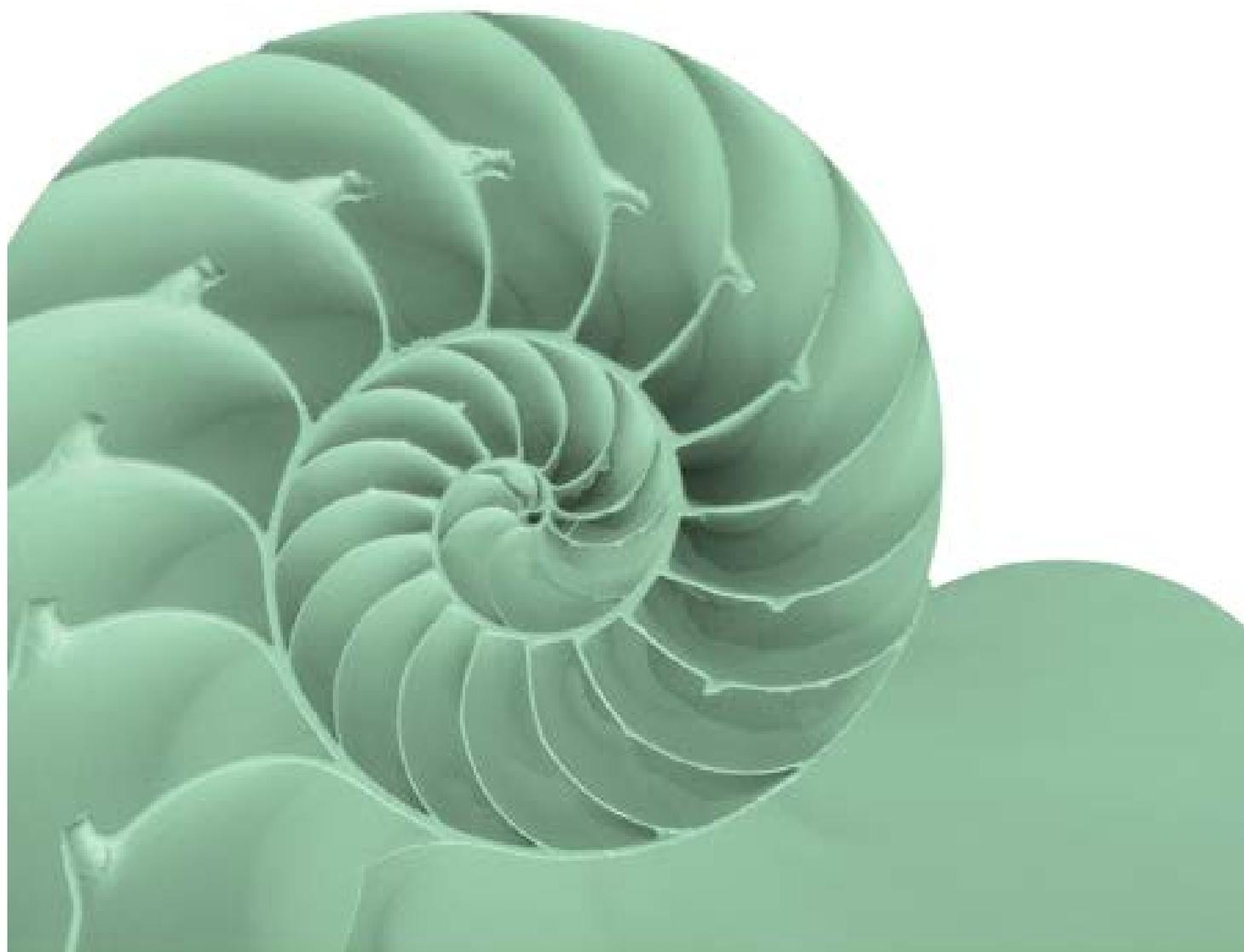


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THE READING PARADOX: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND ELL INSTRUCTION

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Abstract

Language acquisition is an essential part of the socialization process because it gives individuals the tools they need to code and decode written, verbal, and non-verbal messages. The impact that schools have on their student population, especially English language learners in the United States, is, thus, paramount. This is particularly important considering that the English Language Learner (ELL) population in American schools has grown steadily and significantly in the last decade. The techniques and strategies used to address the needs of ELLs of different backgrounds and cultures are varied in nature. This paper evaluates the teaching practices of two of the most popular and innovative methods that exist today: English Language Learner (ELL) instruction and Bilingual Education. The seemingly apparent controversy between both frameworks for language learning is evaluated and found to be minimal, at best. The purpose of this research is to contrast the implications of ELL instruction and bilingual education as two separate identities. In addition, the paradoxical relationship between these two methodologies is explained with the purpose of revealing the similarities of both approaches to teaching reading and language acquisition.

Key Words: Bilingual Education, ESL, ELL, Literacy, Language Instruction

Resumen

La adquisición del idioma es una parte esencial del proceso de socialización porque ayuda a las personas a entender y descifrar mensajes verbales, no-verbales, y escritos. Por esto, el impacto que las escuelas tienen en su población estudiantil, especialmente en la población de estudiantes de

inglés como segundo idioma (ELL) en Estados Unidos, es muy grande. Es importante considerar que la población de ELL en escuelas estadounidenses ha experimentado un crecimiento significativo y estable en la última década. Las técnicas y estrategias utilizadas para converger las necesidades de los ELLs de diferentes culturas son diferentes. Este artículo evalúa las prácticas de enseñanza de dos métodos populares e innovadores que existen hoy en día: La instrucción a los estudiantes de inglés como segundo idioma (ELL) y la educación bilingüe. La aparente controversia entre ambas metodologías de enseñanza son evaluadas y los hallazgos muestran que hay poca diferencia entre ambos métodos. El propósito de esta investigación es contrastar las implicaciones de instrucción de ELL y la educación bilingüe como identidades separadas. Además, la relación paradójica entre estas dos metodologías se explica con el propósito de relevar las similitudes de ambos enfoques para la enseñanza de lectura y la adquisición del lenguaje.

Palabras clave: Educación bilingüe, ESL, ELL, Alfabetización, Instrucción de idioma.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a decrypted medium that humans use to establish communication and interaction. “Infants begin learning language before birth, via brain organization and auditory experiences during the final prenatal months” (Berger, 2009, p.175). This process of language decoding is an unconscious function of the brain that seeks to understand information before children are born in order to equip them with the necessary tools to communicate as a newborn. From the sociolinguistic perspective, the process of encryption and decryption occurs within a specific society that creates the code with which communication occurs. This same society attributes meaning to each codified message to facilitate social interaction through effective verbal, nonverbal, and written communication. Meaning is transferred from one social group or generation to the other through the process of socialization. This phenomenon establishes the underpinnings of

the process by means of which humans at different life stages acquire language by using their environment and any tools – symbolical or physical – available to them (Khatib & Shakouri, 2013, p. 1592). Thus, language learning is an ongoing process that occurs continuously through the lifespan of individuals, from infancy to adulthood.

Language learning, however, does not occur only at home. Schools play a determinant role in socializing students to communicate effectively through the different language dimensions of speaking, reading, and writing. Schools not only teach techniques for effective communication, but also transmit the specific meaning that society distills on the concepts used for communication. The school serves as a socializing agent that facilitates learning of both basic and academic language that students will use in their academic, personal, and professional lives. The impact that schools have on their student population, especially English language learners in the United States is, thus, paramount. This is particularly important considering that the limited English proficient (LEP) population in American schools, also known as English language learners, has grown steadily and significantly in the last decade (Nguyen, 2012, p. 127; Allison & Rehm, 2007, p. 12; Harris, Rapp, Martínez, & Plucker, 2007, p. 26). This highly diverse population present in the United States has forced schools to adopt different instructional practices to teach language. These techniques and strategies must effectively address the needs of native speakers of English and of English language learners of diverse backgrounds and cultures. The challenge is determining which strategies suit best the needs of such a diverse population of students. There is no “one-size-fits-all” response to this dilemma. Students’ needs must be addressed individually considering their particular strengths and areas of opportunity.

Two of the most popular and innovative teaching practices available today are English Language Learner (ELL) instruction and Bilingual Education. Both of these instructional practices impact students’ educational experiences and their ability to develop skills in English and in their native language. Although these methodologies focus on the acquisition of language, they supposedly have different perspectives on how to accomplish this goal. Current controversies between proponents of bilingual education and ELL approaches suggest that both groups of academics and practitioners present and support different methodologies for teaching and acquiring English language skills. Both camps argue that their techniques are different and perhaps more effective than the other’s, and that their methodologies for teaching tap into the true needs of English language learners at different levels of language proficiency. These arguments suggest that there is an inherent and evident difference in the methodologies, research findings, and propositions of both approaches. As a matter of fact, it is argued that bilingual education is a broader concept that captures the teaching and learning of any two languages and, thus, it is not limited to the teaching of a single language as ESL is. This work argues that this controversy is truly paradoxical and contradictory in nature.

Schools in the United States approach language teaching and learning from two different perspectives: ELL instruction also known as English-only instruction and bilingual education or dual-language education. Bilingual education is deemed to be a broader framework of language learning that captures the techniques and strategies used in ELL instruction. In this sense, ELL instruction is under the umbrella of bilingual education and could rely on the techniques, strategies, and methodologies used in bilingual education to achieve its teaching and learning goals. However, the relationship between

both approaches could be reciprocal considering that one (ELL instruction) is a component of the other (bilingual education). Thus, the seemingly apparent controversy between both frameworks for language learning is minimal, at best. The purpose of this research is to contrast the implications of ELL instruction and bilingual education as two separate identities. In addition, the paradoxical relationship between these two methodologies will be explained with the purpose of revealing the similarities of both approaches to teaching reading and language acquisition.

IMPLICATIONS OF ELL INSTRUCTION

English-only instruction focuses on teaching English through a monolingual curriculum. In this environment, “ESL students spend much of their day in classes with English proficient students and are pulled out in small groups for instruction in English grammar, vocabulary, and communication” (Conger, 2010, p. 1104). The main purpose of ELL classes is to develop English literacy, not to promote instruction in other languages. In this sense, students in the ELL instruction framework are oftentimes immersed into the mainstream culture in an attempt to accelerate the process of language acquisition. Thus, “the major difference between bilingual education and ELL rests in the use of native-language instruction” (Conger, 2010, p. 1104) and in the central role that native culture plays (or not) in the process of creating the learners’ environment. The teaching strategies used in the ELL instruction framework focus on the sole acquisition of English language skills with a possible displacement of the native tongue. This process of language substitution has serious implications for language development if we consider that strengthening students’ native

language skills facilitates learning of a second language (Cummins, 1996). Native language instruction is nonexistent in an English-only setting, thus probably making acquisition of English language skills more complicated and time consuming.

Oftentimes ESL classrooms are full of students from diverse backgrounds with different native tongues. English-only instruction is thought of as the only common denominator that can help all students alike and can facilitate instruction in such a diverse environment. This type of instruction facilitates classroom management because teachers do not have to handle different languages or cultural backgrounds. Instead, students are forced to assimilate into the American English culture and their native tongue is, to some extent, ignored. In this academic setting, text choice for facilitating language learning depends on English language proficiency; oral or written translation into the students’ native tongue is not the norm. Students are asked to fully immerse in the target language by speaking and reading in English, and all their background knowledge is not used to its full potential.

English-only instruction causes reading and language arts achievement among language learners to be low. “As a group, students who are learning English as a second language tend to underperform compared to their English-speaking peers” (Kamil, Pearson, Moje, Afflerbach, 2011, p.685). The reading teaching practices in ESL instruction focus on developing strategies that will help students approach the text using only English. Some of these strategies may include pre-reading activities, repetition exercises to practice vocabulary, and the adjustment of instruction using diverse techniques to support instruction in English. An interesting fact is that research suggests that ELL instruction promotes transferability of knowledge from L1 to L2 to improve reading comprehension and reading

support (Kamil et al., 2011). However, these instructional practices fail to address that students can only transfer limited knowledge from their LI depending on the level of literacy developed. In addition, when children are exposed to a dominant linguistic culture in school (English-only) they tend to lose fluency in their native tongue (Yamamoto, 2001, p. 5-6). This puts ELLs at risk of losing their native language skills and jeopardizes their opportunity to ever develop strong academic linguistic abilities in English because they will no longer have LI support.

However, ELL instruction has significant benefits on the development of literacy skills among English language learners. On the positive side, ELL instruction promotes English critical literacy and reliance at a fast pace in students who do not speak English as a first language (L1). In the United States, the educational practices associated with ELLs have evolved from mere English-learning classes to a fully integrated academic content-focused approach. This means that English is taught both during language arts courses and through the general curriculum. Studies show that using content instruction, such as math or science, “can promote LEP students’ all aspects of language at school: vocabulary development, listening, speaking, reading, and writing development” (Wang, 2013, p. 642). The immersion of content classes into the ELL classroom follows the major tenets of Krashen’s theory. Through content, language learning is achieved in meaningful ways. Students approach language as more than just a structure of symbols that are put together to construct and convey a message; it is also the vehicle through which they transmit their knowledge and show understanding of the world that surrounds them. Krashen (1988) suggests that language instruction should be meaningful because when students learned their first language they also had the opportunity to interact with meaningful information, which gave them the opportunity to further develop their vocabulary.

Language instruction in the ELL model is not considered tedious or boring because the opportunities to create engaging activities are endless. Language is a live entity that impacts learners’ lives. As language transforms and molds to the specific circumstances, it fits the specific needs of individuals who use it to construct meaning and convey important messages. Teaching language arts is, thus, a creative process. Teachers of language must break boundaries to show how seemingly tedious rules of grammar construction and writing composition can and do become the vehicle through which readers, writers, and interlocutors construct meaning through language. Language is the key used to decode written or spoken messages that could otherwise be impossible to decipher.

Important elements of teaching come to the fore when evaluating ELL instruction models. For example, educators who follow this methodology have the opportunity to teach listening skills using innovative tools that ask students for more than repetition. New technology is used as a learning aid with which students can engage in meaningful activities such as recording their reading of a poem that they wrote. They can, then, listen to their own recording to analyze areas of strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Teaching reading and writing is also an important element of ELL instruction. The world around ELLs is full of texts and information that can be easily accessible, but only if they can understand them. Reading instruction is an active and engaging task, and as such it is important for facilitators to include reading activities that give students the opportunity to automatically transfer the information that they learned into their daily lives.

ELL instruction focuses on specific strategies that help English language learners develop reading skills in ways that they can implement

in their daily lives and at school. One such strategy is using culturally relevant readings that motivate students to read. Kim (2009) argues that language is developed and used within a social context. As such, readers use their previous experiences and background knowledge to comprehend unfamiliar texts. ELLs use their social, economic, and cultural context to approach new texts and give meaning to what they read. As a result, by focusing on culturally relevant readings, teachers can promote the development of reading skills through the activation of prior knowledge. McIntyre, Kyle, Cheng, Muñoz, and Beldon (2010) add that through sheltered instruction, teachers can “build on students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds to help students connect instruction to their own worlds” and develop stronger reading skills. However, if educators want this technique to effectively help ELLs develop reading skills, they must implement all of the components of the sheltered instruction observation protocol entirely.

Palmer, Zhang, Taylor, & Leclere (2010) argue that “in addition to going through the same reading processes that native speakers do, nonnative speakers may need to translate English words into their own language to arrive at meaning”. This makes developing reading fluency a difficult process that requires direct and explicit instruction (Palmer, Zhang, Taylor, & Leclere, 2010, p. 45). A teaching strategy that ELL instruction implements with students who are struggling with their English language skills is to use explicit instruction in English decoding, comprehension, and fluency. The goal is to activate prior knowledge as a first stage of recognizing vocabulary words that may be difficult to understand. If no prior knowledge exists that makes a word decodable, then, explicit teaching of vocabulary through the use of verbal and nonverbal cues, and proper realia is necessary. The focus is on teaching vocabulary to ameliorate the ELLs reading difficulties (Palumbo & Willcutt, 2006, p. 161).

Explicit tutoring in phonological awareness, vocabulary development, and reading fluency is another effective teaching strategy implemented in ELL instruction to develop reading skills (Ehri, Dreyer, Flugman, & Gross, 2007, p. 414). Reading Recovery is a tutoring intervention model used to teach struggling readers. It focuses on teaching students to hear and manipulate sounds of spoken words. Students learn to put together sounds of letters to make syllables and words. In this process, they start correlating sounds with groups of letters that are written in the text. This process of identifying the sounds of letters written in the text and putting those sounds together to understand written words facilitates the process of reading and teaches students reading fluency. “Developing word consciousness... positions the learner to become metacognitively aware of words as well as to establish a lasting interest in, and motivation to learn, new words” (Cowan & Albers, 2007, p. 35). According to Cowan and Albers (2007), word consciousness promotes vocabulary development and, as a result, solid reading skills in a contextualized environment.

In addition to developing word consciousness and knowledge of key vocabulary, Welsh and Newman (2010), found that summarizing text and using pictures related to concepts are two effective strategies that help students develop good reading skills. ELLs come to their classrooms with vast knowledge of their surroundings. Their experiences and contexts must be used to their favor when developing their literacy skills in English. Pictures, graphs, illustrations, and even body language can be used as tools to connect both prior knowledge and concepts acquired in their native tongue with vocabulary words in English. Knowledge is, thus, transferred from their L1 to L2 and comprehension is achieved. ELL instruction relies on the use of the English language in ways that are meaningful to students. Without using the students’ native tongue, teachers can use pictures of objects

that are familiar to students and use the correct word in English to refer to such pictures. Students can easily recognize the object in the picture, retrieve prior knowledge in their LI, and link it to the vocabulary word in English that is being taught. This facilitates reading of these words when they appear in the text.

Finally, Watkins and Lindahl (2010) argue that targeted instruction can be used to close the gap in reading comprehension skills that exists between ELLs and native speakers of English. Targeted instruction “emphasizes content area literacy development with receptive (reading and listening) and expressive (writing and speaking) language skills in mind” (Watkins & Lindahl, 2010, p. 24). For targeted instruction to work, teachers must be aware of the language demands that their lessons impose on the students. This will help them identify the students’ strengths and weaknesses and implement the different strategies that cater to the students’ specific needs. Before determining how to target their instruction for reading, teachers must identify first the students’ background knowledge, their motivation, their reading abilities and level of reading comprehension, their vocabulary needs, and their writing skills. This will give them a clear picture of where each student stands and what strategies are more suitable for each individual student.

To facilitate reading and reading comprehension, Watkins and Lindahl (2010) suggest that teachers can use word banks and word walls before, during, and after reading. ELLs can refer to these word banks to identify key vocabulary and their meanings. Moreover, during the reading process, teachers can draw students’ attention to the structure and features of the text and use different visuals, graphs, drawings, or pictures to supplement the text. Teachers can also present questions that students can answer while reading or

after reading. This facilitates the reading process and assists in reading comprehension. Finally, Watkins and Lindahl (2010) argue that teachers must use varied text options. Different students are at different levels of reading fluency and reading comprehension. These factors must be taken into account when determining what kinds of books ELLs are ready to read.

English-only education prepares students for English-speaking societies “that conduct much of their daily business via texts—not only much of their information exchange and training, but also much of their governance, organization, and ethical and moral acculturation” (Kamil et al, p.433). Learning only one language at a time enables students to focus on the target language and use all their time in practicing to become proficient at a faster pace. The purpose of ELL education is to equip students, whether children or adults, with the reading, writing, and speaking skills that they need to become active members of the English-speaking community in which they live.

IMPLICATIONS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Bilingual education is an instructional approach that focuses on teaching English as a Second Language while teaching students their LI. Different from ELL instruction, bilingual education uses the students’ LI in meaningful ways to help them develop literacy skills in the second language. This model is culturally responsible and promotes appreciation for the cultural heritage of students as much as for the American culture. When schools provide quality education in

the students' primary language, "they give them two things: knowledge and literacy. The knowledge that children get through their L1 helps make the English they hear and read more comprehensible. Literacy developed in the primary language transfers to the second language" (NABE, 2014).

The main objective of bilingual education is to form bicultural, bilingual, and biliterate individuals in English and other-than-English language. Instruction is equally divided in both languages because, with the appropriate teaching techniques, knowledge acquired in their L1 is transferred to the L2 with relative ease (Perkins & Salomon, 1988, p. 22). This process requires the implementation of multilevel strategies that facilitate the retrieval of prior knowledge and its use in the new context. Perkins and Salomon (1988) argue that teachers in a bilingual education setting must serve as mediators to help students make the bridging connections between their knowledge in L1 and the principles that must be taught in L2. In this process, listening, writing, speaking, and reading skills are equally enforced to ensure balanced proficiency. The most common bilingual education program presently available in K-12 is known as the dual language 50-50 model or two-way immersion program.

"In the 50–50 model, students learn in each language about half the time throughout the program. In many programs, all students learn to read in their primary language and then add the second language" (Gomez, Freeman, & Freeman, 2005, p. 149). The instruction time in each language may be divided in different ways as long as it is equal. For example, instruction in a dual language setting can take place half day in each language, alternate days, and even alternate weeks. Translation is not used when switching from one language to the other. Students are expected to learn and know the information in

both languages in all classes. This last component makes the two-way immersion approach a realistic model because the students are taught all classes in English 50% of the time. This enables them to learn the vocabulary and keywords needed to succeed at their academic level.

A substantial body of literature shows the positive impact that bilingual education has in the academic achievement of students. Lindholm-Leary (2004) found that "reading and writing proficiency of upper-grade elementary students in Spanish/English bilingual immersion programs indicate that both groups of students progressed to high levels of reading and writing ability in both language in composition, grammar, and mechanics" (p. 58) inside a dual language setting. Roberts (1995) argues that the goal of this type of bilingual education program is pluralistic because it values cultures and develops strong literacy skills in both languages. The outcome is that neither language is displaced because special value is deposited on both languages taught.

Although this model was originally created for the K-12 environment, its success has made it possible for a university to modify and implement it in the higher-education setting. The Ana G. Méndez University System is currently the first regionally accredited university to be fully bilingual. The university developed and implements the *Discipline-Based Dual Language Immersion Model*®, which gives adult learners "the opportunity to obtain their university degree at the same time they develop both their English and Spanish language skills" (SUAGM, 2014). The university has been in the continental United States for over 10 years and the increasing amount of locations opened across the United States shows the success this model is having nationwide.

The advantages and continuous growth of bilingual education programs is only one side of the coin. Researchers are currently investigating the potential negative impact of bilingual education in the United States. There are different points of view that explore the potential disadvantages of bilingual education programs in the United States. Some of the most common arguments include the cost of bilingual education programs, the availability of resources, and the impact that this program has on children.

Bilingual education programs are costly because the states have to develop the entire bilingual program curriculum from the ground up. This includes the acquisition of textbooks and workbooks, and the construction of classrooms that have dual-language friendly tools. Adding more weight on the cost is the availability of teachers who can implement the dual language model. The current shortage of bilingual teachers partially explains the lack of implementation of bilingual programs across the nation (Batt, 2008, p. 39). “Bilingual teachers’ stipends, bilingual textbooks, the student to teacher ratios, teacher assistants and the training of personnel to administer bilingual tests, are all perceived as burdens for districts which are overcrowded, poor and constantly providing services to minority population” (Ruhl, 2005, p.1).

Finally, a study by Porter (1998) illustrates the potential negative impact that bilingual curricula can have on the cognitive and academic development of students. In her research, she shares the unfavorable experiences of a few families who enrolled their children in bilingual programs. She argues that the substantial amount of research that speaks to the benefits of bilingual education fails to admit that “children learn a second language more naturally and effectively if they begin at an early age” (Porter, 1998), period. She concludes that thirty years

of research has not been able to justify teaching children in their native language to facilitate the learning of English or academic content. Conversely, she asserts that there is much research that shows little to no evidence to suggest that bilingual programs render better results than mainstream teaching or English immersion. Porter’s research, however, has its limitations due to the lack of empirical evidence and her one-sided perspective about the topic.

Despite this controversial argument about the effectiveness and success (or lack thereof) of bilingual programs, teachers under this framework implement specific strategies to promote literacy in the four language dimensions of reading, speaking, writing, and listening. Research suggests that these strategies effectively promote the transfer of knowledge from the native tongue to the second language, and that students develop language skills that help them communicate effectively. For example, Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow, Dressler, Lippman, Lively, & White (2004) argue that Latino children and other lagging learners have difficulties reading and comprehending because they lack sufficient vocabulary to initially understand the text being read. They assert that reading skills among ELLs are better developed if there is direct teaching of vocabulary words and if these words appear in authentic and motivating texts. Thus, they conclude that reading skills are enhanced when students learn words. ELLs should learn words, which “implies knowing many things about the word –its literal meaning; its various connotations; the sorts of syntactic constructions into which it enters; the morphological options it offers; and a rich array of semantic associates, including synonyms, antonyms, hypernyms, hyponyms, and words with closely related yet contrasting meanings, as well as its capacity for polysemy” (Carlo, et al., 2004, p. 192). Teachers must make clear efforts to teach new vocabulary and provide students with multiple opportunities to encounter the key

words in the various texts. Moreover, they argue that ELLs benefit from being able to preview the text in their native tongue before it is introduced in English. This gives them the opportunity to identify the key words in the L1 and transfer ideas and concepts into the reading process in L2.

Another teaching technique that has proved effective in developing reading skills in a bilingual education setting is espoused by Kolić-Vehovec, S., & Bajšanski (2007). They assert that comprehension monitoring is necessary when working with bilingual students who are beginning to read in L2. Through comprehension monitoring, facilitators use guided questions to periodically check if students comprehend what they are reading in the L2. According to the authors, comprehension monitoring is “an executive function, essential for competent reading, which directs the reader’s cognitive processing as he/she strives to make sense of incoming information” (Kolić-Vehovec & Bajšanski, 2007, p. 198). Comprehension monitoring techniques include asking students to rate the importance of sentences in the assigned text and detecting inconsistencies in the text, such as arguments that contradict the students’ prior knowledge. Research suggests that when students identify inconsistencies in the text, they are likely to implement reading strategies to remedy the situation. In this sense, students use the metacognitive process not only to check for understanding, but also to use effective strategies that will help them develop their reading skills.

There is an undoubted reciprocal relationship between reading and reading comprehension. Effective reading fosters good reading comprehension, and reading comprehension is essential to successful reading (Martínez-Álvarez, Banan, & Peters-Burton, 2012, p. 333). The challenge for teachers is to teach students how to read effectively

and how to monitor their comprehension of the text. Martínez-Álvarez et al. (2012) argue that the knowledge that students bring to the reading process facilitates understanding of texts written in the second language. They also assert “when educating bilingual individuals, attention must be paid to the development of scientific and academic vocabulary, with special emphasis on the transferring of terms across students’ languages” (Martínez-Álvarez et al., 2012, p. 333).

Martínez-Álvarez and colleagues assert that questioning and self-monitoring are two cognitive strategies that help students enhance their reading skills and facilitate reading comprehension. While they reading, students are encouraged to ask questions to test for understanding. They engage in a self-regulation process in which they test their knowledge and comprehension of the text by questioning its content. Similarly, self-monitoring helps students determine, before, during, and after the reading session, what they know and what they need to learn from the text. Both of these are metacognitive process that allows students to evaluate their own thinking processes. These strategies are particularly effective for bilingual students because they can engage in constant evaluation of their own understanding. However, monolingual students who wish to test their understanding of the text can also use them effectively. An alternative method for questioning and self-monitoring used with younger students is to provide engage in guided reading. The teacher serves as a mentor or mediator in the process of self-monitoring and questioning. In their capacity as mentor, teachers provide students with guide questions that they can use to check for understanding, engage in meaningful reading, and analyze the text at hand.

PARADOX OF THE APPROACHES TO READING

Although ELL instruction and bilingual education modalities are different in the way that they approach language teaching, they both have three key strategies to promote effective teaching of reading literacy. These instructional frameworks to teaching reading that are deemed to be contradictory—ELL instruction and bilingual education—are in fact grounded on the same principles. The first strategy used by both ELL instruction and bilingual education is scaffolding. Scaffolding is a teaching methodology used to promote a deeper level of understanding in the students while providing appropriate support. Scaffolding, in the material sense, can be found outside of buildings that are being fixed or improved. In the classroom setting, scaffolding is used to support students in their process of acquiring and developing their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Instructional scaffolding in reading assists the reader by creating a protected environment where learning is challenging and fun. An important step in scaffolding the reading process is to incorporate suitable, relevant, and meaningful reading materials that promote effective reading literacy. The appropriate text for scaffolding literacy has to include rich and complex language, needs to be age-appropriate, and must challenge, but not frustrate, the student (Axford, Harders, Wise, & Burgess, 2009). Scaffolding reading also entails incorporating culturally relevant literature that motivates students and entices them to develop a culture of reading (Tatum, 2008).

The second strategy used by both methodologies to teach reading is the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model. This framework is a research-based and validated instructional model that consists of eight interrelated components: (1) lesson

preparation, (2) building background, comprehensive input, (4) strategies, (5) interaction, (6) practice/application, (7) lesson delivery, and (8) review and assessment (CAL, 2014). The components of the SIOP model benefit students and educators alike by providing both with the necessary support to approach the objective at hand. There are many schools across the United States that follow this model and more K-12 ESL and bilingual classrooms continue to adopt it after discovering its advantages (CAL, 2014). SIOP levels the playing field for readers who have developed Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) but are challenged by their Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) in the classroom. When used for teaching reading, this technique relies on collaborative reading, active reading, explicit teaching, and the use of realia and complementary support to promote comprehension. Sheltered instruction is designed to provide second language learners and bilingual students “with the same high-quality, academically challenging content that native English speakers receive through a combination of good teaching techniques and an explicit focus on academic language development” (Hansen-Thomas, 2008, p. 166).

Finally, both ELL instruction and bilingual education rely on the teaching of key vocabulary and the use of prior knowledge to develop reading skills that promote effective comprehension. Both the English-only approach and the dual language method must implement techniques that enhance students’ vocabulary. Seminal literature from both camps stresses the importance of vocabulary development and the reciprocal and strong relationship between vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. In the process of acquiring and using vocabulary, monolinguals, ELLs, and bilingual students rely on prior knowledge, which influences new learning (Marini & Genereux, 2010, p. 2). Teachers in an ELL or a bilingual education environment must

identify ways to retrieve prior knowledge, teach new vocabulary, and promote meaningful experiences through scaffolding, sheltering, and differentiation if they want their students to become successful readers. Differentiated instruction for reading, which is effective in mainstream, ELL, or bilingual settings, enables teachers to identify the specialty and talent of students in order to design assignments that best accommodate the students' strengths. Through differentiated instruction learning experiences are personalized and individualized to achieve success (Chapman & King, 2009, p. 1).

CONCLUSION

There are clear differences in the way that ELL instruction and bilingual education approach teaching of non-native speakers of English. One approach, ELL instruction, relies on English-only immersion because it considers that transition to the English language is done faster and more effectively if students are challenged to use the L2 with the proper assistance. In this setting, native languages are displaced and education takes place in English. Students are required to learn and are assessed in English. Advantages and disadvantages to this teaching approach are identified. Some research suggests that this type of teaching methodology lengthens the students' silent period, increases their affective filter, and shuns them out of the learning process. Conversely, other scholars assert that ELL instruction, or English-only instruction accelerates the acquisition of language skills in the different dimensions, and facilitates comprehension of written and spoken language through the process of immersion.

Bilingual education, on the other hand, relies heavily on the use of the students' native tongue to help them acquire and develop literacy skills in the second language. This methodology relies on the activation of students' prior knowledge and the transfer of concepts from the native language to the L2. Teaching techniques are implemented to facilitate the acquisition of language skills and the development of language proficiency in English. Some research suggests that these techniques do not fair out well in the classroom environment and that there is very little empirical evidence that suggests that using students' native language to teach a second language is actually productive or effective.

Academics in both fields try to defend their positions by arguing that the techniques and strategies that each implement are better suited to develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills among LEP students. Each camp suggests that their methodologies are clearly different from and more effective than the other's. However, this research points to the paradoxical nature of this controversy. There is some contradiction to the assertions of both stances who, to defend their positions, use arguments that are similar to the other group's. Thus, it is possibly true that these two approaches undertake different strategies to develop and enhance the literacy skills of English language learners, but each camp contradicts itself by stressing the importance of methodologies and techniques that are also deemed important by the other camp. In the end, the goal is to develop the reading and language skills of our students and, upon agreeing to disagree, proponents of the ELL instruction and bilingual education approaches have agreed to more than they are willing to admit.

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