling points. This website can turn into something that almost gives you the opportunity to have an internet “pen pal.” Even if it is within someone in your state that is in a similar situation you can make those connections and continue your practice. Educators can connect with other schools in the district that can use the website and have their classes connect. They can share scores, quiz results, practices they have done and can also engage in conversations with one another. This ongoing practice is sure to help continue their growth in the target language of their program.

Lastly, publishing user generated content signals that people’s time and effort at contributing is appreciated and valued, incentivizing them to engage with you even more (Balkhi, 2020). The best way to learn the needs of the users of your product is to go directly to them. They can give you ideas on what will continue to grow and develop your own ideas such as this website. Users can even create really useful resources you can incorporate if they are given the opportunity.

Timeline

When creating a useful website the design of it all can take time. It is also something that is ever evolving and you continue to evaluate as you make changes. The creation of the website will take about the length of a semester. I will need to use a variety of resources online and from different people to help me with its design and then furthermore with its implementation. Ideally, this website can be something I can begin to test in my own immersion classroom in the later half of the school year. My students are new to our DLIPs and later in the year will be best in introducing something that can actually be useful. The idea of this project is that it continues to evolve with students as they continue to move through grades and DLIPs. After I have tested the website with my own classroom or a close colleague in a higher grade level I can begin to introduce it to our school as a resource the district can begin to use. Hopefully this website can eventually be used district wide. Preferably, it is also a website that has no time limit and can continue to be used as students change grade level and leave dual language immersion programs as well.

Summary

I am creating a website that will help answer the question: *What supports can teachers put in place that students can use when they are not directly in a dual language immersion program?* The website is meant to be used as a way of practicing and continuing to maintain the target language of a dual language immersion program even when students are no longer enrolled in them. The website will use a variety of different strategies to be engaging and successful. The website will be used by educators and by

students and will be a good way to check on a student's progress as well as collect data on its actual effectiveness.

In Chapter Four I will reflect on my project and the creation of the actual website, as well as describe next steps that can be taken in order to continue to provide teachers and students with resources to meet their language needs during or after DLIPs.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

Throughout this research and project I have been exploring the question: *What supports can teachers put in place that students can use when they are not directly in a dual language immersion program?* This chapter will cover a summary of what the main idea of the project created is. It will also include a reflection of what has worked throughout the project and what could be done differently when researching this same topic again. This chapter will discuss limitations that were found once this project was developed and difficulties that I foresee. It will also share what other project topics are related to the research found throughout this project. Lastly, this chapter will conclude discussing ways that this project is a benefit to the profession and immersion education as a whole.

Throughout the creation of this project and my research it was proven time and time again that the key to actually learning and maintaining a second language is based on practice and the motivation of each individual student. Students can learn a language during their time in a dual language immersion program (DLIP), but often when they have long breaks from school, such as summer break, or finish a program they lack the resources to continue their practice. The reason behind this project was just that, providing a space where students and teachers could navigate language materials safely and find engaging content. Also giving students a space to connect with others in similar situations as themselves so they can continue that much needed practice in a more casual and appealing way. The website is designed in two spaces. It includes materials for younger students (about 5-8 years old) and older students (about 9-13 years old). They

can find music, videos, reading materials, posts from other students, discussions on fun interesting topics and in the future even more. The idea is that students have access to these sites all year long and can use them to practice during times where they are not actively learning in a DLIP space. Educators in immersion programs see a lot of returning students in the program regress in their skills during summer break because of that lack of practice. After a lot of discussions with colleagues while developing this project I saw a demand for a one stop shop of resources that are scattered all around the internet for students.

When deciding on the idea of working on a dual language immersion program resource it was very ambitious. The goal initially was to create something successful, but at the same time very complex. As the research continued, it showed that with new language learning sometimes simple is better. It needed to be something students actually wanted to use during their down time, not something that created more stress and was way too challenging. In addition, during the design of the website complications began to arise when it came to creating an actual user interface that students could connect on. This led me to find different ways where the website could still succeed without being too difficult to create and to actually use. My research helped me understand important ways that educators can facilitate the success of students and that is something I wanted to continue to share in the essence of the website created.

Another challenge faced during the creation of this website was the lack of knowledge I have in other languages. In the future I hope to incorporate other commonly learned languages through immersion programs, such as Chinese, but I need a much bigger team to be successful in that. I have only taught Spanish immersion and that is a

language I am comfortable in, but trying to expand this resource into other spaces and languages will require a lot of help and support from other experts.

Revisiting the Literature

Really digging into the literature relating to language acquisition and dual language immersion programs really helped me in better understanding what students may need. Understanding what real data shows are results of DLIPs also supports the idea of continuing to want to create resources to substantiate them. Specific theories about comprehensible input and simplified language instruction researched by Stephen Krashen helped me realize that sometimes being more educational and complex is not better (Krashen 1998). Learning more about theories from psychologist Jere Brophy about what specifically motivates students also was important in my research and in the creation of the project. Brophy (2004) specifically states that students are motivated by peers, what they like participating in, and by their own success all of which became a part of my research design.

Limitations

In an ideal world this project will be used across dual language immersion programs and will be recommended to families when their student leaves a DLIP, but there is more to it than that. Like mentioned prior in this paper and even in this chapter there are many languages that are taught in a dual immersion program setting. The website would have to be translated or recreated to work for all of the different target languages DLIPs teach. This would require educated professionals in all of those languages to take the time to want to better and expand this resource. The website is also something that should be used outside of school to support a students language

acquisition, which means that students should have access to it from home. Educators know that oftentimes students do not have access to the internet from home or have the required devices to use the website.

Related Research Potential

Future projects regarding language acquisition and best methods of teaching a second language could largely benefit from the research and data throughout this project. Although this project largely focuses on the structure of dual language immersion programs (DLIPs) there is a lot of information relating to learning and teaching a new language. It would be interesting to also further research why some languages are chosen for dual language immersion so much more than others, and in what areas would other languages become more popular based on the programs developed.

Future Plans

Due to the parameters of this project I was not able to implement the use of the website in the dual language immersion program I am currently employed in. At the end of this school year hopefully the website is further developed so my students can be introduced to it and be the first to use it through summer break. This will allow me to see if it was of any benefit when these students come back for the following school year and if their language skills were actually supported. Introducing this website design to the Chinese language immersion teachers in my district is also a future plan. Their program is more established than the Spanish language program in my district and I would love to hear their feedback on what they think works and does not work for students.

Benefits to the Profession

As an immersion teacher myself, I want to use this project to support my students and further their second language education. I know how hard my students work to learn everything they do within a school year, and having a long break and coming into a new school year feeling lost again without knowing the language can be really frustrating. This project is meant to be shared with all of the immersion teachers in my district, initially Spanish and in the future hopefully Chinese immersion programs, to facilitate the ongoing practice of our students and see success throughout all of our immersion programs.

Conclusion

This project of creating a resource to help answer the question: “*What supports can teachers put in place that students can use when they are not directly in a dual language immersion program?*” has been difficult but rewarding. It has taught me a lot about the background of dual language immersion, the ways in which it can succeed and what ways we can motivate our students to also want to succeed in their personal language skills. As an immersion teacher I was able to look within the program I work in and see where we may be lacking support for our students. In writing this paper and creating this project creating a resource that can help students and teachers alike in similar environments to mine was imperative to me. Like previously mentioned in this paper, bilingualism is personally important to me and my project shares the goal of achieving that along with dual language immersion programs around the country.

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