

ASSESSING DUAL LANGUAGE POLICY: A CASE STUDY

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The Oklahoma City Public School System has a unique opportunity to evaluate Bilingual Education. A large enclave of Hispanics has settled in south central Oklahoma City and appears on the way towards establishing a bicultural community. Some degree of community dialogue spurred the creation of a bilingual education program that could potentially serve both Anglo and Hispanic students. Despite the initiation of a federally funded program, sustainable organized public support for Bilingual Education failed to materialize and public school administrators quietly moved towards other educational strategies.

Over the decades since 1950, Bilingual Education (BE) has enjoyed various degrees of institutional and public support. This case study reveals that BE can successfully educate both English speakers and non-English speakers when immersed in a carefully constructed BE program. Unfortunately, it is extremely unlikely that BE programs can overcome institutional inertia in favor of other approaches to teaching English, especially when there is a lack of organized public support for BE programs.¹

In the post-WWII movement to include ethnic and minority students in the mainstream educational process, Bilingual Education was conceived and promoted as a valid solution for students whose native language was not English. Public support for BE was never cohesive or steady and the general public never became enthralled with BE. Different ethnic groups only mildly agitated for and against BE. Currently, Bilingual Education has at best been perceived as a temporary solution until children could be mainstreamed — the quicker the better.

Over time, the American public divided itself over two main concerns: those who saw an ongoing need for adequate bilingual, biliterate and bicultural education and those who saw a greater need for adequate cultural and linguistic assimilation. The two camps increasingly battled over the question of BE effectiveness. What was the best way to proceed? One paradigm urges integration and the other paradigm urges assimilation (Cook 2001).

Given the sizable enclave of Hispanics in the Oklahoma City School District, a few community leaders and public school teachers envisioned an opportunity to enhance job skills and academic skills for both Hispanic and Anglo children. Hence, the 1997 birth of the “Empowering School Communities, Yes!” program. The program was a Title VII grant given to the Oklahoma City Public Schools for Shidler and Wheeler and belatedly, Rockwood elementary schools. The dual language program attempted to enrich the foreign language capabilities of native English speakers and improve the level of English proficiency of Limited English Proficient students (LEP). The program ran through the end of the 2003-2004 school year.

This case study analyzes the academic effectiveness of a small, locally organized, and federally funded bilingual education program. It concludes that whereas the OKC BE program did succeed in its stated academic goals, it could not overcome two basic road blocks: 1) Institutional inertia moving towards a different paradigm: a short term intensive English approach that favored assimilation, and 2) Achievement of its titular goal of empowering a fledgling bicultural community. Sustainable organized public support for BE never materialized. Hence, school administrators quietly allowed the program to expire.

A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW REVEALS SHIFTING LINGUISTIC PARADIGMS

John Jay (Rossiter 1961), in Federalist Paper Two, identified several key reasons why unity under the proposed Constitution was preferable over splitting into smaller confederacies. One such reason given was a common language. The proponents of the new Constitution may well have overstated the degree of linguistic unity in the colonies in order to win acceptance of the proposed Constitution. The realistic acknowledgement of a wide range of immigrants, hence a wide range of languages, in the thirteen colonies is without doubt. Jay had to be referring to the “emerging dominance” of English and not the many different languages already competing within the colonial population.

As the country expanded, it also added significant language groups: Native American tribes, the French of New Orleans, the Spanish of Florida and California, the Japanese of California and Hawaii, the Russians of the Northwest, and the Native Hawaiians. Additionally, waves of immigrants tended to congregate into language communities: Cubans, Haitians, Arabic speakers, Jews, Swedes, Chinese, Japanese, Polish, Dutch, French and most often the Germans. By 1900, 600,000 elementary students were taught in German. This represented approximately 4 percent of all elementary students. At the national level, policy makers promoted the notion that the students had to melt together, abandon their mother tongue in favor of learning English and live as new Americans with their new freedoms and rights. However, in local settings, local leaders fought to keep their ethnicity alive through language instruction.

Language diversity played a key role in both WWI and WWII. The fear of German-American disloyalty in WWI allowed for the reduction of foreign language instruction nationwide, until after WWII. The fear of Japanese-American loyalty produced well-known hostilities. However, Navajo code talkers saved the military considerable lives in WWII. The US owes a large part of its military success against the Japanese to its rich and diverse linguistic heritage. By the same token, in a post 9/11 environment, the US government cannot easily find enough Arabic speakers to supply its own intelligence community.

After WWII, the Civil Rights Movement generated support for ethnic rights and by extension linguistic rights. The political shift occurred

and the policy shift soon followed. By 1968, Congress passed the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act). Monetary support soon followed in order to promote the new regime's linguistic goals. Presidents and the Supreme Court followed suit. In *Lau v Nichols* (1974), the Supreme Court ruled that limited English proficient students had a civil right to receive adequate instruction. The policy elites in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) promulgated the Lau Remedies, a series of guidelines designed to guide school districts into compliance with their conceptual framework or paradigm. Also in 1974, the Equal Education Opportunities Act created additional legal requirements for immigrant students. Schools were prohibited from barring an immigrant child from attending public schools (Lessow-Hurley 2005).

The liberal policy monopoly in control of education and language policies favored an internationalist, multi-lingual approach to education from the 1960's through the end of the 1990's. However, political sands began to slowly shift in the 1980s and culminated in a conservative regime shift in Congress as of 1995 and also in the White House as of 2001. The new policy monopoly responded to several stressors.

The large wave of immigrants from Cuba, Haiti and especially Mexico created a wave of cultural anxiety and frustration. The Arabic immigrants were seen as a possible support mechanism for terrorists. The terrorist attacks of September 11th created hostility towards immigrants that held militant intentions against their adopted or host country. Citizens wanted immigrants to once again fit in and not maintain cultural roots that might otherwise indicate hidden reservations about the goodness of America.

More recently, many political leaders have played on the images of secret tunnels and numerous border violations with Mexico to raise fears of subtle and dangerous invasions. Border security now feeds the new policy regime that in order to save America from potential terrorists everyone should learn English as soon as possible, even at the expense of the native language.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislated many of these new policy concerns into law (2002). Federal funding for Bilingual Education all but disappeared. In 2004, Secretary Paige asserted that more than 13 billion dollars was allocated for Bilingual Education but almost all of it for English Language Development strategies and not dual language

strategies (USDE web site). Stringent regulations and high testing goals make any new BE program unlikely and may well force most established BE programs to shrink or disappear. The ELD policy regime can now guide and direct public schools to abandon BE programs. Local communities and a few select states that wish to maintain BE programs will have to do so without federal support.

UNDERSTANDING PARADIGM SHIFTS AND THE STRENGTH OF INSTITUTIONAL INERTIA

Bilingual Education policy illustrates how a dominant regime that supports bilingual education can shift, especially when a large portion of the public awakens to a perceived need to assimilate newly arrived immigrants who are not yet prepared to form coalitions, participate in political battles, and preserve their linguistic heritage.

Over the last two hundred years, the United States has seen at least three different policy shifts: one towards national unity based in part on everyone using the same language. A second shift began after WWII aiming to be more tolerant of linguistic diversity and to preserve and nurture native languages. A third shift has just recently concluded and its political advocates now have the right to implement those policy changes by virtue of their electoral victories.

Carter A. Wilson argues in *Public Policy: Continuity and Change* (2006) that policy regimes work hard to create a closed policy system in order to maintain policy stability. Historical evidence supports three such shifts in linguistic policy. Building on the previous work of Baumgartner and Jones (1993) who identified policy monopolies (policy stability) and explained shifting attention (policy changes), Wilson asserts three critical components of policy stability and change (Wilson 45):

- Power Arrangements: The decision making patterns that a group of influential decision makers establish in order to maintain control over a policy.
- Organizational Arrangements: The array of organizations that deal with government entities while implementing the policy.
- Policy Paradigm: The dominant policy paradigm is the conceptual framework that justifies the policy.

The three educational policy paradigms fit within the conceptual framework that the policy monopoly developed, thrived, and withered as the public waxed and waned in its support for bolstering English development or for the preservation of other languages. The power holders either encouraged or limited what kind of language policies could be implemented and how. The members of the policy monopoly shape the general public's perception of what should be done. However, the policy makers cannot long ignore public support or lack thereof for new policies. Once the policy is implemented, it strives to preserve the status quo thus creating policy stability. Yet, it must hope for continued public support and the formation of interest groups to focus attention and resources on that policy.

A dramatic or substantial change in policy indicates that the regime has changed. Enough stressors accumulated to warrant a sudden shift in policy direction and more than likely in those who control the policy as well. Stressors include among others: demographic changes, catastrophic events, and international events. Such was the case right after WWII, when the country was sensitive to the need of minorities and immigrants. The nation also saw certain diplomatic and cultural advantages to nurturing diverse language skills. This pro-linguistic diversity paradigm slowly emerged after the dramatic experiences of WWII and the general mood supporting international involvement.

A more dramatic policy shift occurred in 2001. An emerging conservative coalition won control of all three branches of the federal government. The members of the conservative coalition generally wanted immigrants to learn more English faster. President Bush complied with those desires in the form of No Child Left Behind (2002). With a unified power arrangement and ample organized public support, a decided shift occurred that largely ended funding for BE unless the programs adopted a transitional program towards English teaching. Educators complied, rather than funding BE programs solely from state monies.

A quick review of available information on the Oklahoma Department of Education web site reveals that at least most if not all BE programs in Oklahoma now use the same type of word choices found in the NCLB guidelines on federal government websites. Hence, school systems wishing to receive grants must prove that their proposals will rapidly assist Limited English Proficient (LEP) students to make

measurable progress towards English development. Little to no mention is made of preserving native languages.

Just as Baumgartner and Jones (1993) argued for “punctuated equilibrium,” we argue for punctuated equilibrium in language policy. There is a long period of policy stability until a sudden shift occurs, pushed along by underlying cultural events and needs. Public support for English development was expressed in the 2001 legislative session and has rapidly gained support as immigration reforms loom large in the 2006 elections.

THE HYPOTHESIS

Our hypothesis is two-fold: Does Bilingual Education (BE) work? And if it does work, why was an academically successful BE program allowed to expire?

THE RESEARCH STRATEGY

The first hypothesis is measured by observing the linguistic success or failure of students enrolled at Wheeler elementary school over a six year period from 1998 to 2004. A number of students were tracked and tested but as the students moved in and out of the BE program, the number of students participating in the entire six year program continued to shrink. The second hypothesis is explored by questioning a number of teachers and administrators involved in the program. The interviews were off the record. No one wanted to respond to the questions within a public format. Many involved refused to participate. The questionnaire can be found in **Appendix C**.

A concern for career security and advancement was obviously a valid concern for all involved in the Dual Language program. No one claimed open hostility but quietly reserved the right to be anonymous. Therefore, the answers to the survey were revised into the plural voice whenever possible and names were removed in order to make some of their comments obscure enough to be used. Additionally, face-to-face interviews were conducted with proponents of English-Only in Washington, D.C. and with James Crawford, an accomplished opponent of English-Only.

THE SUCCESS STORY OF ONE INNER-CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN OKLAHOMA CITY

In an attempt by the Curriculum and Instruction Department of the Oklahoma City Public Schools to comply with Oklahoma law (H.B. 1017), which requires the teaching of foreign languages and cultures in elementary schools, while at the same time meeting the linguistic needs of limited English proficient (LEP) students, the idea emerged to implement a dual language program. In August 1997, a Title VII Bilingual Education Grant was awarded to the OKC district for the purpose of providing an enrichment program in Spanish foreign language instruction for native English speakers, and a sound English development and academic curriculum for Hispanic LEP students. The *Empowering School Communities, Yes!* Title VII project (a Dual Language Program) served two elementary schools, Shidler and Wheeler in the beginning, with Rockwood being added later. This paper focuses on the program at Wheeler (**Appendix A**).

Dual language programs are BE immersion models designed to address the needs of LEP students and native English speakers while developing bilingualism and biliteracy in English and another language. There are two common program models: the 50/50 model in which English and the other language are used 50 percent of the time during the entire program, and the 90/10 model, in which English is used for a minimum of ten percent of the time beginning in kindergarten with the percentage increasing annually until both English and the other language are used equally. Perhaps the most important study addressing dual language programs was reported by Thomas and Collier (1997). Their research examined bilingual education programs across the United States and identified factors that most strongly linked academic success to an instructional model, such as academic instruction in the students' first language through at least grade five and intentional separate use of the languages in different domains. Likewise, Cloud, Genesee, and Hamayan (2000) discussed several features that are essential in the effectiveness of these bilingual programs. The two that are most relevant to this study are an additive bilingual setting and parental involvement. In the case of additive bilingualism, a second language is added for both limited English proficient and English-speaking students. In addition, parents agree to participate in regular group meetings and to cooperate with the school

ensuring that the students attend school on a regular basis. They also commit to at least five years in the program.

In more recent research conducted by Lindholm-Leary (2000, 2003), there continues to be favorable evidence supporting these types of models. One set of cross-sectional and longitudinal studies by Lindholm-Leary represents 7,120 students in 20 schools, mostly in California (2000). While comparing scores of LEP students in Dual Language Programs with those of English monolinguals in English Only classrooms, she concluded that by fourth grade not only are most Spanish speakers (86 percent) proficient in English regardless of the program model (90/10 or 50/50), but by sixth grade, LEP students scored average and well above state norms in standardized testing.

The instructional design chosen for Wheeler was the 90/10 model in order to promote the minority language as much as possible on the assumption that this is the language needing the most support (Cloud et al 2000). The goals of the dual language program implemented at Wheeler Elementary School in the fall 1998 were for students to attain high levels of proficiency in their first and second languages, to perform academically above grade level in both languages, and to develop high levels of self-esteem and positive cross-cultural attitudes. The teachers and instructional assistants fostered high academic achievement by teaching the content areas using both English and Spanish; thus literacy skills were acquired in both languages. The structure of the class was such that English and Spanish dominant students were placed together so that students learned from each other as well as from their teachers. Sheltered instruction and cooperative/collaborative activities, in conjunction with hands-on learning techniques, were used to increase understanding of school subjects. The student population consisted of approximately 50 percent Hispanics with a 35 percent mobility rate and a 100 percent rate of participation in free or reduced price lunch program (Coy & Litherland 2000).

CURRICULUM COMPONENTS

The curriculum was to parallel, as much as possible, the academic core curriculum in the mainstream program. Content was taught through thematic units based on the E. D. Hirsch's *Core Knowledge* curriculum,

and was introduced through literature. The curriculum was also aligned to the state's *Priority Academic Student Skills* (P.A.S.S.) Guidelines, the district's *Standards 2000* Curriculum, and the national standards of all the core subjects. The use of technology was another important component of the curriculum. Each classroom was equipped with three student computer stations where students worked on a variety of software. Internet access and viewing by the whole class were also available. For samples of lessons observed in first grade Language Arts for Spanish, second grade Math for Spanish, third and fourth grade Reading for Spanish, and fifth grade Math in English, please refer to **Appendix B**.

STUDENT LANGUAGE AND ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

Upon entering the dual language program at Wheeler, the two native English-speakers had no knowledge of the Spanish language, and the native Spanish-speakers (initially eighteen) had little knowledge of the English language. It was critical to test all students in the beginning to establish baseline data from which gains in both languages could be measured. Both groups of students were administered several tests throughout the school year for the purpose of collecting multiple ongoing assessments. In the Fall and Spring, these students took one battery of language proficiency tests, the *Language Assessment Scales* (LAS) in English and Spanish, and another one of academic achievement, the *Supera*, which is the Spanish equivalent of the Terra Nova norm-referenced test. In addition, both dual and English language development teachers were expected to make use of journals, portfolios, district assessments, observations, and other instruments to measure progress.

The present research specifically addresses language proficiency as assessed by the LAS, which is designed to generate measures of oral and reading/writing ability for students in grades K-12. The results hereby presented belong only to the one group of native Spanish-speakers being tested by the LAS in English since it is the proficiency in English (or lack thereof) that is at stake in the district's accountability. A student must score a minimum of level 3 in the *LAS-Oral* before s/he can be tested for reading/writing. In both modalities (oral and written), a level 1 generally means non-English speaking or reading ability; a level 2 or 3

for Oral means limited English speaking whereas a level 2 for R/W would be limited literacy; and a level 4 or 5 for Oral indicates fluent English speaking while a level 3 for R/W demonstrates competent literacy.

STUDENT LANGUAGE PROGRESS

Henceforth, the data collected at Wheeler shows the language progress in English of the LEP native Spanish-speakers (by fifth grade, reduced to ten due to the high mobility rate) when tested with the *English LAS-Oral* and the *LAS-R/W*.

ENG. LAS-ORAL/RW

Student	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
A	2	2	2	5/3	5/3	4/3
B	1	1	1	3/2	3/2	3/2
C	1	1	1	3/1	4/1	5/2
D	4	4	4	4/3	5/3	5/3
E	1	1	1	3/2	3/2	3/3
F	-	1	1	5/3	4/3	5/3
G	-	1	1	4/2	4/2	4/3
H	2	2	3/2	5/2	5/2	5/3
I	2	3	3/1	4/2	5/2	5/3
J	1	1	1	4/1	4/2	4/2
1999 – Kindergarten		2000 – 1 st Grade		2001 – 2 nd Grade		
2002 – 3 rd Grade		2003 – 4 th Grade		2004 – 5 th Grade		

ASSESSING THE ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF LEP STUDENTS

After six years of Dual Language instruction, the results seem to indicate that this group of LEP students consistently made progress in their second language, English. Once they had tested at level 3 orally,

they were eligible for reading/writing assessment. It is worth noticing that two students in the group were already testing for reading/writing proficiency in 2nd grade, after having received only 20 percent of English Development instruction. Most of them had reached the highest possible level in reading/writing by the end of 5th grade. During 5th grade, the use of English and Spanish for instruction was 50/50. Even though this sample was small, it still corroborates the findings of many other studies involving larger ones; that is, when a BE immersion program is properly implemented and carefully monitored, the goals of bilingualism and biliteracy are met. However, without administrative support even the most successful program cannot survive, as became the case at Wheeler.

INSTITUTIONAL INERTIA AND PUBLIC APATHY DOOM A POLICY SUCCESS STORY

Based on a series of phone calls and emails to participating teachers, program administrators, district and state officials, we offer the following anonymous statements; some of which are quotes and others are paraphrases in order to disguise the authors. Of those who consented to answer questions, all but one did so with various degrees of reluctance.

It is our observation that the educators who initiated the two-way Immersion program in Shidler, Wheeler and later Rockwood did so based on the older paradigm of BE immersion strategies. In 1995-96, those strategies were acceptable to policy makers and well funded. When asked "Why was the program initiated?" responses included:

A combination of interested teachers and administrative initiative responded to the rapidly growing Hispanic population in the school district and after hearing about a number of successful dual language programs in other school districts.

In other words, those involved saw a local need, observed other similar programs, and applied for a federal funding. The existing paradigm responded to perceived public need and local leadership under the framework of integration of dual languages.

The Hispanic population in OKC had grown from 6 percent to 14 percent in five years. A number of local employers had expressed the need for more employees who were bilingual, particularly in Spanish and English. We had very few teachers in our schools that were bilingual. We wanted to implement a program that was an added value for everyone, that promoted a feeling of unity instead of a feeling of one group needing to be “fixed.”

A key component of the program’s approval was local leadership. When asked “Was the program supported and by whom?” answers included:

The program was initially supported by the principals and the staffs of the two schools. We met with five principals and told them about the opportunity to apply for the grant. We asked them to converse with their faculties and let us know if they were interested. The two principals of Shidler and Wheeler reported that there was 100 percent support for the project among their faculty. The program was also supported by the elementary school directors and the Assistant Superintendent.

What reasons do you have for claiming that the program was a success or failure?

The test scores of the students in the dual language classes were at the same level as the students in the mainstream classes or better, but in two languages instead of only one. The research literature reported that dual language students would surpass their peers in the third-fifth years of the program.

Another reason that the program was a success is the response of parents of the children. Both Hispanic and English-speaking parents of children in the classes were very positive. We even had the children of one of the teachers in the Wheeler class.

Another reason that the program was a success is that we never had difficulty filling a dual language class with both Hispanic and English-speaking students. Our goal was a 60-40 ratio Hispanic to English-speaking and we were able to accomplish that every year.

Would you take the time to explain why the program ended?

The program became a political football between the Curriculum Department and the Hispanic Student Services Department. As long as someone was there to run interference and to minimize their negativity, the program survived.

A change in superintendents began to minimize our ability to do our jobs. The Superintendent was politically aligned with the English-Only group and the Hispanic Student Services used his natural animosity to the program for their own benefit to undermine the program. As a result, many supporters of the grant left. Essentially, all the administrative support for the program left the district at the same time.

The decision to end the BE immersion program occurred at the district level.

Should the program be revived?

Yes, the program should be revived. It was one of the most positive experiences for children with which we have ever been associated. It was a value-added program, providing rich language experiences for all children, not just remediation in English for some. It implemented language instruction at the time when the research tells us that children are most able to learn multiple languages. It can not be revived, though, without strong support from the administration and the school leadership.

In September 2000, 735 surveys were distributed to both Anglo and Latino parents. The survey was not a random scientific survey. More than 50 percent were returned (n=381). Of those who chose to respond, parents overwhelmingly favored the learning of a second language, and felt welcomed, involved, and respected. The surveys revealed that parents with children in the dual language program were 10 to 15 percentage points more likely to favor, support, and respect any aspect of their children's educational experiences.

The BE program had a positive impact on parental attitudes. For example, 47.3 percent of monolingual parents participated in helping their children with homework while 65.5 percent of dual language parents

did so. The report clearly cited that English proficiency improved as did cognitive skills.

The *Empowering School Communities, Yes!* program inspired several superintendents, parents outside the OKCPS district, and university faculty to take note of the program's successes and notoriety. Based in part on its interactions with the three OKCP schools, Hennessey Public Schools implemented a similar dual language program. The participants evaluated, however, clearly noted that there was sparse administrative support and predicted little hope for long-term success.

When asked, state level administrators tended to explain "how NCLB changed the BE strategies and approaches?" in the following manner:

School districts have the right to select the teaching approach of their own choosing, but all schools have to meet the same objective, which is passing NCLB English standards.

When asked if funding priorities changed as a result of NCLB legislation? State level administrators answered like this:

The NCLB funding is the best thing that has happened to our limited English proficient students in our state. It does not matter which strategy/program so long as it is based on scientific research. Districts across the state have hired more ESL teachers to teach these students. Under NCLB all student have to be assessed and show progress (in English). The State Department of Education and the school districts are accountable for the achievement of LEP students.

How many BE programs does Oklahoma have and do they favor any certain type of educational strategy?

There are 109 school districts that receive Title III funds through the NCLB legislation. Many of these schools would not have received Title III funds, without NCLB.

Do they favor English language development or two-way immersion? "All of the schools in Oklahoma favor English language development." In part the total disappearance of BE immersion programs

is explained by this statement, "In Oklahoma we do not have bilingual programs due to the lack of 'highly qualified bilingual teachers.'"

When asked if there is any kind of public demand for or support for preserving native languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, Native American, or others? The administrator replied, "No, the scope of the Title III grant is to help LEP/ELL student meet the English/academic achievement, not to preserve their native language. However, if the school would like to teach the students their native language, they can." Another school administrator made it clear that the school does offer BE opportunities. However, these opportunities are conducted after hours and only for the parents of the children enrolled in that school. It appears that few if any programs are designed to improve the academic efficiency of the native speakers.

We conclude, based on the responses we received, that while some degree of ordinary turf battles made it difficult to keep the program alive, the end of the program is more likely due to the intervening paradigm shift at the national level which was nearly unanimously adopted by the state of Oklahoma. The impact that NCLB has had on schools as they choose their teaching strategies is clear. Schools in Oklahoma unanimously choose strategies favored by the policy paradigm and its agents. Whether this teaching approach will succeed in improving English proficiency must be determined by future research. Yet, English Language Development (ELD) will not improve any student's L1 because it does not purport to try.

CONCLUSIONS

"Empowering School Communities, Yes! was able to improve English language skills for language minority students at Wheeler, while at the same time, Anglo children added an academic knowledge of Spanish. Parents of native English students reported to Oklahoma University evaluators that they were pleased with their children's newly acquired Spanish literacy. The Dual Language Advisory Board met more than 18 times to evaluate the program. Advisory members included administrators, consultants and parents.

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Measured by many kinds of responses: children and parents were happy with the program. They also expressed that the children are “teaching each other” and using their second language regularly. Measured by academic testing: The children scored well enough to regard the program as a success.

POLICY OUTCOMES

The initial supporters of the BE program moved on to other career choices, leaving the program in the hands of less committed administrators. The program had not generated either a wave of public support; or an organized support group that might protect and promote the program. The teachers in the program had committed an immense amount of time and energy to make it work, but one by one, they moved on.

PARADIGM OUTCOMES

The timing of the program was further plagued by its untimely life. The decision whether or not to continue the program was made just as the new focus on ELD was being pushed by federal policy makers. With little support under it, no leadership around it, and no policy support above it, the experiment expired.

Primarily, the program fell victim to a national shift away from the older dominant paradigm that favored Bilingual Immersion strategies. The new dominant policy paradigm favored English Language Development (ELD) strategies. The timing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation suffocated any new funding for BE programs and expanded the funding for ELD strategies. Any remaining institutional inertia for BE ended just as the OKCPS terminated the experiment with two-way BE immersion that hoped to help an emerging Hispanic community develop. Second, the program could not survive a change in leadership and administration, especially with an ELD agenda. Bureaucratic turf wars made support for the program dangerous for

one's professional career. Third, the program did not have a level of public support that could overcome bureaucratic opposition and neglect. The occasional parent, businessman, and citizen interested in the advantages of BE never organized nor agitated for the program. Fourth, the likelihood that any BE program can be revived is indeed small.

POST SCRIPT

The current political environment at the national level is that LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY students should be moved into mainstream programs as quickly as possible and receive remedial classes if they cannot make the rapid transition. In addition, there appears to be ever more hostile anti-immigrant attitudes developing nationwide. Growing concern about the border with Mexico will inevitably feed into less and less support for BE immersion programs. These attitudes seem acute in those states where large numbers of immigrants burden public services.

The public policy ramifications are at least three-fold. First, in a time of obvious USA globalization, the reversal in BE policies seems counterproductive for successful business, educational, and diplomatic activities within a global economy. Second, in the very states where multicultural needs are the highest, the public attitudes seem to be full-throttle-reverse back towards strong public support for English-Only policies. Third, in localities where high levels of immigration have occurred, parents need to vocalize their needs and organize for effective programs that will enable their children to be proficient in both their family's culture and the economic culture, dominated by English. Otherwise, they will face the grim combination of a linguistically dysfunctional family beset by poor economic performance.

Obviously, Oklahoma has an additional level of cultural diversity. Native American parents in Oklahoma do not have to clamor for educators to help them find ways for their children to learn English. These children are already immersed in an English-dominated culture and these children learn English naturally. Parents soon realize that their children opt to learn English and often at the expense of their native tongue. Children often maintain various degrees of linguistic skills based

on family conversations and playground experiences but fail to progress academically in their mother tongue.

The real problem arises when neither English-only nor Spanish-only instruction serves their needs. They need both languages to survive in their bilingual setting and yet the quality of instruction is insufficient in both languages. Children faced with this predicament soon drop out. The few, who persevere, do so in the face of great odds. Good dual language instruction leads to success in both worlds. Poor quality monolingual instruction leads to poor performance. Poorly instructed students are frustrated and are potential social problems.

It appears that there is a symbiotic relationship between the institutional policies chosen and sustained by the school system and the organic implementation of these policies by the parents, teachers, and community leaders. A combination of political leadership, creative funding, proper bilingual staffing, parental participation, and community support converge to create successful educational environs.

Immigrant children with various levels of English proficiency are a fact of life. They are imbedded in the school system, welcome or not. Their presence represents a specific educational challenge which is not going away anytime soon. The US has a porous border and also prides itself with a democratic public school system. Hence, it is incumbent for policy makers to select linguistic programs that work and fulfill our political and cultural goals, such as integration. Imposing institutional stiffness or accepting inferior policies is an "invitation to struggle for cultural survival."

Access to adequate bilingual classroom instruction, acquisition of multiple linguistic skills, and the pursuit of human dignity in any language are both desirable and inalienable. In the short term, administrators need to realize that they will endure criticism from both advocates and opponents of Bilingual Education. In the end, all children should be given the opportunity to learn English and/or to be bilingual. It works. Therefore, no child should be forced to leave their native tongue behind, merely because of lack of institutional and public support.

NOTES

¹A Bilingual Education program for either language majority and/or language minority children emphasizes instruction in two languages for the purpose of cultural integration. An ELD or English Language Development program, specifically designed for language minority children, emphasizes instruction in English for the purpose of cultural assimilation. For a robust treatment of the many subtleties and categories for BE language strategies, see Brisk, 1998.

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APPENDIX A

Empowering School Communities, Yes! Title VII Bilingual Education Grant Overview

Award No. T290U70357

Empowering School Communities, Yes! is a project designed to address more effectively the needs of LEP students and native English speakers by implementing a model dual language program in Shidler and Wheeler Elementary Schools, which can be replicated in other elementary schools in the district.

Length of Grant:	Five (5) years
Amount of Grant:	\$1.45 million
Grant Personnel:	Project Director Project Coordinator Project Secretary Project Consultants
Project Partner:	University of Central Oklahoma
Project Goals:	Participating students will (1) develop high levels of proficiency in their first language, (2) achieve high levels of proficiency in their second language, (3) perform academically at or above above grade level in both languages, and (4) develop high levels of self-esteem and positive cross-cultural attitudes.

- Project Curriculum:** Benchmarks to Progress, district curriculum, which contain the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS), state curriculum, and core subject National Standards.
Core Knowledge Curriculum, E.D. Hirsch
- Project Activities:** Ongoing professional development activities
College courses in ESL and Spanish certification
Adult education program
Parent/community involvement activities and training program
- Teaching Strategies:** Sheltered instruction, cooperative learning, technology as instructional tool, TPR, role-playing, language experience approach, and language taught through content, and other dual language teaching strategies.
- Technology:** A teaching computer with television monitors in every classroom, three student computers with Internet access, teleconferencing and distance learning capacities.
- Assessment:** Language Assessment Scales-Oral, Reading and Writing in English and Spanish (CTB McGraw-Hill)
TerraNova and Supera norm-referenced tests (CTB McGraw-Hill)
State CRT tests
Mobility rates
Parent surveys
Student interviews
Student sociogram
Classroom observation instrument

APPENDIX B

First Grade – Language Arts (Spanish)

February 2000

The first lesson observed in this class was entitled: **Isla (Island)**. The children sat on a carpet in rows and read in unison the lines to the story. They worked on vocabulary (approx. ten different words), and the teacher asked questions on the story. The purpose of the lesson was to emphasize the Vowel+Consonant syllable, as in the title “isla”, and in other words from the story, such as “*estaba, estuve, espero, escalera.*” At one point, one of the students (English native speaker) asked in Spanish about volcanoes, and the teacher responded to him, also in Spanish without ever using any English at all.

The second lesson was entitled **Bosque (Woods)**, and it was in the form of a dialogue. Here, the children read individually, and the teacher would take care of corrections by repeating after the students with proper intonation and pronunciation. The purpose of this lesson was still the V+C syllable pattern, as in the title “*Bosque,*” and in the line: “*¿Qué te gusta, Gustavo?*” (What do you like, Gustavo?). Afterwards, the teacher wrapped up the lesson with an oral review of the possible combinations (each of the five vowels+C) as were displayed in several posters around the room.

Second Grade – Math (Spanish)

March 2001

Each student had a worksheet with the drawing of a clown, and several phrases typed below. The clown had different numbers across

the body, and the students were supposed to find the parts of the body or items of clothing mentioned in the phrases and add their respective numbers. So, for example:

la corbata y el ojo derecho =

26 + 19 = 45

the tie and the right eye =

la nariz y el sombrero =

33 + 37 = 70

the nose and the hat =

los dos ojos =

19 + 16 = 35

the two eyes =

Third Grade - Spanish Reading

March 2001

Each student had a book in Spanish (*El Señor Viento*) and a notebook. One student had forgotten her book at home, and was reprimanded by the teacher in Spanish; i.e. “Ser más responsable” (To be more responsible). While the teacher was writing the reading goal for that day on the board, the students read quietly. The goal (written in Spanish) was to read the story to acquire fluency and to develop a sequence chart for comprehension. All commands were in Spanish. One student was asked to read aloud, while the others were to follow the reading silently. The teacher would have the student repeat words which were not pronounced clearly, or not loud enough. Then, she proceeded to ask questions on the theme of the story (*Mr. Wind*). The students all nicely raised hands to volunteer, and almost all volunteered. The teacher continued to ask different students to read out loud, while she walked around the room making sure that everyone was following along silently. Gradually, she moved on from factual questions on the story to inferential ones. The native English speakers in the classroom were more willing to volunteer answers on the factual ones than on the inferential ones. The teacher stopped the reading after a while and had the students provide an end to the story. They were to do it in writing;

and if not finished in class, it would be finished at home. Then, the teacher and the class together worked on the sequence chart. While she would write information on the board, the students would do it in their notebook. They filled in the first and the last squares; the students were to fill in the second and third ones as homework. The last portion of the class was devoted to vocabulary work. The teacher wrote several words on a big notepad, and asked students for definitions. One of the words to be defined was “arremolinado” (as in a whirlwind), and one student used the analogy of a tornado. The words not covered in class would have to be finished at home. The students were asked to use their dictionary (*Mundo Hispano*) or to ask their parents. The class lasted for 90 minutes, and there were no discipline problems at all. The teacher had them sit in groups of four, with their desks facing each other, and commented that the students knew the routine. Only from time to time, she would remind them of the advantages of staying on task, i.e. less homework to be finished at home and no breaks taken away. No bathroom or water breaks allowed. Impressive!

Fourth Grade – Spanish Reading
May 2003

The teacher distributed the story to each student. Each student played the role of a narrator and each one took turns reading it out loud. The story was about a princess, her prince and a dragon. It made use of many descriptive adjectives to describe their attributes, such as “atrevido, valiente, perspicaz, sagaz, arrogante, egoísta, elegante, etc”. The teacher reviewed these adjectives in conjunction with one of the forms of the verb “to be”; that is, “ser” (contrasted with the use of “estar”). Then, she personalized this vocabulary by asking the class if anyone reflected any of those characteristics. . . . “¿Quién es atrevido/valiente/perspicaz, etc.?” If a student gave a seemingly incorrect answer, she would give him/her the opportunity to change it or defend it. Afterwards, a student from each table, passed around paper, color pencils or markers and the students were to draw the princess, the prince, and the dragon. Below each drawing, they were to write an adjective.

Fifth Grade – Math (English)

May 2004

The class would play bingo today, but with a few adjustments (not by vertical and horizontal rows). The teacher used a wheel (or a pie visual) to review numbers and their factors, between 1 and 90. On a transparency, he drew the visual with eight numbers: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 (one per slice). The students then were to draw their own wheels and choose eight numbers that were factors of the ones chosen by the teacher, so that number 22 would not be possible, but 35, yes. The teacher then distributed the chips so that they could begin to play, but not without first reminding them of the rules. Then, he began to call out numbers: 10 times 8= 80, 5 times 9= 45, etc. until black-out or bingo was called. The students loved it!!!

APPENDIX C

March 2006

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for responding to the following questions about the Oklahoma City Public School Dual Language Program at Shidler and Wheeler, 1999 to 2004².

Why was the program initiated? (Check all that all that apply)

Parental demands

Teacher initiative

Administrative initiative

State level initiative

National initiative

Other reason _____

In brief, what need was there in OKC or the state for such a program?

Was the program supported and by whom? And Why?

Was the program opposed and by whom? And Why?

What reasons do you have for claiming that the program was a success or failure?

In your opinion, why was the program discontinued? _____

- Incompetence: Who was guilty?
- Financial reasons: Who cut off the funding? Was the budget decision well done? Was this a primarily budget decision at the OKCPS or state or federal level?
- It was a proper and well done public policy debate with ample inputs
- Political expediency: the decision had little no political support; in the competition between programs, this program had little to no parental support? Or administrative support?
- Ideological suffocation: the policy did not fit into decision maker's agenda. Which level and whose agenda?

Would you take the time to explain the decisions made above?

Should the program be revived? Why or why not?

Which level would more than likely attempt to resurrect the program?

Who else should I question regarding this program?

²These questions were sent by e-mail to those who agreed to receive them. Often though, the survey merely served as a structured guide to a telephone interview. The survey was not a random scientific sample. Of those who responded, there was a nearly universal reticence to criticize.