

The impact of bilingual literacy instruction on low achievement English Language Learners




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Problem



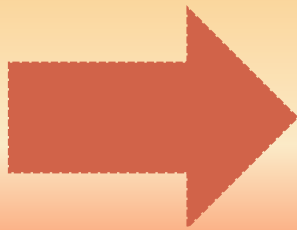
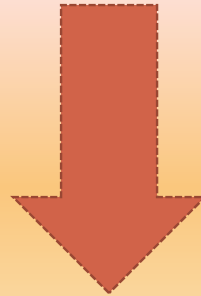
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- Three large, solid red arrows pointing to the right, stacked vertically on the left side of the slide.
- High percent of English language learners (ELLs) in the United States (9%) as well as in Florida (10%). (20006,U.S. Department of Education).
 - Students in third grade should be reading independently, as expected by the No child left behind act (NCLB). An example is FCAT(Florida).
 - Nevertheless that is not the case for most ELLS. They are not reading at grade level, and they carry on that difficulty later in school.

Research question

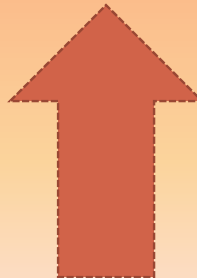
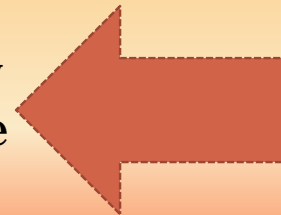


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- Three large, stylized red arrows pointing to the right, stacked vertically on the left side of the slide, each pointing towards one of the three list items.
- Importance of addressing a critical issue in education for this students : they can't read and progress like the rest of the population.
 - A possible solution: literacy instruction in two languages: Bilingual education.
 - Does bilingual education create a positive impact in low achievement reading levels in English language learners?

Hypothesis



The research hypothesis will be that students enrolled in bilingual literacy instruction have a better performance in reading than those who attend English only classes with proper modifications.



Literature review: bilingual education



- Students learn in two languages, L1 (their native language), Spanish in this case, and L2 (target language), English. Different models: Dual language is an example (also called two way immersion) where students learn 50 % in Spanish and 50 % in English.
- When bilingual students use their native language, they find solutions in their own way (Clarkson, 2006).
- Bilingual young people show greater cognitive flexibility, creativity , divergent thought and metacogniton awareness (Cummins, 2004).
- Using L1 and L2 and switching between them (code switching), let the students use key words in understanding better some concepts.

Literature review



- Bilingual students use their two languages in every day life, so as a natural extension, it is expected that they will use them in school as well.
- When facing difficulties in solving problems, it seems that switching languages help them get a more thorough understanding of the problems (Clarkson, 2004).
- Their L1 is the “natural” approach to life, and that is what they speak at home and in their communities, so it is good to use it.
- Metalinguistics abilities that are linked to metacognition (thinking about thinking), seem to be important ingredients in student’s performance.

Type of study



- Causal comparative design (Quantitative).
- Sample (convenient sampling): two groups of students enrolled in third grade in Palm Beach County. One group will be ELL students with instruction in English only and the other will be Dual Language , with bilingual instruction (different independent variable).
- Same dependent variable :Quantitative data will be collected through the Scholastic reading inventory (SRI).
- A t-test will be used to look for differences between means on SRI scores. Instrumentation: data will be collected on site (in the schools) by the researcher.

Limitations



- **Difficulty in reaching the students, because of conditions in accessing the students in the Palm Beach school district.**
- **Little empirical information available on research done locally : most of the research found was done in other states or other countries.**
- **Assessment done only in one language (English). Possibility of doing the assessment of the students in a “bilingual way”: a leading expert from the field (Cummins, 2004) suggest that the evaluation of the student’s progress should be done in their native language as well (in this case Spanish).**

References



- Clarkson, C. (2006). Australian Vietnamese students leaning mathematics High ability bilinguals and their use of their language (Electronic version) . *Educational Studies in Mathematics* (64) 191-215. Education Full Text database
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Thank you!



- Dr. M. Vasquez
- Dr. H. Zainuddin
- Dr. J. Friedenber