

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

by

Sandra Westmoreland

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

Hamline University

St. Paul, Minnesota

Primary Advisor: Laura Halldin  
Secondary Advisor: Julianne Scullen  
Peer Reviewer: Cathy Clemmons

## PROJECT SUMMARY

### Research Question

For my research project I wanted to focus on the question *What do mainstream teachers need to know about bilingualism in the classroom to support ESL students?* I decided to focus on this question because of my past experiences with my first language and because of my recent work with ESL students I wanted to be able to provide teachers with resources and information that can help teachers understand bilingualism. I want to help teachers see how a student's first language can help with their learning in the classroom. I also want to make sure that ESL students are not losing their first language while continuing to learn English. Once I was done with the first three chapters and having done all the research, I knew that I wanted to create a website for my project as this was the best way to provide the information and resources I had gathered.

### Why a website and Audience

For the project I wanted to focus on creating a website. The main reason I decided to create a website is because I wanted to be able to reach more than just a few teachers. I wanted to make sure that I could reach as many teachers as possible. Most teachers don't have the time to attend presentations, so this helps teachers view the information online on their own time. Teachers' can take breaks, check information at work or at home during their own personal time and can go back to the website at any time. Another reason why I created a website is because there are resources that are easily provided through links. The intended audiences for the website are mainstream 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.

## **Process of the project**

Before I started the website, I had to do some research about websites and what it entails to create one. One of resources that I used to help me was 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 learned how to cite resources and material that was not developed by me. Finally, it showed me how to market the website.

For 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 and information and resources about phonological awareness. I felt that these two categories were most important for teachers because these would help support ESL students.

Before creating my website, I searched around different website programs that I could use and the one that I decided on was Wix.com website builder. I felt that Wix.com was easier to use and provided more freedom to create the site that I had in mind. The next step was to choose a web address which I knew had to be related to my question about bilingualism and ESL. I started by creating the homepage and making sure that the homepage is welcoming to all teachers. I provided brief information about why I created the website. I wanted my audience to know why bilingualism is important and how it can help ESL students. I made sure that the website is easy to follow, the homepage is well organized, and that the index is at the top page to help teachers navigate easily. Now, being done with the website I am going to publish it so that it

can be viewed by anyone. I have made sure to add a section on the website where teachers or anyone that visits the site can provide feedback. I will make sure to share the link with friends and coworkers. In the future I plan to continue adding information and resources I will update as needed.

## **THE WEBSITE**

### **Link**

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

### **Website Features**

As I mentioned above I wanted to make sure that the website address was relevant with my question and that the website is easy to follow. I made sure that the appearance of the site is well organized and that it looks professional. I made sure that the website is compatible on all devices; desktops, tablets and cell phones. The website also works on different web browsers, making it easily accessible to anyone at anytime and anywhere.

The homepage section is designed to provide the visitor with a brief explanation of what the website is and what it provides. This website also has 6 tabs at the top of the page making it easy for teachers to navigate. As I mentioned earlier, 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 codeswitching. 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.

The example of the screenshot below shows part of the homepage, I made sure to include why bilingualism is important and how it can help ESL students. The homepage also shows how

there are two categories; in the classroom and phonological awareness. Each category provides a bit of background information for the reader making it easy for the reader to know if that is the information that they are seeking. Each subcategory can be clicked on and takes the visitor right to that page. This feature is for all resources that are provided as links. The visitor places the mouse over the phrase that is underlined and it will take the reader right to that link.

**Why is Bilingualism important?**

- Helps students be proficient in two or more languages.
- Helps students be successful in their future jobs.
- Research has shown that people who are bilingual have more advanced cognitive skills than monolinguals.
- 

**How does Bilingualism help ELL students?**

- Opens up communication even if it is not in English.
- Helps ELL students continue learning in their first language which then can be transferred to English.
- Can provide motivation and student engagement.
- The article "[Bilingual education is most effective choice for English Language Learners](#)" provides more insight on Bilingual Education.

***In the Classroom:***

Incorporating bilingualism in the classroom can open many doors to the success of ESL students. Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2002) believe that 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.

- **Linguistically Inclusive Classroom.**
- **Codeswitching.**

***Phonological Awareness:***

Branum-Martin, Tao, & Garnaat (2015) define Phonological awareness, as the ability to recognize and manipulate linguistic sounds apart from their meanings, how this is a crucial skill for students in learning to read. Phonological awareness in the first language can help with the phonological awareness of the second language with ELL students.

- **Making connections between first and second language.**
- **Using bilingual books for literacy.**

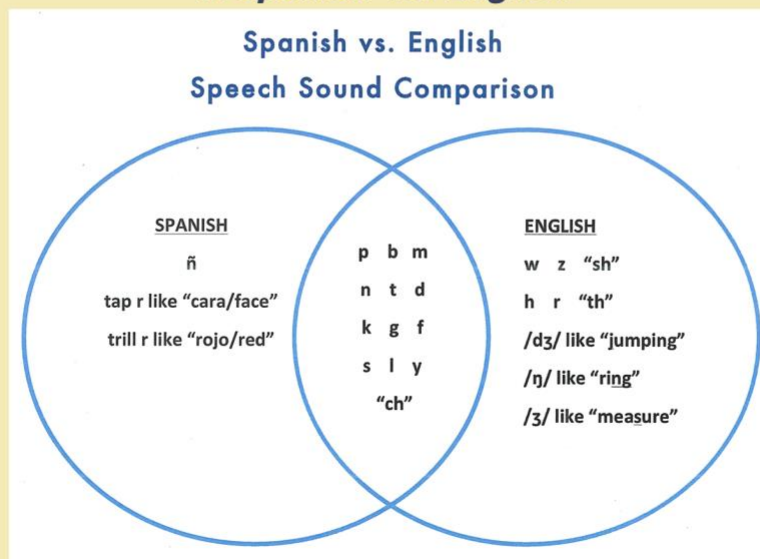
The second screenshot example below shows another part of the website. This portion is part of the section making connections between the first and second language. The screenshot shows part of the background information and also shows one of the three diagrams included in this section. I decided to include the Venn-diagrams to show teachers the speech sounds that the

top three languages spoken by ELLs have with English. There is one for Hmong and Somali that also provides a little more information below each Venn-diagram.

When working with students from different backgrounds it is important to keep in mind the students first language and how this could help you as the teacher become more aware of similarities between their first language and English. Learning about the similarities between a students first and second language does not mean that you have to learn a new language, it simply means being aware of what speech sounds are going to be difficult for them to pronounce or understand.

The following 3 Venn diagrams provide information comparing and contrasting the three languages that are spoken by ELL students.

### 1. Spanish vs. English



Prath (2016)

## References

To make sure that I had good content added to my site I had to take the research from United States Department of Health and Human Services (2006). I made sure that the resources I used for my site were mostly from my chapter two capstone. However, there are links to books, journals and other sites that were new sources. The following list shows all of the resources that I used for the website.

## REFERENCES

- Branum-Martin, L., Tao, S., & Garnaat, S. (2015). Bilingual phonological awareness: Reexamining the evidence for relations within and across languages. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 107(1), 111-125.
- Brisk, M. E. (2005). Bilingual education: from compensatory to quality schooling. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>
- Carrasquillo, A. (2001). In Rodriguez V. (Ed.), *Bilingual education and bilingualism*, 33 language minority student in the mainstream classroom. Clevedon: Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Limited.
- Colorin Colorado. (n.d). Retrieved from <http://www.colorincolorado.org>
- FluentU. (n.d). Retrieved from <https://www.fluentu.com/blog/educator/code-switching-in-the-classroom/>
- Gardner-Chloros, P. (2009). In Gardner-Chloros P. (Ed.), *Code-switching / penelope gardner chloros*. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge, UK; New York : Cambridge University Press.
- Goldenberg, C. (2008, September). Bilingual education is most effective choice for English Language Learners. Retrieved November 11, 2018, from <https://www.ernweb.com/educational-research-articles/bilingual-education-is-most-effective-choice-for-english-language-learners/>

Hansen-Thomas, H. (2008). Sheltered Instruction: Best Practices for ELLs in the Mainstream.

Kappa Delta Pi Record, 44(4), 165-169.

International Children's Digital Library (n.d). Retrieved from <http://en.childrenslibrary.org>

Nordin, N. M., Ali, F. D. R., Zubir, S. I. S. S., & Sadjirin, R. (2013). ESL learners reactions towards code switching in classroom settings. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 90, 478-487.

Prath, S. (2016, July 01). Tips on Writing Articulation Goals for Second-Language Learners.

Retrieved November 11, 2018, from <https://blog.asha.org/2016/07/05/tips-on-writing-articulation-goals-for-second-language-learners/>

United States. (2006). *Research-based web design & usability guidelines*. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services :--U.S. General Services Administration :--For sale by the Supt. Of Docs., U.S. G.P.O.

Wang, X. (2015). Understanding language and literacy development : Diverse learners in the classroom / xiao-lei wang. Chichester, England: Chichester, England: Wiley Blackwell.