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Bilingual Education as an EEO: Educational Enrichment Opportunity for All

Anaida Colón-Muñiz & Norma Valenzuela

Prior to the historic 2008 election, the Obama/Biden platform outlined their main education policy positions on the Obama website to include transitional bilingual education: “Obama and Biden support transitional bilingual education and will help Limited English Proficient students get ahead by holding schools accountable for making sure these students complete school” (Obama & Biden, 2008). Many bilingual educators became hopeful and enthusiastic upon reading this position. With the last administration, the push had been for English-only policies and narrow high-stakes tests that have served to neither inspire high-quality and creative teaching nor effectively measured the growth of children in important intellectual and skill areas. Although we, as proponents of bilingual education, were thrilled that bilingual education was being endorsed more openly, we wanted to see it go further. We wanted to see a greater emphasis on more effective enrichment bilingual models and a broader audience of student participants than what has been targeted traditionally. We also expected more human-friendly performance-based assessments that could account better for the growth of our youth in their intellectual and linguistic capacities that are critical for the global demands of the twenty-first century. Next are our stories, followed by our position on bilingual education as an enrichment opportunity for all of America’s children.

Norma's Story

Dear President Obama, I am a product of bilingual education. I was born in Queretaro, Mexico, but I was brought undocumented to the United States when I was three years old. I understand this may not have been the best way to enter this country, but my parents believed our coming here was the only way their children would escape a life of poverty and have a better life. According to what they told me, we did not suffer grave danger crossing the border. My mother, who is light-skinned and has light brown hair, "passed" for a white woman. The *coyote* (a person who is paid to cross people illegally into the United States) was a white male who told the immigration officer that my mother was his wife and that my siblings and I were his kids; my father was hidden in the back. Luckily for us, the immigration officer did not ask my mother any questions. I can just imagine her sitting in the passenger side of the car holding my little sister in her arms and smiling nervously, with fear in her heart.

Because my parents only spoke Spanish at home, the natural thing to do, once we settled, was to enroll me in a transitional bilingual education program when I entered kindergarten. This used to be the state program for English learners in California. This program was a noble attempt to help kids move from their native tongue to the English language, but there was no intent to develop full bilingualism. I remember reading Spanish texts, which easily taught me how to read. So, from kindergarten to second grade, my primary language of instruction was Spanish, with daily English-language development. I was a very good student. But when I started third grade, Spanish was dropped, and I began learning solely in English with little "transition." The change was drastic. I felt lost and did not understand a lot of what was taught to me. I fully understand the "sink or swim" analogy that is used when describing immersion in all English (failing by "sinking" or surviving by "swimming"). In spite of this, I was determined to conquer the English language by studying hard and reading my textbooks over and over in order to understand what monolinguals seemed to understand upon a first reading.

From firsthand experience, I can say that it is an error to equate all bilingual programs because they have different features and levels of success. Going through a quick exit transitional bilingual program that immersed students in English only was very difficult for me because once the Spanish was eliminated, I felt as if my legs had been cut off. Spanish was the founda-

tion that allowed me to stand on my own two feet as well as "swim" in school. The moment that I was put into English only, I staggered; I thought I would drown. My legs, my language, were no longer there. I believe it would have been less difficult if I had continued developing both languages, as in dual-language programs. While schooling becomes very difficult for students when given quick English immersion approaches, some seem destined to become long-term English learners. I was one of the lucky ones, but today we have a better choice. Happily, the school I currently work for implemented a Title VII federal grant for a dual immersion program. It is here where I have understood the major differences between program models and how much more effective dual immersion is in developing fluency in two languages.

It has been a difficult journey to become a citizen and reach my academic goals. As I seek to complete my doctorate, I am optimistic because I am able to attend a university and graduate with an advanced degree. Even so, now as a doctoral student, I notice how my peers read articles faster than I can. Nevertheless, I feel that I have a good grasp of the readings and can analyze the material from two perspectives. I am proud to have come from my humble beginnings and to be able to sit next to, and exchange my ideas with, highly educated students who respect me for who I am.

I continue to work in the same community I grew up in, and the rewards have been incredible as a dual-language educator. I especially thank my parents for instilling in me a hard work ethic. Through my efforts, determination, and caring teachers, I have been able to succeed in school. Unlike others who did not have the opportunity to participate in bilingual education or develop biliteracy, this has been a tremendous asset in my life, even if it was not the most ideal program. I understand the value of learning multiple languages, and now that I have children, I transfer the importance of learning multiple languages to them. I want them to feel proud of being bilingual. Yes, I am a product of bilingual education. I firmly believe in the famous words of the immigrant leader, Cesar Chavez, "Sí se puede!"; the same chant that became the 2008 election's call to action, Yes, we can! We can offer outstanding bilingual education.

Anaida's Story

Dr. Alberto Ochoa was the director of the federally funded Multifunctional Resource Center in San Diego when I served as a full-time bilingual consult-

ant for Orange and Los Angeles counties in the mid-1980s. I remember him saying that futurists reported that it takes more than 30 years for any major change to take hold “because...we are creatures of habit.” Yet there are certain areas in which we can attest to the fact that the United States is a different place than it was in the 1980s, such as in technology, and by 2008, even in politics. It was an unforgettable experience for me to be in Washington for Obama’s inauguration and to live that historic moment. Although Alberto’s words resonate with me, I continue to hope for more progressive and positive change in the United States, not a reverse trend to conservatism or more of the same.

As a bilingual educator and proponent of bilingual education for more than 30 years, I had hoped to see bilingualism in schools become the norm, especially because more than 30 years had passed since the federal Bilingual Education Act of 1968 under Title VII (Wiese & Garcia, 2001). Ochoa had said that we would probably be more concerned with trilingualism in schools by the millennium, which is what has happened in the European Union, as well as other countries (Cummins, 2000b). But for some uncanny reason, we in the United States seem to keep bouncing back to the notion that we are bound as a nation by one language and culture, and that it is counter to our country’s best interest to be anything else. Personally, that notion has never made sense to me because it takes no time at all to look around, listen, and realize that we are not that kind of nation, never have been, and hopefully never will be.

As a young Puerto Rican child at the tender age of five, I was bound to enter the category of what is now known as English learner. My parents embarked on the daring endeavor of leaving the security of family and friends to seek a better opportunity in New York City in 1956; the rest of my personal history as a child is a blur. I have almost no memories of my life and schooling until about the age of nine. In the linguistic confusion of my early years, when bilingual schooling was not an option, I apparently broke through the linguistic fog after three years, an important time threshold according to Jim Cummins (1981, 2000a) for “figuring out” English and making more lasting connections with memories. But the dismemberment from my earlier linguistic experiences with English-only schooling left a void in me that I have yet to fill. It is difficult for me to even explain the transition I went through from my home in Puerto Rico to the United States because I simply don’t remember very much about my early elementary

school years. Things didn’t really click until junior high, when my Spanish teacher helped me to remember, embrace, and reconstruct some of my identity. That is when I began to flourish academically. Of course, I have to credit my parents for encouraging me to speak Spanish at home and to learn some preliminary reading and writing because this was critical to my success in school. But it was after my junior high experience that I became committed to reclaiming my language and becoming fully bilingual and biliterate. It took me through my university years to feel fully competent, but I am convinced that this is what aided me in becoming a life-long learner and educator.

Although there is no proof that my encounter, with simultaneously beginning school and learning the English language, was responsible for my loss of memory of that period, it is interesting to me that my three older sisters, who had gone to school in Puerto Rico, seemed to have a better memory of their early childhood years. Not surprisingly, I have friends and colleagues who have had similar experiences of memory loss after they, too, had come to the United States just prior to school age. This is certainly a call for research to learn more about this phenomenon. Perhaps my personal experience explain, in part why I have become such a passionate advocate for bilingual education. That and the more than 30 years of working with children and teachers in the quest of making them English proficient, have convinced me that bilingual education can make a huge and positive difference in educating children in English while enriching their own culture, language, and society as a whole.

The trauma that children experience as they transition from home to school is strenuous enough. When this transition is accompanied by schooling in a different language, I am convinced that these compounded factors make it difficult for children to become proficient in the new English language and culture. But the most convincing element for many of my Anglophone friends is that, while bilingual education benefits English learners, it is also a unique and enriching opportunity for English-speaking students. For this reason, bilingual programs have become attractive to many English-speaking parents who have learned of its benefits.

It is with these things in mind that my dear colleague and student, Norma Valenzuela, and I have committed ourselves to writing this chapter, with strong courage. We want our voices to be heard and to be coupled with great

hope so that the readers will agree that it is time for changing the established ideas about language in the United States.

Are We Truly Racing to the Top?

The advancement of other countries in the area of bilingualism and multilingualism far surpasses what is being done in the United States, so that in this regard we are a nation left behind. Our national focus is off. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policies put schools and their students in the position of admitting failure because of low achievement on standardized tests and because they are conducted solely in English and designed for native English speakers. As a result, we have no real way of measuring the language growth students have experienced in English, nor do we have a clue about the richness that may exist in our schools in the way of languages. Sadly, there are no incentives to do so. We fear that our new policies, including Race to the Top (RTTT), are following the same pattern.

For example, if we value multilingualism, why isn't the academic performance of students who are assessed in their home languages valued? Why doesn't that knowledge count if the content is the same, just in another language? We accept academic credentials from other languages when businesses recruit employees who have studied abroad. We also value the credentials of diplomats and academics who have international educational backgrounds. So, why do we discount the performance of our nation's children who can demonstrate their knowledge in their home languages while they are still developing English? It doesn't make any sense now, and it didn't make sense to us as children trying to understand the world around us. Instead, the subjugation of our language and home experiences left us behind for some time until we were able to overcome the rejection through the help of a few caring teachers and our families. Sometimes we still feel like we are playing catch up.

Our Position

In this chapter, we present our position on the need for more, not less, bilingual education based not only on our personal experiences and on the evidence that is available in the literature verifying the value of bilingualism and biliteracy. Even with our bumpy experiences as young bilingual children, we are still better for it than if we had been raised without the benefit of two

languages. But we also know it is time to do a better job with our youth in the United States as it refers to language development.

In Part I, we argue that bilingual education should be viewed as an educational opportunity for every child in America and as enrichment, rather than a deficit program. In Part II, we show that well-designed and implemented dual-language or bilingual programs lead to higher achievement and better academic outcomes for students, their schools, and ultimately our society.

Part I

Obama's administration was touted to be all about change. So the question remains, is there an opportunity to change American public opinion about bilingualism and bilingual education as an educational enrichment opportunity for all its children? Or will we continue to be relegated to another era of English linguistic and cultural hegemony (Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari 2003)?

As Americans, we should not limit the possibility of our children becoming all that they can be, enriched by the benefits of our multiple languages and the tapestry and essences of our multicultural heritage. Enriched bilingual educational programs are important because they move us beyond rigid standardization and a basic education in the three Rs (reading, writing, and 'rithmetic) by (a) focusing on developing more than one language as a means to educate students through dual-language immersion and developmental bilingual education, and (b) building students' language and literacy skills, as well as their cognitive abilities in both languages. Rather than relegating education to rote memorization, lower cognitive functions, and limited scripted curricula that stifle creativity, this form of enriched education better prepares students for the world they will engage in as global citizens (i.e., a world interconnected by technological advances and encumbered by the responsibilities and challenges of the future). According to Cloud, Genesee, and Hamayan (2000):

English is undoubtedly the common currency of most communication in political, economic, social, and academic spheres in North America and English speaking countries. However, many of the local communities in which students in these regions live are populated by people from different language and cultural backgrounds. Proficiency in additional languages can enrich and benefit members of these communities. Moreover, with the increased use of advanced technology for

worldwide communication, impediments to communication among people who speak different languages are diminishing every day. Proficiency in additional languages permits individuals to take full advantage of advances in communication and information technology to communicate with others around the world....There are educational, cognitive, socio-cultural, and economic benefits to individuals as well as society at large that result from intensive study of second and even third languages in enriched educational programs. (p. 2)

Gloria Ladson Billings (2007) says that although we are fixated on closing the academic achievement gap, we rarely talk about the growing national debt that we have created by allowing our health gap, our economic gap, or the other inequities of our society. All of these variables impact children in America, but our eyes are always focused on the achievement gap between English learners and English fluent; we blame native languages as the culprit. Yet there is good research evidence, including brain research, to indicate that developing more than one language early in life benefits the brain cognitively, especially in its flexibility and adaptability to new situations (Latham, 1998). So although we need to address more than just education to supposedly "fix" our lower-achieving schools and poorer communities, we can begin to turn things around by recognizing and reinforcing the cultural and linguistic assets inherent in them. Consequently, it behooves Americans to view bilingualism as an asset rather than a deficit (i.e., making bilingual education a viable educational approach that could enrich the educational experience of all students, not solely those who are in the process of learning English).

Thus, with the diverse linguistic populations currently in the United States who bring their rich and diverse cultural and linguistic capital (Apple, 1979; Yosso, 2005), funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), and sociocultural resources (Rueda, Monzó, & Higareda, 2004), we should be building on this national treasure rather than displacing it in favor of English monolingualism and monoculturalism. These truly *American* resources, coupled with our nation's need to engage in the international community (Lindholm, 2005), give us the perfect scenario for developing a more purposeful educational goal of bilingualism and multilingual education that is affordable and available to its entire student population. The time has come to realize our potential with regard to languages and cultures and to be rid of provincial ideologies. It is time to hold up a mirror to see who we really are. Our nation, whose fabric is made of many peoples, is rich and powerful when compared with other countries. But a large country like ours

cannot pretend to become more democratic and socially just while perpetuating only one language and culture.

Instead, imagine a country where each citizen had the right and obligation to learn English and also the right to learn at least one other language (such as their home or heritage language, much like language communities have the right to do in Spain).

The proactive and positive approach Spain has taken to enrich its linguistic reality through bilingualism has proven to be a key element in the resurgence of these languages. In contrast, bilingualism in the United States is not considered high prestige, school districts often only begrudgingly offer bilingual education programs and then only to correct what is considered a deficiency, and there is constant questioning of validity of promoting bi- or multilingualism instead of focusing on how best to produce well-prepared young people who can speak two or more languages fluently and in an educated manner. The Spanish experience offers a positive approach to creating respect and appreciation for the many languages that coexist within a country's borders and can shed some light on the role of the government and societal institutions in creating an atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance. (Miguélez, 2001, p. 348)

As a large country of 50 states with communities representing every corner of the earth, it is a shame that most of us are not better prepared to interact in the global community without the use of interpreters, and we are perceived internationally as limited monolinguals. Knowing more than one language has always been the sign of a well-educated person, but somewhere along the way we developed this notion that it was more *American* to speak only English and that the world would just have to deal with that (Baker, 2006). With a multitude of languages and cultures at our fingertips, we could have an advantage in demonstrating to the world that it is indeed possible for us to be *E pluribus unum* (i.e., to be a nation of many diverse people, a nation of communities who live and work in peace and still have a sense of what it is to be American). Because of the way diverse linguistic communities settle in the United States, there are concentrations of certain languages in different regions and states that afford us access to a good number of diverse languages. This is a natural resource for developing bilingual/multicultural educational communities that could enrich us all.

Ultimately, history has demonstrated that the effort to nationalize using only one language has never really worked because of the linguistic diversity of most countries. This idea works even less today when immigration

patterns have scattered people throughout the world so that pockets of speakers of a given language may be found just as well in one country as in another. There appears to be a diaspora of peoples from every corner, so that the trend is for multilingualism even in countries that were traditionally homogeneous, such as Korea. “Traditionally homogeneous, Korea is now rapidly plunging into multiculturalism. Korea’s 1.1 million resident foreigners total 2 percent of the population, but everyone agrees that Korea is bound to get more immigrants.”¹ Thus, to think that every citizen in any one nation is monolingual, monocultural, and speaking only the national language, makes no historic sense. Even at the time of the Roman Empire, the ruthless Romans understood that multiple languages were an asset as they set off to conquer the world.

This does not mean that immigrant Americans have resisted learning the English language. The 2000 census provides us with some figures to get a more realistic picture with regard to language in the United States. While 82 percent spoke English as their native language, up to 96 percent of the U.S. population spoke English “well” or “very well” (U.S. Census, 2000). This included speakers of other languages residing in the United States who completed the census. However, in the United States alone, we have speakers of more than 38 major languages (U.S. Census, 2000). If we take a closer look at the 10 major languages spoken other than English and Spanish, these include Arabic, Polish, Russian, Korean, Italian, Vietnamese, Tagalog, German, French, and Chinese. But there are many more languages. According to statistics found in *Ethnologue*, “The number of individual languages listed for United States is 245. Of those, 176 are living languages, four are second languages without mother-tongue speakers, and 65 have no known speakers” (Lewis, 2009). The question then becomes, when in our history have we been monolingual?

A Multilingual Heritage

From pre-colonial times, Native Americans spoke multiple languages and became bilingual when they needed to communicate with other nations. There were probably more than 1,000 languages spoken in the Americas at the time of the encounter with Europeans, with 250 spoken in the territory now known as the United States.² Even during the founding of our country, there were speakers of other languages emanating from different parts of Europe, so English was not the only language heard. For example, German

was spoken by a number of people from the first settlements, as was Dutch. By the start of the twentieth century, a number of other languages, such as Norwegian, Spanish, French, Chinese, and Japanese, joined the choir of languages in the United States. Of course, language policies changed and varied in different regions and periods of history. During several periods, bilingual schools were prominent to serve the children of diverse communities. But during World War I, for example, German bilingual schools were closed due to fears about spying by German Americans. This was also true during World War II, when not only Germans were made suspect, but Japanese-American citizens were subjected to internment camps and their languages suppressed. In Puerto Rico, language policy fluctuated from the period right after the Spanish-American War in 1898 until today. At first, Spanish was removed from the curriculum. Today, however, both Spanish and English are used in schools and are the official languages. Native American languages have not been so lucky because many have been lost or are at risk. Nieto (2009) points out that, “By the 1880s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs implemented a policy of forced Anglicization for Native Americans sending Indian children to boarding schools.” There was an effort to eradicate their culture, language, and family connections as well. However, a few Native American languages have remained, such as Navajo and Hopi. The Hawaiian language was also strongly suppressed and was later reclaimed by native Hawaiians. We should remember that, despite the enslavement policies against African slaves, they too spoke different languages depending on what region in Africa they were from, even though slave owners worked quickly to dismantle and mix those families and communities so they would have difficulty communicating in their languages. Is this the legacy we want to leave our future citizens: one that continues to limit human and civil rights as well as people’s intellectual and linguistic potential?

No one argues that speaking and being literate in English is of the utmost importance to Americans here and to the international community abroad. But why not invest in the linguistic capacities of our citizens? In actuality, 1.5 million³ Americans took a foreign language in school in 2006, but of those, how many feel they are truly bilingual? The approaches and methods we are currently using are limiting the possibilities for true bilingualism and multilingualism, especially because they are introduced so late in a student’s life. According to some experts in brain research, although one can learn another language at any age, children tend to acquire and retain new lan-

guages with more ease due to “windows of opportunity” in the brain (Chugani, 1996). Why stay behind other countries that not only tolerate but also promote the development of multiple languages (including English) in their citizens from early on and view this as a national treasure?

More on Our Linguistic Capital

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) used their theory of cultural and linguistic capital from the dominant society as a way to explain the failure of minority children in majority schools through the reproduction of the classes in power as manifested in the structures inherent in schooling and society. Other researchers (Rueda, Monzó, & Arzubíaga, 2003; Yosso, 2005) redefine how capital might be redefined if the richness that children of non-English-speaking U.S. homes bring to school from their life experiences were to be highly valued in society.

Linguistic capital reflects the idea that Students of Color arrive at school with multiple language and communication skills. In addition, these children most often have been engaged participants in a storytelling tradition, that may include listening to and recounting oral histories, parables, stories (*cuentos*) and proverbs (*dichos*). This repertoire of storytelling skills may include memorization, attention to detail, dramatic pauses, comedic timing, facial affect, vocal tone, volume, rhythm and rhyme. Linguistic capital also refers to the ability to communicate via visual art, music or poetry. Just as students may utilize different vocal registers to whisper, whistle or sing, they must often develop and draw on various language registers, or styles, to communicate with different audiences. (p. 78)

Currently, five major languages are concentrated in diverse regions of the country, but more than 38 major languages are spoken across the country, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. By far the largest non-English language spoken is Spanish, attributed to our proximity to Mexico and our neighbors in the Caribbean. Although they represent diverse Spanish-speaking countries, regionalisms, and accents, an overwhelming 29.1 million people speak Spanish. This is followed by 2 million speakers of Chinese (predominantly Mandarin but also Cantonese, Taiwanese, and other variations). There are also 1.6 million who speak French, including Creole and Canadian French; 1.4 million who speak German; and 1.2 million who speak Tagalog, one of the languages of the Philippines. Our linguistic natural resources dwindle as second- and third-generation immigrants lose facility in the language of their heritage in order to become more American. But one does not need to lose a

language to gain facility of another. On the contrary, one language facilitates the other while also bridging the cultural, social, and economic divide that plagues our diverse communities.

What little there is in the way of American language policy tends to encourage this language loss. Several scholars have noted the irony that, in schools, the United States first strips newcomers of their native language and then forces them to learn a foreign language in which they will never become fluent. A government expert once remarked to a congressional committee that this wasn't really a problem because the languages that immigrants lose are neither culturally significant nor vital to the national interest. Rather than protecting an English language that can take care of itself or worrying about an American Babel that is not to be, our policymakers might do better to address the massive loss of language that the inevitability of assimilation still guarantees. In the “global” 21st century, language is an endangered resource that we cannot afford to squander (Baron, 2003).

An Erroneous View of Language Development

Bilingual education has been the center of heated debates for the past three decades. As a consequence of the civil rights unrest of the late 1960s, states began to implement bilingual programs throughout the country, beginning in states such as Florida, New York, and Massachusetts. Nationally, we have aimed for transitional bilingual education programs since 1968, with the passing of the Bilingual Education Act, also known as Title VII. In addition, states like California established similar legislation (Mora, 2005); it sought to meet the needs of a burgeoning immigrant population through professional development, educational materials, and compliance programs.

But for too long, bilingual education has been viewed as either a deficit program for immigrant children who are supposedly “handicapped” by their limitations in English or as a poorly designed schooling endeavor that deters individuals from reaching their full potential and dooms them to academic failure. Although nothing could be further from the truth, politicians and proponents of the English-only movement targeted the elimination of bilingual education programs under the misguided assumption that using English-only instruction was the best way to help immigrants assimilate (Baron, 1990).

Unfortunately, due to the shortage of qualified bilingual educators, coupled with anti-immigrant sentiment and English-only aficionados, the bilingual education debate reached a boiling point with the passing of Proposition 227. Ron Unz was primarily responsible for the passage of

Proposition 227 in California in 1998, for the passage of Question 2 in Massachusetts in 2003, and for the passage of Proposition 203 in Arizona in 2000. All of these propositions severely limited bilingual programs in those states. His efforts in Colorado and other states failed thanks to the strong opposition of parents and community groups.

However, in the states where these laws did pass, the bilingual programs had been in place for years and had taken decades to build (Mora, 2000). Now in those states where there are limited options for bilingual education, researchers have been reevaluating the negative effects of both dismantling bilingual programs and installing less effective English-only programs. They are finding a good body of research to demonstrate the effectiveness of bilingual education in not only developing English fluency but also academic achievement, especially as evident from developmental and dual immersion models. So it has been more about politics than education. English learners who participate in dual immersion programs receive their academic subjects in their primary language, therefore they understand the content being taught and are slowly and systematically introduced to English subjects. Thus, having a well-organized and highly structured curriculum allows for the successful development of the primary and secondary languages. Unfortunately, this notion is confusing to some who profess being against bilingual education because it makes sense to them to be *learning everything in the language you aim to acquire* (i.e., learn English while learning in English as claimed in Proposition 227). Yet when these same skeptics relate it to something that is closer to home, it suddenly begins to make sense to have dual-language access. For example, for Americans to be schooled in American schools when they are abroad makes perfect sense to those Americans because they can be more successful in school abroad if they are given content classes in English while they are learning the target culture's language. Well, this is bilingual education for Americans! How effective would it be for us to be taught Chinese literature in Chinese before we learn any Chinese language or culture? It would be meaningless to us even with the best use of pictures and teaching strategies. As Krashen typically points out in his presentations, it is much more reasonable to take Chinese language classes and then have a separate literature class given to us in English until we have some command of Chinese to be able to handle literary concepts in that language. Of course, ironically, it also makes perfect sense to many Americans for the world community to be learning English as part of their

primary and secondary education and to have gained some fluency so that when we are in their countries they can be helpful to us. But how many Americans are willing to acquire other languages to be of assistance to our visitors from abroad? Although I have encountered many empathetic Americans, those who mistakenly associate patriotism with English feel that this is America and that "they" (those others who come to our shores) should learn English and quickly.

English-only proponents have erroneously claimed it would take only one year for the students to become fluent, and yet these children have remained in English immersion programs for at least the same amount of time as bilingual program students do on average before being reclassified as English proficient, with one major difference: The bilingual program students are proficient in two languages. This demonstrates that it was more about politics against immigrant populations than about forward thinking to benefit our country's intellectual and linguistic capacity. Children of immigrants learn English no matter what. It is their heritage languages and academic development that are at risk. Children of immigrants are English bound, as noted by Baron:

Not to worry: English is secure. The number of immigrants acquiring English closely tracks the rise in immigration, so despite the concerns of English-only advocates, there has been no net loss in English usage in the U.S. The real endangered languages in America continue to be the ones spoken before the English came, and the ones that immigrants bring with them. Families tell stories of grandmothers who never learned English and lived out their lives in Italian, Polish, Chinese or Spanish neighborhoods, where all their needs were met in their native language, but the fact is that even immigrants who try to hold on to the old ways will lose their language. Of the 47 million minority-language speakers over five years old now in the country, 43.6 million of them speak at least some English, and over half of them speak English fluently. With time, the rest will achieve fluency or something close to it. And their descendants will likely become monolingual English speakers. (Baron, 2003)

Why would we want to be monolingual English speakers when what we need as a nation are linguistic resources—a citizenry who is capable of traveling, working, living, and interacting with the world?

Types of Programs

Choosing a bilingual education should be the right of every American attending our schools, public or private. In a democratic society such as ours,

all students should have the civil right and privilege of learning not only two but multiple languages if they so choose. Bilingual education program models vary by state, district, and school, as do the credentials of staff who teach in the various programs. There are several key models of bilingual or dual-language education. The term *bilingual education* serves as an umbrella for a multitude of programs such as *dual language immersion* or *two way language immersion*, *heritage language immersion*, and *developmental* or *maintenance bilingual education*. *Transitional bilingual education* also falls under this umbrella, but only the late-exit model makes a positive difference in the achievement of English learners because, unlike the early exit model that Norma experienced in elementary school, in late-exit transitional programs the students are allowed to continue developing higher levels of cognition in their native tongue as they are increasing their participation in English academic instruction.

But the most promising alternative bilingual program to date is the dual immersion program, which offers bilingual education to English-only students as well as students who begin their schooling speaking a language other than English (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Some of these students are already bilingual to some degree, and others are monolinguals of the target language. This setting with both groups helps to provide role models of either language during the instructional period as well as during recreation.

Developmental bilingual education is also a preferred program and is known by several names, such as maintenance and heritage bilingual programs, which cater to English learners with the intent of acquiring English while developing and maintaining the heritage or first language. Variations of these programs exist throughout the country, depending on the local population, the bilingual teacher supply, and the local political stance on bilingual education.

While transitional bilingual programs were the most popular from the 1960s to the 1980s, their popularity began to falter in the 1990s, ultimately leading to the watershed years with states starting to retreat from bilingual programs in preference to English immersion. The problem was low performance in English for some students once they transitioned from their home language to all-English instruction. In an effort to quickly immerse students in all English, students who may have needed more support were prematurely transitioned and had difficulty closing the academic gap. Those who were successful were redesignated as English proficient and were no longer

counted as English learners on state English-language development tests. This left the results of only the lowest-performing students of English learners who had not been reclassified and, naturally, was made to appear as evidence of failure. The fact is that the quick transition from the home language to English with the discontinuance of literacy and language development in the native language was an ill-conceived model of language development and would not lead to proficient bilingualism. This is why programs known in the literature as “late-exit” programs tended to have better results in language and academic performance because their students were not transitioned as quickly out of their bilingual development.

English immersion, a predominantly English approach to language development, only uses minimal support of the children’s native languages but is supposed to be distinguished from mainstream English by the use of special English-language development techniques infused into the instruction. It is a program that continues to be used widely, especially in states that have limited bilingual education programs and in those schools settings where a critical mass of students from one target language is missing. So the language of instruction thus becomes English. In some cases, the native language is used for clarification or to support instruction, but never for direct instruction.

In California, prior to Proposition 227, more than 70 percent of the English learners were already in this type of classroom due to a number of factors, including the school’s population, the availability of qualified staff, and a waiver process that was available for parents who chose instruction in English. Students who tend to do better with this type of program are those who come from more academically advantaged homes, where parents/families and communities are able to provide de facto bilingual support (Krashen, 1996) and academic tutoring in the native language. Students with limited home support tend to do poorly in this type of program. Table 4.1 shows the various language development programs and their goals, target populations, and languages (Collier & Thomas, 1997, 1999).

Table 4.1: Types of Language Development Programs, Their Goals, Target Populations, and Languages

| Program | Goal | Target Population | Target Languages |
|--------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Dual immersion (DI) two way | Bilingualism, biliteracy, multiculturalism | English learners English-only speakers | Spanish, Chinese, Korean, others |

| | | | |
|---|--|------------------|-----------------|
| Developmental Bilingual maintenance or heritage | Bilingualism, biliteracy, multiculturalism | English learners | Spanish, others |
| Transitional bilingual education (TBE) | Primary language used to transition to English only (early or late exit) | English learners | Spanish, others |
| Structured English Immersion (SEI) | English only | English learners | English |

Note. Developmental bilingual and dual immersion models are the most promising according to Collier and Thomas (1997).

What We Propose

Because of their effectiveness, we propose that states use the developmental and dual immersion-type bilingual program models to develop the linguistic capacity of their students, instead of the transitional bilingual. Obama and Biden referred to the transitional model because of the limited understanding that exists among politicians about the various language development approaches and which ones hold greater promise for higher performance. We understand that the Transitional Bilingual Education Program model was used during the campaign to appeal to those educators throughout the country who work with English learners. However, research⁴ (Collier, 1997, 1999) demonstrates that the transitional model only serves as a means to move students into English without the cognitive benefits of proficient bilingualism. As mentioned, the underlying premise of the transitional model is to use the students' primary language as a bridge in order to assist in transitioning the child into an English-only program. Although this approach is generally more effective than the English-only programs, using this model does not advance students academically as well as developmental and dual immersion bilingual education models, which focus on fully developing bilingualism and biliteracy and tend to have more positive cognitive effects (Paralis, 2005). Moreover, for English learners, the developmental and dual immersion models repeatedly demonstrate the greatest opportunity for closing the academic achievement gap (Collier, 1997, 1999; Collier & Thomas, 2004; Thomas & Collier, 2002), with the added benefit of improving intercultural relations and building our nation's overall cultural and intellectual capital.

Why are Developmental Bilingual and Dual Immersion Education worth the Effort?

Developmental bilingual and dual immersion program models have been found to be the most promising with regard to dual language and cognitive development (Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2005). Traditional quick-exit transitional and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs use the student's native language to serve merely as a bridge or crutch into English and then drop the first language entirely. Dual language and developmental programs are committed to fully developing the linguistic and cognitive realms in two languages so that students benefit fully as proficient bilinguals.

"El que habla dos idiomas vale por dos." This is a saying that was popular in the 1980s and 1990s and meant that "he who speaks two languages is twice as valuable." In other words, it is a privilege and a benefit to speak two or more languages. In an ever-shrinking world, it is an asset for students to begin learning two languages starting in the primary grades. Students who learn two languages through a highly structured dual-language program have better opportunities for developing higher cognitive skills (Latham, 1998).

Individuals can become bilingual in several ways. From a young age, simultaneous bilinguals develop two sets of linguistic structures that are interdependent, yet can function independently, depending on the demands of the communiqué, which might be the case of parents who speak two different languages with their children from birth. Meanwhile, sequential bilinguals learn a second language after they have developed their first set of language structures in their first language. Then, they rely on it for translation into the second language. This can happen at a rapid mental rate when they become proficient in both languages. With trained teachers, students are able to transfer skills to a second language of focus once they have developed a strong base in the first language.

When proficient, both types of bilingual children, simultaneous and sequential, are able to code switch automatically and respond in the appropriate language. Students who are fortunate enough to participate in dual immersion and maintenance-type programs must remain in these highly structured settings for at least seven years in order to become fully bilingual in oral and written language (biliterate). According to Jim Cummins (1981, 2000a), it can take anywhere from five to seven years (or more) for a person to become fluent in a new language given multiple variables, such as age, interest, personality, learning style, and motivation. Research over the last two

decades has demonstrated that students who are competent bilinguals, with high levels of proficiency in at least two languages, develop several cognitive and linguistic advantages over students who are monolingual (Cummins, 1981; Lambert, Genesee, Holobow, & Chartrand, 1993), especially in the areas of meta-linguistic awareness (Latham, 1998); English reading, writing, and listening tests (Lambert et al., 1993); as well as higher levels of language and cognitive functioning (Cenoz & Genessee, 1998).

Part II

Ready for the Global Market...

Highly Competent and Prepared Students

In this day and age, alternative bilingual programs such as dual immersion and developmental bilingual have to fight to survive. More and more bilingual programs are disappearing due to stringent procedures and to little or no support from local districts, states, and national policies to sustain them. In response to President Obama's five pillars of education, if the purpose of schooling in the United States is to produce competent students who will be able to compete in the global market, then one could assume that attaining multiple languages would aid in communicating with other countries. Students who learn in an environment in which multiple languages are taught and multiple cultures are respected tend to perform better academically. Studies have shown that many students move on to colleges and universities and pursue careers in which knowing multiple languages is not only an asset but is the basis for their livelihood. If the United States truly wants to compete with the global market, then it needs to reassess its educational infrastructure.

In the global marketplace, plenty of jobs call for bilingual proficiency. The European Union is now one of the world's largest economic zones—it is made up of countries that speak different languages, and it does business multilingually. Similar economic zones are under development in Asia and in the Americas, and they will also do business multilingually. Thus, there are clear and powerful incentives for learning French, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, or other languages that are linked to economic hot spots around the world. Individuals who know English along with these other languages will clearly be at an advantage in the global marketplace. Communities with large numbers of qualified multilingual professionals will also be at an advantage in the 21st century because they will be prepared to do business worldwide no matter what the language being spoken. (Cloud et al., 2000, p. 4)

Redirect Our Focus

The measures and targets imposed by No Child Left Behind make it difficult for schools to show growth from one year to the next in all aspects of education. Added to this, the threat of becoming a Program Improvement (PI) school for failure to meet these targets has become a nightmare for many schools. However, pockets of schools are succeeding despite all the barriers and obstacles against them. Some of these schools are inner-city schools with high numbers of English learners.

Case: A Look at One State, One District, One School

As mentioned earlier, in 1998, Ron Unz led his aggressive campaign against bilingual education, beginning with the state of California. Those of us who experienced this period recall that some Unz supporters used questionable tactics to gain votes. For example, parents in districts with high numbers of English learners received several phone calls from supporters of Proposition 227. One parent was asked the following question: "Do you want your children to learn English?" He of course answered "yes." The caller told him to then vote *yes* on the ballot for Proposition 227 if he wanted his children to learn English. What the callers purposely failed to mention was that if this proposition passed, it would result in the demise of many bilingual programs that also taught English to the children, programs from which their children had benefited.

The California proposition passed 60:40 as the result of a predominantly English-speaking electorate. Because the policy was to be implemented almost immediately, it made it difficult for bilingual programs to survive; its aim was to destroy bilingual education, so districts were forced to abandon books, programs, and methods. It became virtually impossible for these programs to be replaced by a viable structured English immersion program because it offered little guidance. Bedlam ensued in many places. The policy was so ill conceived that in many districts there was no program design for Structured English Immersion (SEI) to be implemented, except for what teachers and schools could construct within a short period of time. Millions of dollars in instructional materials were thrown or given away, including children's books and textbooks in various languages. For districts that struggled with limited budgets, this was a painful command to follow. California is still feeling the effects of this devastating policy that served little to improve the plight of English learners.

Given its ideological base, the purpose behind Proposition 227 was to teach in English only. However, because it is against federal law to have a regulation that prohibits using the native language, the policy was modified so that some native languages had to be available to assist students. The policy ensured that the course of study must be *overwhelmingly*⁵ in English (California Secretary of State-Primary 98, 2010). The California Department of Education had to scramble to provide technical assistance to schools (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Students who qualified for the new program, which was known as *English for the Children* under Proposition 227, were all assigned to English immersion classes. Due to federal regulations, some students were allowed to participate in an alternative bilingual program but only through a waiver process. The bilingual programs we still have today are thanks to these federal policies. What follows is an example of what occurred in one California district.

The City of Santa Ana is one of the most densely populated cities in the state of California, with more than 60 percent of the district's students designated as English learners. Spanish is the predominant language other than English in this Southern California city. Most of the district's English learners are enrolled in a structured English immersion program at one of its 61 schools. Despite the legal restrictions of Proposition 227, some schools were able to establish bilingual programs because of the sheer number of English learners in their school, whose parents had requested parental exception waivers.

Many of the district's schools are designated as underperforming schools under the current No Child Left Behind criteria, which means that they have not met their test score targets. However, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School has recently exited PI status (California Department of Education, 2008). This school is located in one of the most impoverished sections of the city. It happens to be one of four schools in Santa Ana that offers the dual-language immersion program as a strand within the school. According to data from the California Department of Education, this school has steadily been making growth in the areas of language arts and mathematics as measured by the California standardized test.

Researchers, policymakers, and administration want to know exactly what is driving schools like these to have such positive results. Many factors contribute to academic success, one being school culture and high expectations. Schools such as this one provide evidence that it is possible to succeed

in the midst of so many constraints and obstacles. According to the California Department of Education, this school was identified as a California Distinguished School in 2010, and its dual-language program was highlighted as a signature practice that played a significant role in the school's success. What the tests don't show are the other cognitive, social, and economic benefits that this sort of program will provide for American children.

This case is consistent with what Thomas and Collier (2002) found. The number of English learners who were able to close the academic achievement gap was highest in developmental and dual-language programs when compared with other English-language development program models. The research comparing different program models for English-language development was conducted with more than 210,054 students and programs nationally over a period of 6 to 11 years. The data resulting from this study show that for states such as California, structured English immersion, following the policies of Proposition 227, was the least effective program in helping to close the achievement gap (Thomas & Collier, 2002):

Although only 30 percent of the LEP [limited English proficient] students in California were enrolled in bilingual education programs at the time (the other 70 percent were in all-English programs), bilingual education was identified as the cause of academic failure on the part of Hispanic students (many of whom were monolingual in English), and the public voted to prohibit bilingual education. Instead, LEP students were to be educated through sheltered English immersion during a temporary transition period not normally to exceed one year. Three years after the implementation of Proposition 227, the scores of LEP students on state tests were beginning to decline rather than increase. (<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/65j213pt>)

However, students in dual immersion programs tended to develop cognitive skills needed to perform at advanced academic levels. As Cummins' (2000a) work demonstrates, having a foundation in the primary target language (Spanish) is instrumental in transferring knowledge in the upper grades because of what he calls the Common Underlying Proficiency.

What We Stand to Gain or Lose as Americans and World Citizens

World-class citizenship and world-class schools are phrases that we often hear. In most developed countries, children in schools learn not two but sometimes three languages. English is one of the principal languages taught in schools throughout the world, as it has become lingua franca, displacing

French in most places. Although other countries are ready, willing, and proactive in the teaching of English, Americans tend to shun the acceptance of other languages. Our concern should be that, by the second or third generation, children of immigrants have virtually lost their use of their heritage language in becoming English fluent. As Baron (2003) points out:

From the outset, American history has been a history of immigration, both voluntary and involuntary. It has been a history of the clash of civilizations, of the merging and submerging of cultures and languages. So far, in the clash of languages in the United States, English has come out on top. It's the 800-pound gorilla that has turned America into "a veritable cemetery of foreign languages" (Portes & Hao, cited in Pew, 2004b, p. 3). Having made its mark at home, English now threatens to become master of the universe as well. (p. 88)

Are we willing to play fair in the global scenario and truly become global citizens open to learning other languages and valuing those we have within our own borders? As Americans, are we protected along with our children to acquire and speak as many languages as we choose? Language rights play a key role in a democracy.

The English-only movement can be best understood and challenged as being deeply antithetical to the values and relations of a democratic society. The attack on bilingual education can be best grasped in its complexity when it is engaged as part of the ongoing struggle against public education and broader efforts by various social movements to extend democracy into all spheres of society. In this contest, language rights would be defended as part of a struggle on behalf of literacy projects that would affirm the right of students and others to speak and learn from the context of their specific cultures and histories. (Giroux, 2001, p. xv)

If we don't value our multilingual heritage, we will continue to be viewed as hypocritical in our vows as a democracy, open and willing to respect not only our citizens but also our relationships with other countries.

The Role of the State

As the leading political entity in charge of the education of its constituents, states should also be at the forefront of establishing language policies for schooling their students. However, restricting policies, like Proposition 227, can only serve to limit the potential that we have as educators, parents, students, and citizens. In contrast, the 2002 Master Plan for Education called

for the state of California to require that every student graduate from school knowing at least one language in addition to English.

Recommendation 11.3—The State should ensure that all schools provide all students with a curriculum and coursework that include the knowledge, skills, and experiences to enable them to attain mastery of oral and written expression in English and that establish a foundation for future mastery of a second language, by the end of elementary school, and attainment of oral proficiency and full literacy in both English and at least one other language, by the end of secondary school. (California Master Plan for Education, 2002)

These noble goals would indeed provide the impetus for our schools to focus on the development of languages, if we had the support. However, given the intolerant mood of our country toward immigrants, the tone of nativism, and the budgetary constraints, it seems advisory bodies like the committee that was established to develop a new master plan for California, have taken a back seat when it comes to language policy and education. But why not move beyond the milieu that we are in, with its limitations to creativity and what it means to be literate and intelligent? Why not create a new notion of what a basic education should be—one enriched with dual-language arts instruction, infused with the creative arts and culture, and centered on the important principles established by the sciences, mathematics, and history as well as human development?

The Role of the Schools

A school culture in which multiple languages are valued and protected is imperative if bilingual programs are to succeed. Other advantages of bilingual programs include sociocultural competencies. "The sociocultural advantages of knowing more than one language include a greater intercultural understanding and tolerance as well as an appreciation and respect for cultural differences" (Cloud et al., 2000). Students in a bilingual program develop a sense of bicultural pride as well as respect for other cultures. They learn to appreciate the beauty of all cultures and to embrace their traditions and customs. As noted earlier, studies show that students enrolled in quality bilingual programs early on have more "metalinguistic, psycholinguistic and cognitive capacities to learn language" (Carrera-Carrillo & Rickert-Smith, 2006, p. 5). In general, students in bilingual programs, such as dual-language immersion, tend to perform better in norm-referenced tests.

The Role of Parents

Parental commitment and participation are essential to ensure student success in dual-language programs. Parental involvement is an essential component in building strong bonds between the home and school. When a collaborative environment among teachers, students, and parents is developed, students' academic success is a natural result (Cummins & Sayers, 2000). Without parental involvement, a dangerous disconnect exists between the home and school. School personnel may make assumptions about a student's inability to follow through on projects, assignments, and activities, blaming either the student or the family for any failures. In contrast, schools that make the effort to communicate with and engage parents tend to have students who experience greater success. According to Delgado-Gaitan (1990), we should be empowering parents and students of diverse backgrounds rather than displacing them: "A crucial contribution of the empowerment theory is that language, culture and class position need not constrain individuals or a group from actively participating in their school's social environment when controlling institutions (family and school) cooperate with each other to maximize the individual's influence over his/her own life."

The Role of Teacher Education Programs

Teacher education programs have the important responsibility of preparing our nation's teacher force for an increasingly diverse student population. This holds especially true if we are to prepare bilingual teachers for bilingual programs in schools. Colleges of education play an important role in preparing highly sophisticated professionals who are ready to address a number of the high demands of today's classrooms. Even so, most new teachers could benefit from knowing more about the linguistic and cultural diversity of today's classrooms and from knowing more about the languages spoken in the vicinity where they plan to teach. Colleges of education typically prepare beginning teachers with the expectation that in-service programs will continue to nurture and hone their skills to meet the local districts' needs. Strategically, preparing multicultural/multilingual teachers would provide added resources to schools because they could better meet the needs of their students with less need for local translators and more highly trained professionals.

One issue that must be addressed is the low level of financial support and respect given to teachers in America. Bilingual educators could command

more attention because of their added assets to schools and communities. Few other professions expect their workers to give so much with so little in return (in terms of support). Few other professions get the kind of criticism generously thrust at colleges of education and the teachers they produce. However, teachers are among the highest educated and best prepared professionals, despite the fact that they also happen to fall in the ranks of the least paid with the highest demands and expectations from the national, state, and local levels. As an example, in California, most teachers have at least the equivalent of a master's degree after having completed all of the required coursework and meeting state credentialing requirements. Bilingual teachers typically complete more coursework to meet the added requirements for a bilingual credential. In addition, they are asked to pass multiple tests to prove their academic competencies. So a greater appreciation of teachers would benefit us all.

While the demands of the classrooms increase, so do the demands in teacher education programs. Bilingual/multicultural programs offer a better opportunity to prepare teachers who could teach in more locations and situations state and nationwide. Colleges of education with bilingual multicultural programs will not only prepare the beginning teacher to teach academic subject matter, but they will also be better prepared to address the multiple linguistic, cultural, and special education needs of students from diverse communities. The more prepared teachers are to work with diverse students, the better the education program. For language minority students, well-prepared bilingual educators satisfy the many diverse needs of schools to work with their students as well as with parents and community members. College programs that undertake the challenge of preparing bilingual/multicultural teachers offset the great demands placed on schools and serve ultimately to benefit the country as a whole. Moreover, because colleges of education keep up with the national and state reforms and policies that constantly change the course of schooling in the United States, they are better positioned to take the role of leadership in shaping the educational discourse and reforms. As a result, future policies may be based more on the needs of school children and families in local communities than on state and national politics. That is not to say that this in any way detracts from the desire to be world class. Bilingual multicultural teacher education is forward thinking and puts the United States in step with the most progressive ap-

proaches to an education that both meet the needs of its citizens while also setting a high standard for world-class education.

What It Takes at the National Level and the Obama Administration

If we believe that our government must set the standard on language policy in schools, then federal initiatives in education need to refocus our educational priorities to include languages as part of the effort to promote high-quality schools and teachers. Currently, the emphasis in measuring student performance and school and teacher quality is based on standardized tests, especially in English language arts and math. Little focus is given to skills and abilities in languages other than English. As a result, state departments of education, schools, and school districts primarily focus on reading and math instruction and assessment. Sadly, students who are currently in bilingual programs and who take standardized tests in those languages are left behind because their scores are not valued and are not used in the measurement of academic performance even if they score high enough to meet and exceed what is considered proficient. Instead, only English performance matters. Yet as indicated earlier, our national and state data show that we have a critical need to begin developing proficiency in languages other than English. It does not make sense to wait until secondary school and college to introduce another language, when the research suggests that children have a facility for acquiring multiple languages. It is time that the federal government as well as state governments and local school districts value the rich linguistic capital in our schools. So we say, “Yes We Can” proudly become a multilingual nation, where our students are proficient, conversant, and literate—not only in English, but in at least one other language.

Notes

Chapter Four

1. Broward, J. (2009). Korea at tipping point of multicultural society. *The Korea Times*. Available at http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2010/05/160_55370.html
2. The American Indian Studies Research Institute, Indiana University. Retrieved June 4, 2010, from <http://www.cogsci.indiana.edu/farg/rehling/nativeAm/ling.html>.
3. According to a 2006 survey by the Modern Language Association, more college students in the United States are studying languages than ever before. More than 1.5 million col-

lege students were enrolled in language courses in fall 2006. Retrieved June 4, 2010, from http://www.vistawide.com/languages/us_languages.htm.

4. The Thomas and Collier national research study summary may be found at Thomas, W. P., & Collier, V. P. (1997, December). School effectiveness for language minority students. National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) Resource Collection Series, No. 9. Available at <http://www.ncele.gwu.edu/pubs/resource/effectiveness/>.
5. The term in English meant little to the field because no one was sure how to interpret it. Thus, districts varied in the early implementation of the law because Unz had claimed to win the vote of the electorate “overwhelmingly” with 60 percent of the vote. Some districts eliminated all programs, whereas others taught in English for 60 percent of the day. There was no clear pattern of what to do.

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