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Becoming Literate in English After Proposition 227:
An Examination of Three Children

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Effects of Proposition 227 on California Bilingual Education: Three Case Studies

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Abstract
The delivery of literacy instruction to English language learners (ELLs) in California changed drastically with the passage of Proposition 227 in 1998. This study examined three third grade students, whose first language is Spanish and who had been in a transitional bilingual program for three years. With the enactment of Proposition 227, students were enrolled in a Structured English Immersion (SEI) class. Subjects were selected by the classroom teacher and the researcher based on the students’ apparent readiness to succeed in an academic setting in their second language. The three subjects were an 8 year old girl who was probably not be ready to be transitioned to English, an 8 year old boy who was possibly ready, and a girl who became 9 during the study who was measured as literate in her first language and predicted to be academically successful in her second language. Literacy of students was assessed in five areas: oral language, writing, reading in English and Spanish, classroom participation, self-perceptions as bilingual readers and writers. Findings support previous research that not all ELLs become ready to succeed academically at the same rate. Assessment of students’ literacy development in multiple ways is critical to designing appropriate educational programs.
Becoming Literate in English After Proposition 227: An Examination of Three Children

The question, "What is the best way to educate language minority students," has been studied and debated extensively for more than thirty years. In June of 1998, voters in California adopted Proposition 227 (see Appendix A) by a 61% majority. Proposition 227, which eliminated many of the bilingual programs in the California, radically changes the profile of education for the English language learner (ELL). Students are to be taught "overwhelmingly in English." The new law provides for students who are not yet fluent in English to be placed in one year of "sheltered English instruction" (SEI) after which they are to be mainstreamed and expected to acquire academic content with native English speakers.

In the 1997-98 school year, approximately 420,000, 30%, of the state's 1.4 million Limited English Proficient (LEP) students received some form of bilingual education (California Department of Education, 1999). Post-Proposition 227, in the 1998-99 school year, the numbers of students in bilingual programs was reported to be 170,000 students, 12% of the LEP population (California Department of Education, 2000). This new law mandated an early transition to education in their second language, with one year of SEI for most students, and then mainstream English the following year, for the majority of California's students who had been enrolled in bilingual education. This
study examines three third grade students during their first year of SEI. What is the impact of Proposition 227 on the literary acquisition of these students and what are the implications for educators structuring SEI programs throughout the state?

First, the introduction will describe types of second language instruction practiced in California public schools in recent years and what research has to say about effectiveness of these programs. Second, the history and debate regarding instruction for English learners in California will be described. The third section will look at the continued debate after implementation of Proposition 227. Fourth, current research about best teaching practices for English learners in a “structured immersion” classroom will be examined. The final section will advocate the case study as a valid and necessary tool to study the effect of the larger political/educational issue on three children who were placed in a “structured immersion” classroom after their transitional bilingual program was eliminated by Proposition 227.

Common Forms of Second Language Instruction

Much of second language instruction in the United States historically has consisted of placing students in classrooms with monolingual English speaking students with supplemental English as a Second Language (ESL) Pull-out. Second language students leave the classroom on a regular basis to receive additional language development activities
from an ESL teacher or aide. English Language Development (ELD) is different from ESL because it usually takes place in a classroom of non-native English speakers at varying levels of proficiency with a teacher specially trained in second language development. Students are expected to learn the full core curriculum as well as the second language (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997).

Sheltered English Development (SED), which occurs in a special classroom such as Sheltered Science, and Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), used in the mainstream classroom, are forms of ELD designed for students who are at least an intermediate level of fluency. Language used by teachers is modified by use of "simplified syntactical and grammatical structures, controlled vocabulary and short sentences" (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 1996, p. 73). Strategies include using illustrations and manipulatives, building on students' background knowledge and experiences, using cooperative learning techniques and teaching core vocabulary in advance. The goal of these strategies is to present content areas in order to optimize language development and the acquisition of regular classroom subject matter (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez).

One model of Sheltered Instruction is the CALLA program (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994) designed to meet the academic needs of: (a) students who have developed social communicative skills, but not yet academic language skills appropriate to their grade level; (b) students who have
acquired academic language skills in their native language and beginning proficiency in English, but need help transitioning to English academic instruction; and (c) bilingual students who are dominant in English who have not yet developed academic language skills in either language. In other words, Sheltered Instruction is not designed for students who are at a beginning level of English proficiency.

Bilingual education was common during Greek and Roman times as well as in the United States prior to World War I (Lewis, 1976, as cited in Cummins, 1996). Bilingual education has been described as “an instructional tool to help students whose first language is not English to overcome their linguistic and academic difficulties and, it is hoped, to perform as well as their English speaking peers in school” (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 1996, p. 66). Bilingual education has traditionally taken one of three forms: Immersion, Two-Way/Dual, and Transitional. Immersion education was originally developed in Canada to teach a minority language to language majority students. For example English-speaking student may learn Spanish or French as a second language. The ultimate goal is bilingualism (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997). Two-Way/Dual programs teach in two languages to serve language minority as well as language majority students. Subject matter is taught in both languages in approximately equal proportions. Both groups serve as models for each other as they learn the
second language and maintain their primary language (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez; Peregoy & Boyle).

Transitional bilingual education is demonstrated by two types of programs usually described as early-exit and late-exit. Definitions of early and late exit vary. However, the Ramírez report released by the U.S. Department of Education (Ramírez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991), defined early-exit as use of students' primary language (Spanish) approximately one-third of classroom time during kindergarten and first grade with a return to English during second grade. Early-exit programs generally release students to mainstream classes at the end of grade three. Ramírez et al. described late-exit programs as having instruction in Spanish for 100% of the time during kindergarten, two-thirds of the time during first and second grade, 50% during third grade, and approximately 40% of class time during fifth and sixth grade. Late-exit programs, as defined by Ramírez, mainstream students to the regular English instructional program at the end of sixth grade.

Research and Bilingual Education

Researchers have examined bilingual programs for more than thirty years. Because a thorough review of the research in this field would be an immense undertaking and has been done by others (Bialsytock & Hakuta, 1994; Fitzgerald, 1995; and Romaine, 1995), only nine studies, demonstrating the variety and theoretical background of
research of bilingual education, will be examined.

Baker and de Kanter (1983) looked at the results of 300 transitional programs, discarded results of all but 28 studies as invalid, and concluded that there was no consistent evidence to support bilingual education. Willig (1985) used meta-analysis on the Baker and de Kanter results and determined that there were actually small to moderate differences favoring Transitional bilingual education.

Saville-Troike (1984) studied students from second to sixth grade from seven different language groups and determined that the amount of time spent using English orally was unrelated to English reading achievement. There was no relationship between English reading and the amount of time spent interacting with English text. However, a correlation was found between native-language reading ability and ESL oral ability.

Krashen and Biber (1988) examined the standardized testing results of six California bilingual programs. Their research demonstrated that language minority students who had received primary language instruction did as well or better than comparison children (English only) in both English and academic achievement.

Collier (1987, 1989) looked at relatively wealthy English learners in a ESL pull-out program in Virginia and determined that children who arrived in the United States between the ages of 8 and 12, with several years of
education in their first language before arrival required about two years to reach a level of English for comfortable conversation. However, they required four to nine years to meet national norms on standardized tests in the areas of reading, social studies, and science. Students who arrived after age 12 often were unable to catch up in subjects requiring language with their peers who had English as their primary language.

Ramírez et al. (1991) carefully matched comparison groups and instructional treatments of three programs (early-exit, late-exit, and structured immersion) over eight years. The final report stated that the complexity of the study prevented a direct comparison of the effectiveness of the three programs; however, direct comparisons of early-exit and structured immersion were made and indirect comparisons of these and the late-exit program. Students in early-exit and immersion progressed about the same rate as students in the general population, but there was a significant gap between their level of achievement and that of the general population. In contrast, the late-exit students showed substantial gains compared to the norming population in mathematics, English language, and English reading skills. The authors concluded that providing LEP students with substantial amount of primary language instruction does not interfere with acquisition of English and does lead to “growth in academic skills ... atypical of disadvantaged youth” (p. 36).
Beykont (1994) further analyzed data from Ramírez et al. and determined academic progress in reading in Spanish correlated highly with academic progress in reading in English for third grade students.

Much of the theoretical basis for bilingual education and sheltered instruction is the work of Cummins (1991, 1993, 1994, 1996). Cummins (1996) offered the principle of "additive bilingual and biliteracy skills" stating that there are

...no negative consequences for children's academic, linguistic, or intellectual development. On the contrary, although not conclusive, the evidence points clearly in the direction of metalinguistics, academic, and intellectual benefits for bilingual children who continue to develop both their languages. (p.109)

Cummins (1994) also proposed a distinction when measuring second language proficiency between basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Others have designated these playground language vs. classroom language (Gibbons, 1991). Whether students are successful in academic settings depends upon demands placed on them by the social and educational settings. Figure 1 shows the four quadrants based on two continuums, context-embedded
Figure 1

Range of Contextual Support and Degree of Cognitive Involvement in Communicative Activities

vs. context reduced and cognitively demanding vs. cognitively undemanding. Context-embedded communication is when the subject matter is supported by meaningful cues given by other people and the environment. Context-reduced communication relies heavily on linguistic cues and is most likely found in classroom. Cognitively undemanding situations are more likely social or recreational, although a new social situation might be more demanding. Cognitively demanding situations require processing large amounts of information for successful student participation.

Cummins (1996) suggested that the academic progression should ideally go from the level of quadrant A, to quadrant B, to quadrant D. Social conversation is typical of quadrant A, where cognitive demands are low and students are supported by context cues. Quadrant B activities might include verbal persuasion of another student to one's viewpoint. Cognitive demands are higher, but contextual supports are also present. Cummins recommended avoiding quadrant C tasks, such as filling in work sheets that measure only memorization, because they "usually fail to supply either cognitive challenge or learner-friendly language" (Cummins, 1996, p.59). Additionally, he warned against moving too quickly to quadrant D, if students have not been given the contextual supports they need. Quadrant D tasks in the classroom might include writing an essay or speaking to a group about an academically demanding topic.

Studies of rates of second language acquisition
support Cummins theories. Age-appropriate proficiency in Quadrant A (BICS) is commonly achieved after two years. Several large-scale studies have reported that five to seven years are required for English learners to reach age-appropriate proficiency in Quadrant D (CALP) (Collier, 1987, 1989; Cummins, 1981). Thomas and Collier (1996), continuing this research, now have a database of over 700,000 language minority students. They have found:

... students who arrived between ages 8 and 11, who had received at least 2-5 years of schooling taught throughout their primary language (L1) in their home country, were the lucky ones who took only 5-7 years. Those who arrived before age 8 required 7-10 years or more. (p. 33)

Separate underlying proficiency (SUP) as contrasted to common underlying proficiency (CUP) was proposed by Cummins (1991) to explain the transfer of skills and knowledge learned in one's primary language to the second language. Cummins argued that language acquisition forms a "dual iceberg" with a large area of shared proficiencies between first and second language. He stated:

... the development of academic skills in English depends not just on exposure to English (as "time on-task" advocates argue) but equally on the knowledge and concepts that children have inside their heads that help them make sense of English. Thus, instruction that builds up Latino/Latina children's
reading and writing in Spanish is creating a conceptual foundation upon which academic skills in English can be built. (Cummins, 1996, p.111)

Rossell and Baker (1996) argued that bilingual education was not an effective instructional methodology. They reviewed studies of bilingual education and concluded that 75 were methodologically acceptable based on four criteria: the studies had to compare students in a bilingual program (at least some bilingual instruction) to a control group of similar students; differences had to be controlled statistically or subjects selected at random, results had to be based on standardized test scores in English; and differences between the scores of treatment and control groups had to be determined by appropriate statistical tests.

Greene (1998) conducted a meta-analysis on studies used in the Rossell and Baker (1996) literature review and came to a different conclusion. Using Rossell and Baker’s own criteria for inclusion, Greene eliminated all but eleven of those studies: some cited by Rossell and Baker were duplications of others, others did not control for differences between treatment and control groups, and another group used only small amounts of bilingual education (seven weeks or less). However, Greene’s evaluation of the eleven acceptable studies concluded that even some primary language instruction, rather than English-only instruction will improve achievement of
English learners as measured by standardized tests in English.

Krashen, in an online commentary (1998) of the Greene (1998) meta-analysis explained that the original Rossell and Baker (1996) review of studies was statistically flawed in that it did not account for effect size in the different studies. Krashen predicted that the Greene meta-analysis would have "a profound impact on the field."

Bilingual Education in California

Prior to the passage of Proposition 227, California law for educating students not proficient in English was determined by the Chacón-Moscone Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act (1974). The law required that a home language survey be completed by parents to specify a child's primary language and a required language assessment would indicate a student's level of proficiency in both the home language and English. Districts were required to provide special services for students designated as non-English proficient (NEP) or limited English proficient (LEP). The Bilingual Education Act (1981) provided more detailed instructions to school districts to carry out education of English learners. Students in California have been served in a variety of ways, including ESL pullout, early and late-exit transitional, and two-way bilingual.

With the implementation of Proposition 227 in August of 1998, English learners were not to be placed in programs where instruction was predominately in their first
language. This included two-way, transitional, and maintenance programs. Proposition 227 (Appendix A) mandates that students receive one year of sheltered English immersion and then be placed in a mainstream class. A waiver signed by the parent may extend this period of sheltered English immersion if the child is older than 10 years of age and is identified as having special needs. Even then, the school is not required to provide special instruction unless 20 other children in the same grade also have requested waivers. Additionally, some parents have been granted waivers to place their children in parallel language programs.

Proposition 227 defines 'sheltered English immersion' or 'structured English immersion' as "... an English language acquisition process for young children in which nearly all classroom instruction is in English but with the curriculum and presentation designed for children who are learning the language" (Unz & Tuchman, 1998). Educators implementing Proposition 227 throughout the state of California have attempted to define "sheltered English immersion" in terms of classroom instruction. The term "sheltered" is reminiscent of SDAIE, which is for students at intermediate to high levels of English language proficiency. The term "immersion" is generally used by educators to describe models of instruction in Canada where French is being taught as a second language to students who are already literate in their primary language (Cummins,
1994). Other immersion programs include students not yet literate in their first language, but students are not expected to reach fluency in one year. California students affected by Proposition 227 may be at beginning levels of English acquisition and, unlike “immersed” students in Canada, not literate in their primary language.

After Proposition 227

It is apparent that many of the issues surrounding Proposition 227 are political and battles continue as educators, researchers, the California State Board of Education and concerned citizens attempt to define terms such as “sheltered”, “structured”, and “immersion” during this time of implementation. Mora (1998) argued:

It is difficult to figure out what the authors of Proposition 227 had in mind with sheltered or structured immersion. Is it a language acquisition process, a program, a technique, a method, a curriculum, a presentation or a class? Or is it just a catch-all term now adopted by the English-only movement to make the public believe there is a plan when there is not? Actually, the term sheltered immersion is just educational jargon invented to disguise the most recent version of ‘sink or swim.’

(paragraph 11)

In fact, districts throughout California responded to Proposition 227 in a variety of ways. For the first months after the adoption of the new law, educators worked
feverishly to meet with parents, order text books, and train teachers. Some districts, such as San Francisco Unified, actually served a larger number of limited-English students in bilingual programs (de Fao, 1998). District officials stated that Proposition 227 violated federal mandates. Los Angeles Unified, on the other hand, reported a decrease of students in bilingual classes of 89%. Other districts, such as a large unified district in San Diego County, have allowed no waivers for bilingual education. Some districts have continued dual-language programs, with parent-signed waivers, but have eliminated transitional bilingual programs. Other districts have requested district-wide waivers to continue bilingual programs. The state Supreme Court ruled in December 1999 that entire districts cannot get waivers (Egelko, 1999). Other legal issues are still before the courts.

The political battle regarding bilingual education in California has changed instruction for our English learners. What form of instruction emerges is being determined by classroom teachers and school districts with little direction from state leaders. How is “sheltered immersion” being defined in the classroom and how will it influence the literacy of English learners? Finally, what do individual children need from the classroom to be successful learners in school?

**Individual Student Differences: Focus of this Study**

Policy decisions, whether made by a local school
board, a state school board, a state department of
education, or the electorate, have a tremendous impact on
the education of individual children. These children may or
not fit the definition provided by researchers or by policy
makers.

Children come to school with different backgrounds,
abilities, and knowledge. One obvious difference is the
degree of fluency in both the first and second language.
Many school districts measure fluency in a language with
the Woodcock-Muñoz (1993) which gives scores on a five­
point scale for oral language development, reading,
writing, and an overall broad score. A student is
determined to be Not English Proficient (NEP) with a score
of one point, Limited English Proficient (LEP) with two or
three points or Fluent English Proficient (FEP) by earning
four or five points. The score, which the authors say
measures a student's CALP, is comprised of four subtests:
picture vocabulary, verbal analogies, letter-word
identification and dictation. A limitation of the Woodcock­
Muñoz is that the tasks do not require original writing or
spoken discourse. Additionally, reading comprehension is
measured only by skill at verbal analogies which is not
necessarily a good predictor of a student's readiness for
academic success in classroom tasks.

Another measure of English oral proficiency is the
SOLOM: Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (California
Department of Education in Peregoy and Boyle, 1997)
(Appendix B) in which an observer rates a student on a matrix of five categories with five points possible in each category (comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar). Students should be observed in a variety of settings before being scored. A total of 5-11 points is NEP, 12-24 points is LEP, and 25 is FEP.

A student's academic proficiency in reading in first or second language can be assessed with a nationally normed test, providing data to compare the student with others in the same grade. The Aprenda provides that data for Spanish reading. The SAT-9 is used in many states to provide that information for English proficiency. Individual reading assessments can provide more detailed information regarding students' strengths and educational needs.

Students also differ in their level of exposure to literacy before entering school. Many students enter school with little or no experience with reading or writing in either their first or second language. Hamayan (1994) expressed concern that second language children from low-literacy backgrounds often do not understand forms and functions of literacy. She stated:

The task of making meaning out of written material is made doubly difficult for low-literacy second language children who not only have little oral proficiency on which to build meaning but who also have few tools to control the meaning of written language. (Hamayan, p. 287)
The level of parent involvement is also related to the acquisition of literacy in a second language. Parents may or may not be models of literacy themselves or direct collaborators with school activities. A two-year study in London by Tizard, Schofield and Hewison (1982) showed that children who read books sent home from school to their parents on regular basis demonstrated more growth than children seeing a reading specialist several times a week. Although the parents spoke limited English or no English, they were willing to collaborate with the school in their child’s education when invited.

A student’s self-perception as a learner can also influence academic success. Any assessment of self perception has inherent difficulties such as the student’s possible inability to “articulate what goes on inside their heads” (Rhodes & Shanklin, 1993, p. 116). This is a likely limitation for a student responding in his or her second language. In spite of limitations, information gathered from a questionnaire, interview, or group discussion can provide valuable information about a student’s attitudes, background, and learning strategies.

The Case Study

The case study format was selected to provide a snapshot of three students in one classroom in Southern California during the school year immediately following the passage of Proposition 227. The purpose of these case studies is to gain insight into the complexity of learning
a second language and the diverse needs of students who seem to have come from similar backgrounds. "When studied in depth, individual children emerge from the shadows,... potentially enriching the ongoing conversation about literacy, development, and schooling" (Dyson, 1995, p. 29).

What are the educational needs, post Proposition 227, of English language learners who were previously enrolled in a transitional bilingual program? This study will examine oral language, writing, and reading development of the subjects, describe the literacy program in their post Proposition 227 third grade classroom, and assess the students' progress and educational needs in English. Finally, this study will suggest instructional implications for educators working to define "structured English immersion" in the classroom.

Hopefully, this case study will be valuable in looking at the impact of Proposition 227 on the education of three individuals, but also, in making the complexity of the issue more visible. Public policy decisions of "one size fits all" are not always best for the individual. Teachers of second language learners must know each student and determine educational needs on an individual basis.

Method

Participants and Setting

Subjects were three children, ages eight and nine, who were enrolled in a third grade "structured English immersion" classroom at a suburban Southern California
elementary school. All students are identified by pseudonyms and all had written parent consent to participate in the study. Enrollment at the school in December 1998 was 1021. On the home language survey, 48% of the students reported Spanish as their primary language. Based on the Woodcock-Muñoz Language Assessment (1993), 37% of the school’s population was classified as ELLs. (California Department of Education, 2000)

Because the school district schedule consists of four year-round tracks, most students began the school year in early July. The district was rushed to implement Proposition 227 which had become law July 1, after a June state-wide election. District policy was to follow the dictates of the new law closely. Three programs were defined and made available to second language learners: Structured English Immersion (SEI), Mainstream English, and Parallel Language Development.

SEI offers instruction in basic English based on mainstream curriculum, emphasizing academic vocabulary. Supplemental materials designed for lower levels of English proficiency are provided. Students are grouped by English proficiency level for instructional blocks and receive daily English language development (ELD) lessons. Spanish may be used for “clarification, enrichment and parent communication.”

The Mainstream English program places students with native English speakers in age appropriate grade level
classrooms. Instruction is entirely in English with SDAIE adaptations and daily ELD lessons.

Parallel Language Development as described in district materials is similar to a two-way bilingual program. Students are grouped by language of instruction for language arts, and parts of social studies, science and math. For kindergarten, first, and second grade students, as well as new non-English speaking students, reading and key academic concepts are presented in Spanish and Spanish language arts materials are used. Daily English Language Development (ELD) lessons are provided, Spanish may be used for clarification and both English and Spanish are used as enrichment for all students.

Parent meetings were held at each local school during the first month of the school year to inform them of options for students not yet proficient in English. To place a student in either the Mainstream English or Parallel Language programs, the parents were required to sign a parental exception waiver. None of the parents of the students described in this study attended the meeting and none requested to sign a waiver for either of the other programs. The only parent waivers requested at the school site were on behalf of Spanish speaking students enrolled in the school’s existing Two-way Bilingual program, which is now identified as a Parallel Language program.

Of the students in this study, two had been enrolled in the school’s Transitional Bilingual program since
kindergarten. The other arrived from a transitional program at another school in the same district during second grade, but completed one year in the bilingual program at the school being studied.

The second grade program, in which all three students participated, was transitional with approximately 70% of classroom instruction in Spanish and the remainder in English. Reading had not been formally taught in English; however, ELD was taught by the classroom teacher for 30 minutes each day.

Prior to Proposition 227, students generally stayed in the school’s bilingual program through fourth grade, with a gradual move to more English and less Spanish instruction. District policy defined transitional reading as a process during which instruction focused on reading skills which do not automatically transfer from the first to the second language. District criteria for transitioning from the transitional bilingual program to a mainstream English-only class required: (a) high intermediate oral English Proficiency (Woodcock-Muñoz of 3.0-3.5), (b) fourth grade reading level in Spanish, (c) fourth grade writing level in Spanish, (d) teacher recommendation, and (e) parent approval.

The three students in this study included: one student whose skills indicated that she was ready to learn successfully in her second language, one of possible readiness, and one student determined not ready to
transition. Because subjects were selected for this study during the fourth month of third grade, the district's criteria can only serve as guidelines for their selection. Only one of the three was reading and writing at a fourth grade level and only two of the three were at a score of 3.0 on the Woodcock-Muñoz. Much of the data for selection of students was gathered from their cumulative records. These included end of second grade (1998) SAT-9 reading scores and reading scores in Spanish from the standardized, nationally-normed Aprenda test. Language development in English was measured by the Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey (1993) completed in fall 1998.

Additional information to determine instructional reading level in English was measured by the Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver, 1997). The DRA defines instructional reading level as 90 to 95% accuracy in decoding and measures comprehension with an oral retelling which is determined to be complete, adequate, or limited. The DRA was administered by the researcher during the second month of the school year. A limitation of the DRA is the determination of comprehension by an oral retelling. For English learners, lack of fluency in retelling such context-embedded subject matter may influence the assessor's opinion of whether or not the student understood the material.

The researcher and classroom teacher were concerned after reviewing assessments of Maria that she was probably
not ready to learn academics successfully in her second language. Her 1998 Sat-9 total reading score, tested in the Spring of second grade, was in the 4th percentile, with comprehension in the 12th percentile. Maria's Spanish reading at the end of second grade as assessed by the Aprenda was in the 18th percentile. Her Woodcock-Muñoz (1993) broad language score measured in fall of third grade was 2-3 (very limited to limited), her oral language score was 3 (limited), and reading and writing was 2. During the second month of third grade, Maria's DRA (1997) instructional reading level in English was only at level 16, which is considered grade level for the end of first grade by district standards.

Ricardo was determined to be possibly ready to be successful studying academic subjects in English. Having received no formal instruction in English reading, his 1998 SAT-9 total reading score was in the 12th percentile, with comprehension in the 22nd percentile. Ricardo's Aprenda total reading score was in the 71st percentile. His Woodcock-Muñoz (1993) broad English score in the fall of third grade was 3 (limited), his oral language was 2-3 (very limited to limited), and his reading and writing was 3 (limited). Ricardo's instructional reading level in English was measured with as a level 34 (mid third grade) on the DRA (1997) during the second month of third grade.

At the beginning of the study, Azucena was determined by the classroom teacher in consultation with the
researcher to be ready to learn academic subjects in English. Her SAT-9 total reading score, without formal instruction in English, was in the 11th percentile, with comprehension at the 17th percentile, and her Aprenda total reading score was in the 99th percentile. Her Woodcock-Muñoz (1993) broad English score was 3 (limited), oral language also measured 3, and her reading and writing score was 3-4 (limited to fluent). During the second month of third grade, Azucena’s instructional reading level in English was estimated at level 40 (beginning of fourth grade) on the DRA (1997).

These three students, Azucena, Ricardo, and Maria shared the experience of having been in a transitional bilingual program from kindergarten through second grade. None of the children had received formal reading instruction in English prior to third grade. Beginning in third grade, as a consequence of Proposition 227, they were placed together in a SEI class, after which they were to be moved to a mainstream fourth grade class.

The classroom teacher, an experienced bilingual teacher who had previously taught in transitional bilingual programs for eleven years, instructed this third grade SEI class in English. She used Spanish very rarely and then only to clarify concepts not understood by the children. As will be described later, the teacher did use many of the strategies suggested by researchers to facilitate English learners. Curriculum materials were problematic because the
school's year-round schedule began just weeks after Proposition 227 was ratified by voters. Within weeks, the school district provided special training for SEI teachers and ordered *Into English* (Hampton-Brown, 1997) for ESL instruction. Because those materials were not in the classroom for several months into the school year, older English language development materials, already in use at the site, were used until the Hampton-Brown arrived. Since new English reading texts had been ordered during the prior school year for mainstream classes, but not previously bilingual classes, the teacher located and used second and third grade reading texts that were no longer being used by the mainstream English classes until the district adopted texts arrived.

**Assessment**

According to Rhodes and Shankin (1993), multiple assessments, including evaluation of authentic classroom tasks, are necessary to complete a picture of literacy development and to identify student's instructional strengths and needs. Additionally, the International Reading Association (1991) stated "...literacy assessments must incorporate a variety of observations, taking into account the complex nature of reading, writing, and languages" (International Reading Association, p. 3). All students, but especially those learning in a second language, should be assessed in multiple ways (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997).
The more detailed description of these three English learners in the following section is based on ongoing multiple assessments and classroom observations in their third grade SEI classroom setting during literacy instruction and activities. The schedule for collection of data is shown in Table 1. Assessments and observations were completed during the sixth, seventh and eighth months of the school year. Those weeks that research was completed for this study are identified as weeks #1 through 14.

Oral language in English was assessed by the SOLOM (California Department of Education in Peregoy & Boyle, 1997) (Appendix B). This matrix was completed two times, during weeks #1 and 14 by the classroom teacher based on observations of oral communications during class time as well as social situations.

Written work from three different classroom writing prompts during weeks #1, 8, and 14 was compared to the Writing Traits Matrix (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997, see Appendix C). The matrix assigns three levels of proficiency to six traits. The writing samples were assessed by the researcher in consultation with the classroom teacher. The first sample was a classroom journal entry, the second was a letter to a pen pal, and the third was a letter written as a response to a district writing prompt to “write a friendly letter to someone telling them about a time when you were scared.”

Second language reading acquisition was measured
### Table 1

**Schedule of Assessments (during months 6-8 of school year)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>SOLOM Writing samples</th>
<th>Johns reading English</th>
<th>Johns reading Spanish</th>
<th>Class observation</th>
<th>Student interview</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
during week 10 by The Basic Reading Inventory, Form C (Johns, 1997), in which a student reads a short passage orally and demonstrates comprehension with an oral retelling, followed by comprehension questions. The Johns Spanish Reading Inventory Form A (Johns, 1997b) was used to measure student reading level in Spanish during the same week. A limitation of the Johns inventory in Spanish is that it only assesses to the fourth grade level. One of the students in the study would have gone farther, had the instrument permitted. Reading proficiency on both Johns inventories is described as being at frustration, instructional, or independent level for different grade-leveled passages. Separate levels are obtained for decoding and comprehension, although, when determining a student’s overall reading level, the authors recommend giving “more emphasis first on comprehension, then word recognition in context, and finally word recognition in isolation” (Johns, 1997a, p. 47). Counting only “significant” decoding errors (those that appear to change meaning) is an option when administering the Johns that was selected by the researcher. Reading miscues and comprehension performance were further evaluated by the Jerry L. Johns Qualitative Summary of Miscues on the Basic Reading Inventory and the Summary of Student’s Comprehension Performance on the Basic Reading Inventory (Johns).

Measuring the students’ reading proficiency in Spanish is of questionable validity since none had had
formal reading instruction in their first language in preceding ten months. Performance on this assessment probably reflects family literacy activities, but is interesting data to add to the picture of a child's growing literacy.

Students' perceptions of themselves as bilingual readers and writers were assessed during week one of the study with an interview (see Appendix C) developed by the researcher based on the work of Rhodes and Shanklin (1993).

Classroom Context

The purpose of classroom observations was to provide an informal description of the content and activities in the third grade SEI classroom in which the children were enrolled. Another benefit of the observations was the gathering of information regarding each student's types and levels of involvement during class. Observations occurred for approximately 30 hours during weeks four through twelve of the study.

Within this SEI classroom, two units of study were observed: one more limited to literacy and one cross-disciplinary. During the first, the objectives were to help students locate the main idea and to rewrite the passage in their own words. The class was divided into three reading groups by the classroom teacher according to reading levels as assessed on the DRA (1997). The first group of below grade-level readers, read *Mike Mulligan and the Steam Shovel* (Burton, 1939) in a guided reading session with the
teacher. The other two groups read the nonfiction passage, "Underwater Explorer" from the district adopted third grade text (Macmillan / McGraw Hill, 1997a). Within each group, students were assigned a partner and given the task of rewriting a section of the story, capturing the main idea of each paragraph with one sentence. Students then wrote their summarizing sentences on chart paper. The summaries were then illustrated, placed on a long roll of paper, and presented to the class as a roll movie. During the following week, groups visited second grade SEI classes and presented their "TV show."

A follow-up lesson, built on the same theme as "Underwater Explorer", was done in three heterogeneous literacy groups. Students read and summarized three of the short Macmillan Spotlight books: Danger at Dolphin Point, Rescue at First Encounter Beach, and How the Ocean Fooled Us. (Macmillan / McGraw-Hill, 1997b). Each group then made an illustrated poster, which used their summaries to demonstrate the concepts of beginning, middle, and end, with each section on a colored background. The poster was shared with other class members.

The second unit incorporated language arts, science and social studies and culminated with a field trip to an nature preserve where students met pen pals from a nearby school. The class had been studying the concept of habitat during science. They carried magnifying glasses to the grass-covered playground, kneeled, and explored the
creatures living on the ground. Again, they returned to the classroom and shared their findings in small groups, recording them on chart paper. The science text led to a broader study of ecosystems. During this same time period, during social studies, the class studied geographic zones and plant and animal life.

The teacher led the class in an oral discussion, to develop English language skills and vocabulary, of what someone might see if they visited a ranch. Their responses were recorded, and visually organized in columns on chart paper. Many students in the class had experiences living on or visiting family ranches in Mexico and the discussion was lively. Questions included: What animals would you find on a ranch? Would that be a ranch animal or a wild animal? What plants would you find on a ranch? Is that a cultivated plant or does it grow wild? Who works at a ranch? Students were assigned a partner and instructed to “Imagine you live on a ranch. Tell your partner what your ranch is like and everything on it.” Each student shared for one minute while his or her partner listened and then the partner shared. Student level involvement was very high as they described their imaginary ranch. Several students were heard sharing from their own background knowledge such as, “I live on a ranch. There are skunks that make a smell.”

As the class readied to meet their pen pals, the teacher attended a Saturday class at the nature preserve in order to learn more about the plants and wildlife they
might see. The day before the field trip she again led a group discussion with the students in which they predicted what they would see. She built on their existing background knowledge by describing and showing pictures of some of what she had already seen and experienced at the nature preserve. On the day of the trip, students met their pen pals in the parking lot of the preserve and walked with them on the hike. The hike lasted more than two hours, ending with sack lunches which were eaten at an historic ranch house. The teacher reported that level of involvement and enthusiasm were high and that the classes met again at a park close to the two schools for a final pizza party.

These lessons are examples of scaffolding as described by Carrasquillo & Rodriguez (1996). The teacher used illustrations and manipulatives, provided students with hand-on experiences, built on students' background knowledge, used cooperative learning techniques, and taught vocabulary in advance. The content areas of language arts, science and social studies were presented to optimize language development, but also regular classroom curriculum.

Audiotaping was used during individual reading. assessment, classroom observation, and student interviews. Videotaping was used for observation of a classroom presentation by students. There was no attempt to quantify the data gathered during observations. Feedback and dialogue regarding this study was available to subjects and
their parents upon request. Parents were informed of what occurred during observation and data collection and were offered the opportunity to review audio and video tapes.

Data was analyzed to measure levels of student success in acquiring literacy skills in English in a SEI classroom. Observations of students in the classroom complete a picture of how these three students are developing English language literacy skills in a "sheltered immersion" classroom.

Results

Subjects were assessed in five areas of literacy development. Results of those individual assessments are summarized in the following tables. Table 2 shows performance on Summary of Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) (California Department of Education in Peregoy & Boyle, 1997) and Writing Traits Matrix (Peregoy and Boyle, 1997). Table 3 demonstrates the data obtained in the student interviews regarding self-perceptions of literacy acquisition. Table 4 includes instructional levels attained by students on the Johns Reading Inventory in both English and Spanish (Johns, 1997a, 1997b).
Table 2

Summary of Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) and Writing Traits Matrix

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Maria</th>
<th>Ricardo</th>
<th>Azucena</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
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Table 3

Summary of Interview Data

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<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Maria</th>
<th>Ricardo</th>
<th>Azucena</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
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<td>homework in English</td>
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<td>Feelings about learning in</td>
<td>harder than</td>
<td>happy</td>
<td>fine, same as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>How learned to read/write</td>
<td>teacher made me</td>
<td>at school, books at home</td>
<td>friends, cousins</td>
</tr>
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<td>English</td>
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</table>
### Table 4

**Summary of Instructional Reading Levels as Measured by Jerry L. Johns Basic Reading Inventory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>decoding English</th>
<th>comprehension English</th>
<th>decoding Spanish *</th>
<th>comprehension Spanish *</th>
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<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
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<td>3rd grade</td>
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<td>primer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ricardo</td>
<td>2nd grade</td>
<td>2nd grade</td>
<td>primer</td>
<td>1st grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azucena</td>
<td>4th grade</td>
<td>4th grade</td>
<td>4th grade +</td>
<td>4th grade +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes.**

1. Johns scores indicate student’s instructional reading level (90 to 95% accuracy) decoding by grade level of reading passage. PP=preprimer. P=primer.
2. Comprehension scores indicate grade level based on number of comprehension questions answered correctly.
3. Johns Spanish Reading Inventory does not go higher than the fourth grade passage.
Maria

As described above, Maria began third grade with a history of difficulty learning to read and write in her native language. She qualified for pullout Title 1 service in Spanish in kindergarten and first grade. However, Maria’s oral language at the beginning of the study, as measured by her classroom teacher on the SOLOM, was the highest of the three students, with a score of 18. Her SOLOM at the end of the study remained at 18.

Maria’s writing samples reflect her struggle. The first sample was one of her daily writings from her classroom journal. She chose to write about a field trip to an aerospace museum. Her passage was brief, 17 words, and at a “beginning” level on all areas of the Writing Traits Matrix. Her second sample was a letter of 27 words and, again, is at the lowest level except in the area of grammar in which she demonstrates improved syntax and fewer grammatical errors. The final sample was a letter to a pen pal, 43 words, and generally a more “intermediate” level of proficiency. Her sentence structure is more varied and vocabulary use is less limited.

On the English version of the Jerry Johns Basic Reading Inventory (1997), Maria successfully read the graded word lists to the fourth grade level. When reading passages, her decoding was at an instructional /frustration level on the first grade passage. Despite week decoding, her comprehension was independent at the first grade level.
This pattern continued until the fourth grade passage, when Maria reached frustration on comprehension, as well as decoding. Analysis of Maria’s reading on the first, second, and third grade passages, before she reached frustration in comprehension, indicates that her decoding errors did not affect comprehension 31% of the time. She spontaneously self-corrected 11% of those errors that had initially changed meaning. An examination of her errors on the comprehension questions indicates that she missed 28% of the lower level fact questions, but missed 40% of the higher level questions (topic, evaluation, inference, and vocabulary). Interestingly, although perhaps not surprising for a student with limited skills in English, Maria missed all of the questions that asked her to define vocabulary words as they were used in the passage.

Maria was frustrated decoding in Spanish at the lowest level assessed (preprimer). It is reasonable to assume that not having formal instruction in Spanish for nearly eight months accounts for a large part of this. Also, teacher report card grades and written comments indicate she struggled with reading in her first language in both kindergarten and first grade. However, the strength seen in English comprehension in spite of weak decoding was also demonstrated in her Spanish reading. Maria comprehended at an first grade instructional level. An examination of her errors on the comprehension questions indicates that she missed 23% of both the lower level fact questions and the
higher level questions. Her responses to vocabulary questions were 100% accurate in Spanish.

When interviewed about her self-perceptions of learning to speak, read, and write in her second language, Maria responded eagerly. Her language of preference for speaking, reading, and writing was Spanish. On five point scale, with one being “easy” and five being “hard”, Maria said that learning reading to read and write in Spanish was easy (1). Learning to read in English was also easy, but learning to write in English was more difficult (4). When asked how she learned to read in Spanish, Maria said “In first grade, my teacher taught me. The words are easy.” Regarding how she learned to read in English, Maria stated, “The teacher made me.” During the interview, Maria stated that she received little help at home on school work, relying most on her older sisters. She reported that her mother can read in English as little and that her father only went to second grade in Mexico. When asked about her feelings of being taught in English, rather than the Spanish instruction she received in the first three years of school, Maria said, “It’s different. It’s harder.”

Maria was observed both out of class on the playground in a class in a variety of literacy activities. In a social settings, Cummin’s Quadrant A, Maria appeared to be comfortable speaking English. Occasionally, with other Spanish speaking students, she used her first language. For the most part Maria functioned well in Quadrant A
activities which are less demanding cognitively.

Maria was observed in very few Quadrant C activities, context-reduced and cognitively-undemanding. Her reading group received some direct instruction of phonics with an instructional assistant, but the group was small (three to five students) and the social interaction and relationship with the assistant made it more context-embedded than it might have been (Quadrant B). That Maria’s phonics and spelling skills improved during the year is reflected in her writing samples. However, it is very likely that both direct instruction and maturation led to this improvement.

As would be expected, Quadrant D, cognitively-demanding and context-reduced, activities appear to be difficult for Maria. Her writing samples did not demonstrate the same level of thinking seen in classroom discussion. She was limited in her second language both when writing and when responding to higher level, more cognitive, oral comprehension questions on the Johns Reading Inventory (1997).

Maria’s third grade teacher recommended that she repeat third grade, with the expectation that her reading and writing skills would be closer to grade level standards with another year of practice. Her third grade teacher reports that she has improved, but still has trouble with tasks that require higher levels of cognitive thinking.

Ricardo

Ricardo completed second grade reading at grade level
in Spanish, according year-end assessments. Ricardo’s oral language at the beginning of the study on the SOLOM, was a score of 17. His SOLOM at the end of the study was 18.

Ricardo’s writing samples during the time of the study demonstrate growth. The first sample was from his classroom journal in which he wrote about his plans for the weekend. Ricardo’s passage was only 21 words and at a “beginning” level on all areas of the Writing Traits Matrix (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997), except in vocabulary use which showed an ability to use appropriate language. His second sample was a letter of 28 words and, again, is at the lowest level except in the areas of vocabulary and grammar in which he demonstrates improved syntax and fewer grammatical errors. The final sample, a letter to a pen pal is longer, 60 words. His sentence structure is still limited and organization shows no logical sequence.

On the English version of the Jerry L. Johns Basic Reading Inventory (1997), Ricardo read the graded word lists to the sixth grade level. On the leveled passages his decoding reached an instructional level on the second grade passage and frustrated at third. Ricardo’s comprehension was independent at the first grade level. He reached an instructional / frustration level at both the second and third grade passages. Analysis of Ricardo’s reading on the first and second grade passages, before he reached frustration in decoding, showed that his decoding errors did not affect comprehension 37% of the time and he self-
corrected 40% of those errors that had initially changed meaning. Ricardo’s errors on the comprehension questions indicate that he missed 40% of the lower level fact questions, and only 13% of the higher level questions. Like Maria, Ricardo missed all of the questions that required him to define vocabulary words as they were used in the passage.

Ricardo was frustrated both decoding and in answering comprehension questions in Spanish at the lowest level assessed (preprimer). Again, not having had formal instruction in Spanish for nearly a year, it is not surprising that his skills have diminished. An examination of his errors on the comprehension questions on the primer, and first grade passages, indicates that he missed 40% of both the lower level fact questions and 50% of the higher level questions.

On the interview of his self-perceptions of learning to speak, read, and write, Ricardo stated that the language in which he read best was Spanish, but for writing and speaking he preferred English. On a five-point scale, with one being “easy” and five being “hard”, Ricardo gave learning to read in Spanish a “three”, and learning to write in Spanish a “five”. Ricardo gave learning to read in English a “four”, but learning to write in English was a “one”, easy for him to learn. When asked how he learned to read in Spanish, Ricardo said, “I learned in kindergarten and first grade. At home, I read both.” Regarding learning
to read in English, Ricardo replied, "I learn by having books in English. When I read English books, it helps me talk in English." During the interview, Ricardo said that any homework help he receives is from his mother, who reads "some" English. When asked about his feelings of being taught only in English during his third grade year, Ricardo said, "I feel happy. I like to read and write in English. I like to read and write in Spanish."

Ricardo was observed both out of class and in class in a variety of literacy activities. In social settings, such as on the playground with friends, Cummin's Quadrant A, Ricardo appeared to be comfortable and proficient speaking English.

However, in more demanding Quadrant B and D activities, Ricardo demonstrated lack of organization and confusion. None of the writing samples followed logical organization. Additionally, some of his responses during the interview were off the subject, including his numerical responses regarding difficulty learning reading and writing in either language which do not seem to follow a logical pattern. When asked about who helps him with homework, Ricardo responded that sometimes he goes to work with his uncle and helps him "fill in the dirt". Possibly, his limited English interfered with his understanding of the questions, but his classroom teacher confirmed that at times he seemed "unfocused" often in class even when provided with scaffolding to facilitate learning.
Ricardo continued on to fourth grade and, although the class is not designated SEI, the teacher is bilingual and uses scaffolding and many support strategies. She reports that Ricardo continues to be unfocused and unorganized often, but especially when working on more cognitively demanding tasks. He still continues to function near grade level in literacy activities.

Azucena

Azucena began third grade reading above grade level in Spanish. At the end of second grade, her standardized reading comprehension scores were 98th percentile on the Aprenda and 17th percentile on the SAT-9. At this point, she had received no formal reading instruction in English. Azucena’s oral language at the beginning of the study, as estimated on the SOLOM was 18 and, fourteen weeks later, was 20. Both scores are within the range of limited English proficient.

Azucena’s writing samples show tremendous growth during the time of this study. The first sample was a classroom journal entry about a field trip. Her passage was 26 words, and at a “beginning” level on all but one area of the Writing Traits Matrix (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997), receiving an “intermediate” score for use of vocabulary. Azucena’s second sample, written in response to a district prompt, was 116 words, and written at a more advanced level overall. Azucena’s final sample was a letter, of 113 words, to a pen pal and demonstrates writing mostly at “advanced”
levels. Azucena wrote more than one paragraph and used a variety of sentence patterns. The only "intermediate" area was several grammatical errors, reflecting her limited English status, such as dropping suffixes such as -ed and -ing from words.

On the English version of the Jerry L. Johns Basic Reading Inventory (1997), Azucena successfully read the graded word lists to the sixth grade level. Her decoding of passages was independent on the third grade passage, instructional at fourth and fifth, and again at an independent level on the sixth grade passage. Her responses to comprehension questions indicated an instructional reading at fifth and sixth grade level. Azucena reached frustration both when decoding and responding to the questions for the seventh grade passage. Analysis of Azucena’s reading on the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade passages indicates that decoding errors did not affect her understanding 55% of the time. She self-corrected only 5% of those errors that had changed meaning. Azucena’s performance responding to the comprehension questions shows that she missed 45% of the fact questions, but only 10% of the higher level questions.

Azucena made no errors when decoding in Spanish at either the third or fourth grade levels, which is the upper limit of the Spanish Johns Basic Reading Inventory (1997). This is surprising considering she had no formal instruction in Spanish since second grade. However, may
reflect her family’s level of literacy. Azucena’s comprehension was also independent at those levels. Analysis of Azucena’s response to comprehension questions indicated that she followed the pattern seen in English. Her errors on lower level questions at a rate of 13% and she missed none of the higher level questions.

Azucena’s self-perceptions of learning to speak, read, and write in her second language were expressed clearly, as though she had given the subject thought previously. She reported that she believes she speaks better in English, but reads and writes better in Spanish. On the five-point scale, Azucena said that learning reading to read and write in Spanish was easy (1). Learning to read in English was less easy (2), but learning to write in English was more difficult (3). When asked how Azucena said she learned to read in Spanish, Azucena replied that she learned to read in Spanish before she started school when her mother brought home a book. She said that she no longer needs assistance with homework, but in first grade her cousins helped her. When asked about her feelings of being taught in English, rather than Spanish, Azucena said, “I feel the same as I do (learning) in Spanish. Fine.”

Quadrant D, cognitively-demanding and context-reduced, activities, appeared to be increasingly easy for Azucena as she progressed through the school year. Her writing samples showed organization and good expression of ideas. Answering higher level comprehension questions was easy for her. In
class, Azucena worked well independently, even when others were in groups, on the most difficult tasks including summarizing a section of a non-fiction piece.

Azucena’s classroom teacher recommended that she be assessed for the Gifted and Talented (GATE) program. She was accepted and participated in the after school activities for the remainder of the year. Although Azucena’s family moved several miles away, she was placed in a fourth grade GATE class at her new school which is in the same district.

Discussion

There is ample research, as discussed earlier in this study, to support primary language instruction as a method to facilitate student success in a second language. However, that debate became moot for most California second language learners with the adoption of Proposition 227 by California voters in June, 1998. Many California school districts chose to follow the law as closely as possible. This meant abolition of many Transitional Bilingual (TBE) programs and the placement of students in Structured English Immersion (SEI) classes. Based on the review of literature of differing types of bilingual education, a prediction was made that a student who has less well-developed Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) in his or her primary language will have a more difficult time successfully transitioning to a second language in an academic setting. Likewise, a student who has developed
CALP would expect to have greater academic success in his or her second language.

This study examined three students, who came from similar backgrounds of transitional bilingual education but entered third grade with very different strengths and needs. They differed in ease and degree of success in learning their first language. At the beginning of this study, in the sixth month of a third grade SEI class, although their observed levels of oral English were similar, the three differed in their proficiency in both reading and writing English. During the fourteen weeks of the study, those gaps widened.

Although she began the study with the highest score of the three students on the SOLOM oral language measure, Maria was identified as a student likely to have trouble transitioning to academics in English. She had difficulty learning to read in her native language in the first three years of school. Her struggles to both write and read in English became even more obvious as the study continued. Maria decoded in well in English only on the first grade Jerry Johns passage. However, her comprehension answering questions was at an instructional level at third grade. Predictably, Maria was much more successful answering lower level, fact-based, questions than she was answering questions that required more CALP skills. Her reading in Spanish followed the same pattern, with her comprehension one grade level above her decoding.
What are Maria’s educational needs? After repeating third grade, she is functioning at grade level. However, her classroom teacher reports that she still difficulty with decoding and is considering recommending her for special education assessment. Maria may have learning disabilities that could be identified and served within a special education environment. Issues surrounding language acquisition sometimes mask other learning issues and delay assessment. Maria’s level of comprehension, apart from decoding, indicate that she would grow from discussions, cooperative learning situations, and hands-on activities within the classroom. Verbal interaction and sharing of ideas of a strength that can be built upon. Maria continues to need support with decoding and written expression.

Ricardo’s performance on the assessment in this study does not show clear patterns. He decoded the Johns word list to the sixth grade level, but was frustrated when decoding the third grade passage. His level of reading comprehension is apparently at a higher level than his decoding because he reached a low instructional level when answering questions on both the third and fourth grade passages. Uncommon for a second language learner, Ricardo missed a smaller percentage of the higher level questions than he did of the more fact-based questions. Ricardo’s writing demonstrated a similar quality of inconsistency. Although his grammar, vocabulary, and syntax improved, his organization remained very weak. Classroom observations and
comments during the interview also reflected this lack of organization and focus.

Educationally, Ricardo's seems to require assistance developing concepts, such as a sense of story and sequence. This instruction and practice should involve writing, as well as speaking and reading. Because Ricardo's home environment does not seem to be highly literate, even more responsibility falls on the school environment to capture his interest and to further develop his academic proficiency. Hopefully, his ability to stay focused will improve as he matures. At this point, Ricardo is developing well as an English language learner.

Although Azucena's classroom educational background is much like the others, she succeeds academically in all areas. Her writing grew tremendously during the course of this research, showing strengths in all areas but grammar. As a seventh month third grader, Azucena decoded at an independent level and comprehended at an instructional level on a sixth grade passage. Her reading in Spanish was above fourth grade level, although she had not received primary language instruction in nearly a year. Azucena's skill with more analytical questions sets her apart from Maria and Ricardo. One wonders if the higher level of competency that she achieved in Spanish allowed her to learn those thinking skills in her first language. According to Cummin's "common underlying proficiency" model, this would explain her success in her second
Azucena’s educational needs are different from the others and yet similar. Because she is a strong, independent reader from a literate family, Azucena will probably continue to grow academically with ease. Her classroom teacher will need to provide opportunities for her to extend her knowledge as with any other academically gifted student. With Azucena’s apparently strong development of CALP in Spanish, she is well prepared to be successful academically in her second language. Azucena does have further needs for ESL instruction. Both when producing oral and written work, her syntax, grammar, and vocabulary are those of a second language learner rather than a native speaker. Her classroom teacher will need to provide a good example, but also many opportunities to interact at higher cognitive levels with proficient speakers of English. Collaborative groups will continue to be important for Azucena’s growth.

Predicting a student’s readiness to succeed academically in a second language is a complicated task. Three theoretical constructs of Cummins (1994, 1996) have been discussed previously: (a) the dimensions of context-embeddedness and cognitive demand to describe settings, (b) the distinction between acquisition of basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) and (c) understanding the common underlying principles (CUP) and separate underlying
principles (SUP) in relation to first and second language. These provide an understanding, the background scenery, against which we can view individuals.

Learning to be literate in a second language is a complex process. In order to help our growing population of second language learners become literate in English, educators need to closely examine the needs of individual students. This means looking at a variety of measures, over time, including authentic assessments of actual student work for all the components of literacy education. Evaluation of student strength should also include background knowledge, degree of family support, and self-perception as a literate individual. Then, we will be prepared to write the script for literacy instruction, and modify it as needed, based on that individual data.

Laws, such as California's Proposition 227, create a broad framework upon which our educational system performs. The spotlight shines on the much smaller stages of the classroom and, finally, the individual child. Children do not come in just one size, needing just one educational script. Through careful examination, each child can be better understood by the classroom teacher. Then, can we help our second language learners become stars of the literacy stage.
References


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Collier, V.P. & Thomas, W.P. (1989). How quickly can


student achievement and program effectiveness. California Association for Bilingual Education Newsletter, 17, 5, 19, 24.


Appendix A

California Proposition 227
English Language Education for Children in Public Schools

Text:

SECTION 1. Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 300) is added to Part 1 of the Educational Code, to read:

CHAPTER 3. ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

ARTICLE 1. Findings and Declarations

300. The People of California find and declare as follows:

(a) WHEREAS the English language is the national public language of the United States of America and of the state of California, is spoken by the vast majority of California residents, and is also the leading world language for science, technology, and international business, thereby being the language of economic opportunity; and

(b) WHEREAS immigrant parents are eager to have their children acquire a good knowledge of English, thereby allowing them to fully participate in the American Dream of economic and social advancement; and

(c) WHEREAS the government and the public schools of California have a moral obligation and a constitutional duty to provide all of California's children, regardless of their ethnicity or national origins, with the skills necessary to become productive members of our society, and of these skills, literacy in the English language is among the most important; and

(d) WHEREAS the public schools of California currently do a poor job of educating immigrant children, wasting financial resources on costly experimental language programs whose failure over the past two decades is demonstrated by the current high drop-out rates and low English literacy levels of many immigrant children; and

(e) WHEREAS young immigrant children can easily acquire full fluency in a new language, such as English, if they are heavily exposed to that language in the classroom at an
early age.

(f) THEREFORE it is resolved that: all children in California public schools shall be taught English as rapidly and effectively as possible.

ARTICLE 2. English Language Education

305. Subject to the exceptions provided in Article 3 (commencing with Section 310), all children in California public schools shall be taught English by being taught in English. In particular, this shall require that all children be placed in English language classrooms. Children who are English learners shall be educated through sheltered English immersion during a temporary transition period not normally intended to exceed one year. Local schools shall be permitted to place in the same classroom English learners of different ages but whose degree of English proficiency is similar. Local schools shall be encouraged to mix together in the same classroom English learners from different native-language groups but with the same degree of English fluency. Once English learners have acquired a good working knowledge of English, they shall be transferred to English language mainstream classrooms. As much as possible, current supplemental funding for English learners shall be maintained, subject to possible modification under Article (commencing with Section 335) below.

306. The definitions of the terms used in this article and in Article 3 (commencing with Section 310) are as follows:

(a) "English learner" means a child who does not speak English or whose native language is not English and who is not currently able to perform ordinary classroom work in English, also known as a Limited English Proficiency or LEP child.

(b) "English language classroom" means a classroom in which the language of instruction used by the teaching personnel is overwhelmingly the English language, and in which such teaching personnel possess a good knowledge of the English language.

(c) "English language mainstream classroom" means a classroom in which the students either are native English language speakers or already have acquired reasonable fluency in English.
(d) "Sheltered English immersion" or "structured English immersion" means an English language acquisition process for young children in which nearly all classroom instruction is in English but with the curriculum and presentation designed for children who are learning the language.

(e) "Bilingual education/native language instruction" means a language acquisition process for students in which much or all instruction, textbooks, and teaching materials are in the child's native language.

ARTICLE 3. Parental Exceptions

310. The requirements of Section 305 may be waived with the prior written informed consent, to be provided annually, of the child's parents or legal guardian under the circumstances specified below and in Section 311. Such informed consent shall require that said parents or legal guardian personally visit the school to apply for the waiver and that they there be provided a full description of the educational materials to be used in the different educational program choices and all the educational opportunities available to the child. Under such parental waiver conditions, children may be transferred to classes where they are taught English and other subjects through bilingual education techniques or other generally recognized educational methodologies permitted by law. Individual schools in which 20 students or more of a given grade level receive a waiver shall be required to offer such a class; otherwise, they must allow the students to transfer to a public school in which such a class is offered.

311. The circumstances in which a parental exception waiver may be granted under Section 310 are as follows:

(a) Children who already know English: the child already possesses good English language skills, as measured by standardized tests of English vocabulary comprehension, reading, and writing, in which the child scores at or above the state average for his grade level or at or above the 5th grade average, whichever is lower; or

(b) Older children: the child is age 10 years or older, and it is the informed belief of the school principal and educational staff that an alternate course of educational study would be better suited to the child's rapid acquisition of basic English
language skills; or

(c) Children with special needs: the child already has been placed for a period of not less than thirty days during that school year in an English language classroom and it is subsequently the informed belief of the school principal and educational staff that the child has such special physical, emotional, psychological, or educational needs that an alternate course of educational study would be better suited to the child's overall educational development. A written description of these special needs must be provided and any such decision is to be made subject to the examination and approval of the local school superintendent, under guidelines established by and subject to the review of the local Board of Education and ultimately the State Board of Education. The existence of such special needs shall not compel issuance of a waiver, and the parents shall be fully informed of their right to refuse to agree to a waiver.

ARTICLE 4. Community-Based English Tutoring

315. In furtherance of its constitutional and legal requirement to offer special language assistance to children coming from backgrounds of limited English proficiency, the state shall encourage family members and others to provide personal English language tutoring to such children, and support these efforts by raising the general level of English language knowledge in the community. Commencing with the fiscal year in which this initiative is enacted and for each of the nine fiscal years following thereafter, a sum of fifty million dollars ($50,000,000) per year is hereby appropriated from the General Fund for the purpose of providing additional funding for free or subsidized programs of adult English language instruction to parents or other members of the community who pledge to provide personal English language tutoring to California school children with limited English proficiency.

316. Programs funded pursuant to this section shall be provided through schools or community organizations. Funding for these programs shall be administered by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and shall be disbursed at the discretion of the local school boards, under reasonable guidelines established by, and subject to the review of, the State Board of Education.

ARTICLE 5. Legal Standing and Parental Enforcement
320. As detailed in Article 2 (commencing with Section 305) and Article 3 (commencing with Section 310), all California school children have the right to be provided with an English language public education. If a California school child has been denied the option of an English language instructional curriculum in public school, the child's parent or legal guardian shall have legal standing to sue for enforcement of the provisions of this statute, and if successful shall be awarded normal and customary attorney's fees and actual damages, but not punitive or consequential damages. Any school board member or other elected official or public school teacher or administrator who willfully and repeatedly refuses to implement the terms of this statute by providing such an English language educational option at an available public school to a California school child may be held personally liable for fees and actual damages by the child's parents or legal guardian.

ARTICLE 6. Severability

325. If any part or parts of this statute are found to be in conflict with federal law or the United States or the California State Constitution, the statute shall be implemented to the maximum extent that federal law, and the United States and the California State Constitution permit. Any provision held invalid shall be severed from the remaining portions of this statute.

ARTICLE 7. Operative Date

330. This initiative shall become operative for all school terms which begin more than sixty days following the date at which it becomes effective.

ARTICLE 8. Amendment.

335. The provisions of this act may be amended by a statute that becomes effective upon approval by the electorate or by a statute to further the act's purpose passed by a two-thirds vote of each house of the Legislature and signed by the Governor.

ARTICLE 9. Interpretation

340. Under circumstances in which portions of this statute are subject to conflicting interpretations, Section 300 shall be assumed to contain the governing intent of the statute.
### Appendix B

**Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Comprehension</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cannot be said to understand even simple conversation.</td>
<td>Has great difficulty following what is said. Can comprehend only social conversation spoken slowly and with frequent repetitions.</td>
<td>Understands most of what is said at slower-than-normal speed with repetitions.</td>
<td>Understands nearly everything at normal speech, although occasional repetition may be necessary. Understands classroom discussions.</td>
<td>Understands everyday conversation and normal classroom discussions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B. Fluency</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speech so halting and fragmentary as to make conversation virtually impossible.</td>
<td>Usually hesitant: often forced into silence by language limitations.</td>
<td>Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussion frequently disrupted by the student’s search for the correct manner of expression.</td>
<td>Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions generally fluent, with occasional lapses while the student searches for the correct manner of expression.</td>
<td>Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions fluent and effortless; approximating that of a native speaker.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C. Vocabulary</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make conversation virtually impossible.</td>
<td>Misuse of words and very limited vocabulary: comprehension quite difficult.</td>
<td>Student frequently uses wrong words: conversation somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary.</td>
<td>Student occasionally uses inappropriate terms and/or must rephrase ideas because of lexical inadequacies.</td>
<td>Use of vocabulary and idioms approximate that of a native speaker.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D. Pronunciation</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation problems so severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.</td>
<td>Very hard to understand because of pronunciation problems. Must frequently repeat in order to make him/herself understood.</td>
<td>Pronunciation problems necessitate concentration on the part of the listener and occasionally lead to misunderstanding.</td>
<td>Always intelligible, although the listener is conscious of a definite accent and occasional inappropriate intonation patterns.</td>
<td>Pronunciation and intonation approximate that of a native speaker.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E. Grammar</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Errors in grammar and word order so severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.</td>
<td>Grammar and word order errors make comprehension difficult. Must often rephrase and/or restrict him/herself to basic patterns.</td>
<td>Makes frequent errors of grammar and word order that occasionally obscure meaning.</td>
<td>Occasionally makes grammatical and/or word order errors that do not obscure meaning.</td>
<td>Grammar and word order approximate that of a native speaker.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
SOLOM phases: Phase I: Score 5-11 = non-English proficient; Phase II: Score 12-18 = limited English proficient; Phase III: Score 19-24 = limited English proficient; Phase IV: Score 25 = fully English proficient.

Based on your observation of the student, indicate with an "X" across the category which best describes the student's abilities. The SOLOM should only be administered by persons who themselves score at level "4" or above in all categories in the language being assessed. Students scoring at level "1" in all categories can be said to have no proficiency in the language.

## Appendix C
### Writing Traits Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Beginning Level</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Advanced Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td>Writes one or two short sentences</td>
<td>Writes several sentences.</td>
<td>Writes a paragraph or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Lacks logical sequence or so short that organization presents no problem.</td>
<td>Somewhat sequenced.</td>
<td>Follows standard organization for genre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Basic word order problems. Uses only present tense forms.</td>
<td>Minor grammatical errors, such as -s on verbs in third person singular.</td>
<td>Grammar resembles that of native speaker of same age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Limited vocabulary. Needs to rely at times on first language or ask for translation.</td>
<td>Knows most words needed to express ideas, but lacks vocabulary for finer shades of meaning.</td>
<td>Flexible in word choice; similar to good native writer of same age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>Does not differentiate form to suit purpose.</td>
<td>Chooses form to suit purpose, but limited in choices of expository forms.</td>
<td>Knows several genres; makes appropriate choices. Similar to effective native writers of same age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence variety</td>
<td>Uses one or two sentence patterns.</td>
<td>Uses several sentence patterns.</td>
<td>Uses a good variety of sentence patterns effectively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix D

Student Interview Questionnaire

1. What school did you attend in second grade? ______________ 

2. Who was your teacher last year? ________________________

3. Which language do you think you speak best?
   English________   Spanish________

4. Which language do you think you read best?
   English________   Spanish________

5. Which language do you think you write best?
   English________   Spanish________

6. When you write in your journal, in what language do you write?
   English________   Spanish________

7. For you, how difficult is learning to read in Spanish?
   1 (easy)   2   3   4   5 (hard)

8. For you, how difficult is learning to read in English?
   1 (easy)   2   3   4   5 (hard)

9. For you, how difficult is learning to write in Spanish?
   1 (easy)   2   3   4   5 (hard)

10. For you, how difficult is learning to write in English?
    1 (easy)   2   3   4   5 (hard)

11. How did you learn to read in Spanish?
    ___________________________
12. How did you learn to read in English?

13. How did you learn to write in Spanish?

14. How did you learn to write in English?

15. Last year, more of the instruction in your classroom was in Spanish. This year, more instruction is in English. How do you feel about this change?