



2008

Description and Analysis of Bilingual Programs Implemented in Kalamazoo Public Schools

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DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF BILINGUAL PROGRAMS

Description and Analysis of Bilingual Programs Implemented in

Kalamazoo Public Schools

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Lee Honors College

Senior Thesis

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Introduction and importance of study

The purpose of this study is to answer the question “How does Kalamazoo’s bilingual education program align with the standards established by Intercultural Development Research Association?” In this study I list and researched the current bilingual programs implemented in Kalamazoo Public Schools, and then I analyze Kalamazoo Public Schools’ overall bilingual program using a rubric designed by Montecel, Cortez, Cortez, and Villarreal (2002).

Research on bilingual programs is important because more and more often schools are faced with a rising population of students whose first language is not English – in fact, according to one source, the number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in the nation's schools has increased by 50% over the past 10 years, and that figure is expected to double in the next decade (sharingsuccess.org). With that in mind, if one is to research bilingual programs as they are implemented in schools, it is important to do so by using analytical tools that have been established through prior research, such as the rubric designed by Montecel et al (2002).

Through increased research of bilingual programs, my hope is that schools will be able to use the resulting information to make better decisions about how to best educate students who speak English as a second language as well as how to determine the efficacy of the methods they employ. By attending to the needs of their bilingual students just as they do with students who are native speakers of English, schools can only move forward in their efforts to make education accessible to all.

Description of current bilingual programs implemented in Kalamazoo Public Schools

According to the Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) web site, “the Kalamazoo Public Schools Bilingual / ESL program is a combination of Transitional Bilingual Education, English

as a Second Language, and Two Way Language Immersion Programs” (Kalamazoo Public Schools, 2007). The Kalamazoo Public Schools web site maintains that it has established several bilingual centers with full-time staff to employ these bilingual programs. These centers include Lincoln International Studies School, Woods Lake Elementary, Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts, Kalamazoo Central High School, and Loy Norrix High School (Kalamazoo Public Schools, 2007). The following information was found at the Kalamazoo Public Schools district profile on the greatschools.net web site and on the Public School Review web site.

Kalamazoo, Michigan has approximately 150,657 residents, 36% of which have a college degree. The average age of its citizens is 29 years old and the median household income is \$35,384 which, when considering that the average household size is 2.4 persons, is approximately \$11,000 over the Federal Poverty level (\$14,000) as listed by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (2008).

According to the KPS web site, the school district has 17 elementary schools (including one dual-language school), four middle schools (including one alternative learning program) and three high schools. Kalamazoo Public Schools has 772 teachers and 12,316 students. 6,389 of those students are male, comprising 51.9% of the district population; 5,927 students are female, making up the remaining 48.1% of the population (publicschoolreview.com).

The majority of students in the Kalamazoo Public Schools district are African American (47% with the state average being 20%) followed by White (40% with the state average being 71%), and Hispanic (9% with the state average being 5%). 2% of students identify as being of Asian ethnicity (state average – 2%), and 1% are listed as American Indian (state average - <1%). 1% are Unspecified (state average was not available). 62% of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch, compared to the state average of 37% (greatschools.net)

From 2005-2006, 57% of expenditures per pupil were instructional (state average – 58%), 15% are for student and staff support (state average – 7%), 10% are for administration (state average – 15%), and 19% are in the “other” category (state average – 19%). Total expenditures per pupil were \$10,089 (state average - \$8,561) (greatschools.net)

The following table provides a brief description of the bilingual centers with full-time staff that have been established in the KPS district as listed on the KPS Bilingual Education web site. Types of Bilingual Education Support were found on the KPS Bilingual Education web site; Number of Students and Teacher:Student Ratio were found at the KPS district profile at www.publicschoolreview.com.

Table 1: Bilingual Centers in the KPS District

School	Type of Bilingual Education Support offered	Number of Students	Teacher:Student Ratio
Lincoln International Studies School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) Program (grades K-3) - Two Way Language Immersion Program (grades 4-5) - Transitional Bilingual Program (grades K-6) 	503	1 : 14
Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ESL Classes - Bilingual Skills Classes - Bilingual/ESL Support 	600	1 : 12
Kalamazoo Central High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ESL Classes - Bilingual History - Bilingual/ESL Support 	1328	1 : 20
Loy Norrix High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ESL Classes - Bilingual History - Bilingual/ESL Support 	1291	1 : 18

The following is a brief description of each type of bilingual education programs most commonly utilized by Kalamazoo Public Schools.

Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)

Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) is a type of bilingual program in which students are taught using two languages – English and the native language – and English is taught as a second language. The main purpose of these programs is to help the English language learner transition to an all-English teaching environment while still providing the student with academic subject instruction in the native language to the extent that it is necessary (NCELA, 2006). In TBE programs, English language learners are provided with content instruction in their primary language while they learn English separately.

According to Marshall, Lieb, DeMorais, and Saavedra (2003), “People who are in favor of transitional bilingual education believe that the first language can be helpful in providing background knowledge, and literacy transfers across languages” (§ 3). Also, some argue that while the implementation of all-English classes may impede the academic development of English language learners, TBE is designed to avoid this (Genesee, 1999). This may be due to the fact that in all-English classes, English language learners may not yet be able to speak and understand English enough to sufficiently understand and benefit from that type of instruction. Meanwhile, TBE allows English language learners to master the content area in their native language while making the transition to all-English instruction. (Genesee, 1999).

However, there are also a number of inherent issues that may arise with the use of TBE. These problems may include, “(1) the unexamined effect of transitional bilingual education, (2) a need for more examination of the concept of ‘transfer,’ (3) materials development in the less commonly spoken languages other than Spanish, and (4) development of trained teachers who are proficient in other languages” (Marshall et al., 2003, § 4). Though Transitional Bilingual

Education is a popular method of bilingual instruction, much research is still needed to determine the efficacy of this approach, as with any approach.

Critics also believe that TBE may interfere with the proper teaching of English, and that there is no clear-cut evidence that this type of bilingual education is more effective than using the traditional method of teaching English through English. Also, it may keep students in the program for a period of time which may be considered too lengthy (Marshall et al., 2003). Villarreal (1999) claims “research and evidence show that most transitional bilingual education programs are segregated and anemic. They operate in isolation, lack public and administrative support, languish in poorly designed models of instruction, and are staffed by personnel with preconceived notions on the innate and acquired abilities and aspirations of English language learners and their families” (p. 12).

TBE, like any other educational program, also requires a number of resources to be successful. These resources include credentialed bilingual teaching staff, professional development for mainstream teachers that are in charge of all-English instruction, appropriate bilingual instructional materials, bilingual assessments, special programs and other additional bilingual resources (library books, school newsletters, parent bulletins), and strong leadership (Genesee, 1999). Also, it is crucial to have a partnership between the school and the larger community (Genesee, 1999).

Transitional Bilingual Education can be considered the most common form of bilingual education in the United States (Genesee, 1999). How it is implemented varies by school district, but in all cases the goal is to ensure that English language learners master content knowledge in their native language while helping them acquire proficiency in the English language. While it is

the subject of some criticism, Transitional Bilingual Education also demonstrates a number of positive qualities that allow it to continue to be widely used in schools today.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

English as a Second Language (ESL) is a type of bilingual program in which English language learners learn how to use English using little or none of their native language, usually during the school day. (NCELA, 2006). This type of program typically involves little or no use of the native language and it focuses more on language acquisition than on specific content instruction. (NCELA, 2006). A trained teacher instructs English language learners on how to speak, read, and write English in one or several class periods, and these learners are taught completely in English during the rest of the day (Insideschools.org, 2007).

The Prosper Intermediate School District, located in Prosper, Texas, proposes that ESL students experience a number of benefits. According to their web site, ESL students become more capable in comprehension, speaking, reading, and composition of the English Language (Prosper ISD, 2008). Also, Harvard Graduate Assistant Professor Nonie Lesaux studied 1,000 children comprised of native English speakers and ESL students and found that “the ESL group as a whole did better in grade two on a number of reading and language measures ... than their native-speaking counterparts” (Potier, 2007, ¶4).

Furthermore, while many oppose bilingual education under the pretense that such programs are expensive (Harguth, 2003), Stephen Goode, writer for the online magazine *Insight*, points out that many find English as a Second Language, or ESL, to be cheaper and more effective than other typical federal, state and local bilingual programs (Goode, 1995). Thus one might conclude that ESL is not only useful in allowing English language learners to perform as

well as, or at times better than, their native English speaking classmates, but it is also relatively inexpensive when compared to other programs.

Also, ESL teachers must be qualified in order to maintain the quality of their teaching (Online Education, 2007). According to the State of New Jersey Department of Education, “In order to be considered highly qualified, an ESL teacher must have at least a bachelor’s degree, a standard certificate as an ESL teacher and must demonstrate content area expertise in ESL” (State of New Jersey, 2004, ¶6). Carol Kreidler (1987) points out that “The teacher of ESL must know more than simply how to speak the language. Studies in English linguistics, anthropology, psychology, and sociology, as well as in education, form the special areas of preparation for the ESL teacher” (¶8). Furthermore, ESL instructors have the option to pursue a master’s degree in Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language in at least 36 states and or territories in the U.S. (universities.com).

However, as is the case with other bilingual education programs, there does exist some criticism with regards to ESL programs. One critic maintains, “ESL is ineffective in training students to speak English because it does almost nothing to retrain the brain to coordinate hearing and to control millions of nerve sensors in the mouth. ESL emphasizes language memory, but it does almost nothing to help the student's brain coordinate all of the new information into spoken English” (freeenglishnow.com, 2006, ¶8). This critic also claims, “Students universally complain because ESL does not teach them to speak English. It can't. ESL principally teaches two things (language memory and visual memory) and only one of these is required in speech. At it’s very best, ESL partially teaches only one of the three essential elements required in spoken language” (freeenglishnow.com, 2006, ¶10).

On the other hand, professor Huaxin Xu (1993), argues, “The question in English-As-Second-Language (ESL) classrooms is not whether a teaching method is good or not, but whether the teacher knows how, for what purpose, for what kind of students, and in what language situation a particular method is used to enhance learning effectively” (p. 1). Therefore it may be argued that the effectiveness of ESL programs is not inherent in their design but depends largely on the teachers who implement them.

Two Way Language Immersion Programs

According to Mary Ann Zehr (2005), assistant editor for Education Week, Two Way Language Immersion Programs are bilingual programs in which “native English speakers and native speakers of another language – usually Spanish – learn both languages in the same classroom” (¶3). Such programs aim for the development of dual language proficiency along with academic achievement in English language learners (Christian, 1994). Two Way Language Immersion programs integrate language majority and language minority students and provide instruction for those students both in English and in the native language of the language minority students (Christian, 1994).

There exist a number of positive opinions about the use of Two Way Language Immersion Programs. According to Thomas and Collier (1998), “Dual language programs help native and nonnative speakers of English speak two languages proficiently--and they do so in cost-effective ways that lead to high academic achievement for all students” (p. 23). Also, results of program evaluations around the country demonstrate the effectiveness of such programs in promoting academic achievement for minority and majority language students, as well as improved levels of bilingual proficiency for both groups (Christian, 1994). Christian (1994) also feels that “two-way bilingual education can be an effective model for teaching academic

subjects, for teaching other languages to English-speaking students, for teaching English to students from other language backgrounds, and for fostering positive cross-cultural attitudes and self-esteem among students” (¶42).

Additionally, a study by Senesac (2002) concludes that through two-way immersion, “it is possible to provide a challenging, equitable, educational environment supportive of the linguistic, academic, and social goals of language minority and language majority students” (p. 99). Students in this study received English instruction only 50% of the time, yet they consistently achieved high levels in English reading and writing, math, science, and social studies. Also demonstrated in this study were “very high attendance rates and parent satisfaction demonstrated by their strong advocacy for the program and volunteer participation in all components of the school” (Senesac, 2002, p. 99).

However, some issues may arise with the utilization of Two Way Language Immersion programs. For example, students whose programs use different amounts of the target language may experience different outcomes (Christian, 1994). Also, some successful Two Way Language Immersion programs have found that extra funding is necessary to provide the staff development and materials necessary for such programs (California Department of Education, 2006).

For Two Way Language Immersion programs to be successful, the following conditions are necessary:

- A minimum of six years of bilingual instruction;
- Focus on the main academic curriculum rather than a watered-down version
- Quality language arts teaching in both languages
- Separation of the two languages for instruction

- Use of the non-English language for at least 50 percent of the instructional time and as much as 90 percent in earlier grades
- Full support from school administrators
- A balanced ratio of students who speak each language (preferably not below 70:30)
- Promotion of positive interdependence among peers and between teachers and students
- A high quality instructional personnel; and active partnerships between schools and parents. (Thomas & Collier, p. 25, 1998)

Senesac (2002) also finds it necessary to include “a nurturing, family atmosphere with high expectations for learning and personal development...a thematic curriculum reflecting the culture of the students... and pedagogical approaches and strategies that are student-centered, fostering interaction and active engagement in learning” (p. 99).

While the Transitional Bilingual Education model is traditionally the most common form of bilingual education in the United States, “an increasing number of schools are offering two-way bilingual immersion programs as educational options to meet the needs of both language minority and language majority students” (Senesac, 2002, p. 85). Two Way Language Immersion programs show much promise in the classroom, having yielded many positive results in past and current research.

In order to analyze the implementation of these three models of bilingual education in Kalamazoo Public Schools, it is useful to have a set of guidelines by which to do so. Thus, an established and recognized rubric, based on the research of the Intercultural Development Research Association, was used for this process. The following section will describe and explain the rubric that was used and the five dimensions that it encompasses.

Description of rubric for schools with successful bilingual programs

The following rubric, produced by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) was developed with the purpose of helping schools to evaluate their services to English-language learners (Montecel et al, 2002). This guide was designed based on a previous research study, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, whose purpose was “to identify those characteristics which contribute to the high academic performance of students served by bilingual education programs” (Montecel & Cortez, 2002, p. 2). As the purpose of this study is to use this rubric to analyze the bilingual program in place at Kalamazoo Public Schools, it is necessary to describe this rubric and the dimensions it incorporates.

This rubric includes five dimensions: School Indicators, Student Outcomes, Leadership, Support, and Programmatic and Instructional Practices. Within each dimension are subcategories that are considered necessary factors of a successful (or unsuccessful) bilingual education program (see Table 2). IRDA has assessed these factors by collecting quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data included school demographic data, surveys of principals, teachers and administrators, and structured formal classroom observations. Qualitative data included structured interviews with school principals and administrators, and focus group questions asked of teachers, parents, and students when possible. School profiles were also analyzed (Montecel & Cortez, 2002).

Table 2: Outcomes/Standards sorted by dimension

Dimension	Outcomes/Standards included
School Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dropout rate - Enrollment in Gifted and Talented Programs and in Advanced Placement Programs - Enrollment in Special Education or Remedial Programs - Test Exemption Rates - Program Exiting Standard

Student Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oral Language Proficiency - Written Language Proficiency - Content Area Mastery in English - Content Area Mastery in the Native Language
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership - Vision and Goals - School Climate - Linkages - School Organization and Accountability
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional Development - Parent Involvement - Staff Accountability and Student Assessment - Staff Selection and Recognition - Community Involvement
Programmatic and Instructional Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Program Model - Classroom Climate - Curriculum and Instruction - Teacher Expectations - Program Articulation

The following section contains a brief description of each dimension with the subcategories as described by Montecel et al., (2002) along with the criteria as outlined in the rubric for meeting that subcategory, and a subsequent description of the current situation in Kalamazoo Public Schools. Each description was provided by Julie Devers, a bilingual / ESL specialist for Kalamazoo Public Schools. Ms. Devers provided the information during an interview as well as by answering a document of questions that she returned to me via email. The following information is all of the information that I had available to me at the time, so although I filled in what I could, it should not be considered all-inclusive. All information from Ms. Devers was gathered in 2008.

School Outcomes

According to Montecel et al. (2002), the School Outcomes dimension includes retention rate, dropout rate, enrollment rate in gifted and talented programs and in advanced placement

programs, enrollment in special education or remedial programs, test exemption rates, and program exiting standards.

Retention Rate

Description and criteria: Retention Rate refers to the number of LEP students who are retained in grade. The criteria is defined as “ninety-eight percent or more of all students, including LEP students, are not retained in grade: retention is only allowed for extenuating circumstances” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 8).

Current situation in KPS: According to Julie Devers (2008), bilingual/ESL specialist at Kalamazoo Public Schools, schools that are considering the retention of a student communicate with the bilingual staff to get input as to whether the circumstances are extenuating enough to warrant such action. She states the example of one such student: the student had moved four times that year, had been enrolled in three school districts, but had not had good attendance. The school turned to Ms. Devers who interpreted the extenuating circumstances of the student.

Statistical data was not available.

Dropout Rate

Description and criteria: Dropout Rate refers to the number of LEP students that fully complete the school curriculum. The criteria is defined as “ninety-five percent or more (longitudinal rate) of all students, including LEP students, graduate with a high school diploma” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 10).

Current situation in KPS: Ms. Devers states that she doubts that any urban school has 95% graduation rates; also, “schools use all kinds of ways to calculate the graduation rate.”

Statistical data was not available.

Enrollment in Gifted and Talented Programs and in Advanced Placement Programs

Description and criteria: Enrollment in Gifted and Talented Programs and in Advanced Placement Programs refers to the efforts made to ensure that LEP students are not under-represented in such programs. In this instance, “under-represented” means that “the proportion of LEP students [in gifted and talented programs and in advanced placement programs] is lower than that of non-LEP students enrolled in GT/AP programs, and *no efforts* are made to meet the standard ” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 12). The criteria is defined as: “LEP students, as compared to non-LEP students, are not under-represented in gifted and talented and in advanced placement (GT/AP) programs” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 12).

Current situation in KPS: According to Ms. Devers, it is likely that LEP students are under-represented. The tests used to decide on Academically Talented (AT) candidates are in English, which would result in lower scores for those kids who are limited in English.

Enrollment in Special Education or Remedial Programs

Description and criteria: Enrollment in Special Education or Remedial Programs refers to the efforts made to keep LEP students from becoming over-represented in such programs. “Over-represented” in this case would mean that “the proportion of LEP students [in special education or remedial programs] is higher than that of non-LEP students, and *no efforts* are made to meet the standard” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 14).

The criteria is defined as: “LEP students, as compared to non-LEP students, are not over-represented in special education or remedial programs” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 14).

Current situation in KPS: According to Ms. Devers, the special education department and staff are careful to not identify someone as needing special education services or as having a learning disability if that child is an English Language Learner. Special education staff,

psychologists and classroom teachers meet often with one of the bilingual staff to see if staff can tell if the problem is the language level or some kind of disability.

Test Exemption Rates

Description and criteria: Test Exemption Rates refers to the number of LEP students that are exempted from school wide tests, such as standardized tests, state tests and open-ended assessments. The criteria is defined as “No students, other than special education students exempted by their Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committees, are exempted from tests” (Montecel et al., p. 16, 2002).

Current situation in KPS: According to Ms. Devers, English Language Learners aren’t exempted from mandated tests such as the MEAP. The only exception is that if a student has spent less than one year in the United States, he or she doesn’t have to take the English Language Arts section of the MEAP test. Instead, the student must take the ELPA (English Language Proficiency Assessment). English Language Learners can have accommodations such as extended time, use of videos in English, Spanish and/or Arabic for math, social studies, or science, and use of bilingual dictionaries.

Ms. Devers also gives an example of the Developmental Bilingual Education program at Lincoln Elementary School and the Dual Language School (where students obtain literacy in Spanish), where the school district has approved using Logramos instead of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) in early grades. According to the Garland ISD web site, The ITBS is “a norm-referenced assessment that measures student achievement in the academic areas of reading (including vocabulary, word analysis, reading comprehension, and listening), language, mathematics, social studies, and science” (2006). Meanwhile, Logramos is “a norm-referenced achievement test to assess the academic progress of Spanish-speaking students. The Logramos

measures a student's ability to apply knowledge and concepts, as well as interpret and analyze information" (garlandisd.net).

Program Exiting Standard

Description and criteria: A Programming Exiting Standard deals with how long students will remain in a school's limited English program before they are exited from that program (Oakeley, Urrabazo, & Yang, 1998). The criteria is defined as "Students in bilingual education programs are not exited before the third grade but are exited only upon demonstrating full English proficiency and being on grade level in all content areas" (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 18).

Current situation in KPS: According to Ms. Devers, students are not exited in early elementary. Students at the upper elementary or secondary level must meet specific criteria: they must "score at the Advanced Proficient Level on the ELPA, have a 2.0 average, have no grade below a C in a content area, and the recommendation of the classroom teachers and bilingual staff." After exiting, students are monitored for two years to ensure that they are experiencing academic success, and if they are having difficulties, staff has the option of re-classifying them and providing them with additional support.

Student Outcomes

According to Montecel et al, (2002), the student outcomes dimension includes oral language proficiency, written language proficiency, content area mastery in English, and content area mastery in the Native Language.

Oral Language Proficiency

Description and criteria: Oral Language Proficiency refers to "proficiency in literacy skills in English and the native language of the English language learner" and is a major goal of effective bilingual education programs (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 21). Montecel et al., (2002)

elaborate that LEP children are often excluded from state and local education accountability systems, and that this practice has led to the overlooking of their needs.

The criteria is defined as “Students participating in bilingual education programs since kindergarten are fully proficient in speaking English and their native language (on level) by fifth grade; secondary-level students fully proficient in their native language in English as a second language (ESL) programs are fully proficient in speaking English after three years in the program” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 22).

Current situation in KPS: Ms. Devers attests: “we do not use years in our system to decide on whether they receive services or whether they are exited. We use the criteria above (by “above,” Ms. Devers meant the criteria as defined by Montecel et al. that is listed in the above paragraph). The ELPA score tells us whether they are proficient or not. Besides, it can take 7 years or more to learn the academic English needed to succeed in the classroom.”

Written Language Proficiency

Description and criteria: Written Language Proficiency refers to “proficiency in literacy skills in English and the native language of the English Language Learner (ELL)” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 23). Montecel et al. comment that “recent research in bilingualism asserts that the bilingual student brings to learning a linguistic repertoire that cannot be measured in a single language; therefore, developing adequate assessments in the students’ first language and in English is crucial” (2002, p. 23). The criteria is defined as “Students participating in bilingual education programs since kindergarten are fully proficient in reading and writing English and in their native language (on level) by the fifth grade; secondary level students fully proficient in their native language in ESL programs are fully proficient in reading and writing English after three years in the program” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 24).

Current situation in KPS: Ms. Devers claims that the situation with this category is the same as that of the oral language proficiency category. However, it takes even longer for a student to be proficient in writing.

Content Area Mastery in English

Description and criteria: Content Area Mastery in English refers to the development of a curriculum that helps English-learning students gain important academic skills in the main content areas, such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies (Montecel et al., 2002). In this type of curriculum, content area vocabulary may be presented both in English and Spanish with the intent of helping English language learners develop the ability to use such vocabulary words in a number of academic contexts (Montecel et al., 2002). The criteria is defined as “LEP students’ performance in content areas (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies) meet and exceed the state and/or district standards” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 26).

Current situation in KPS: For this category, Ms. Devers simply points out that “the ELLs do not seem to be a problem group on the MEAP when data is broken down into sub-groups.”

Content Area Mastery in the Native Language

Description and criteria: Content Area Mastery in the Native Language refers to the development of a curriculum that includes instruction of the main content areas (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) in the native language. In this type of curriculum, English language learners may initially receive reading instruction in the native language, and receive English literacy instruction at a later age, usually in the third grade (Montecel et al., 2002). The criteria is defined as “LEP students’ performance in content areas (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies) meet and exceed the state and/or district standards” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 28).

Current situation in KPS: According to Ms. Devers, only the Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) program at Lincoln Elementary and the Dual Language School provide content area in the native language. Students at Lincoln have done very well, while the Dual Language School is in its first year. By “very well,” Ms. Devers means that “the students in the DBE or Dual Language program did well in Spanish on Logramos as well as on DIBELS [Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills] and other Spanish assessments” (Devers, 2008).

Leadership

According to Montecel et al. (2002), the Leadership dimension includes leadership, vision and goals, school climate, linkages, and school organization and accountability.

Leadership

Description and criteria: According to Montecel et al. (2002), Leadership, with regards to a bilingual education program, involves the following characteristics:

- “Total and unwavering commitment to students’ achievement and to an excellent bilingual education program that is fully integrated into school;
- Open and frequent communication between the principal, faculty, and staff;
- Pro-active involvement of faculty, staff and the community in the bilingual education program;
- Professionalism, skills, and knowledge;
- Grounded in the rationale for bilingual education;
- Valuing of all individuals – students, parents, faculty and staff;
- An ability to inspire, motivate and validate;
- Openness to innovation and change;
- Access provided to current research and best practices;

- An ability to identify, secure, and mobilize resources;

Support for faculty and staff” (p. 31);

- The criteria is defined as “Program leaders are well-informed of the rationale for bilingual education and share an active commitment to bilingualism. They pro-actively involve teachers, the community and private sector in the design, and development of the bilingual program and are open to innovation” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 32).

Current situation in KPS: Ms. Devers provides the following example: “KPS provided a 3 day SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) training for 30 teachers this past August in an effort to help prepare K-12 teachers with the strategies and knowledge to successfully teach the ELLs in the classrooms. There will be a follow-up session some time during the winter for those 30 teachers. There will be further training sessions with additional teachers. SIOP is an excellent way to provide the support needed for ELLs. In the past, several schools have had Manuel and me do workshops for their teachers to help them use strategies that work well with ELLs.”

Ms. Devers also points that the fact that the district opened the Dual Language School and that Lincoln now has a DBE program demonstrates that support. Also, bilingual staff were given approval to hire two additional bilingual teachers this year. However, there still remains a shortage of bilingual and ESL teachers, and thus there is still a vacancy.

Vision and Goals

Description and criteria: Vision and Goals refers to the fact that a schools’ vision and goals “should be published and evident throughout the schools, setting clear expectations for the achievement of all students” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 33). These visions and goals show in the daily work of principals, faculty, staff and families, and are often developed by those same

individuals (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 33). Meanwhile, Snyder and Graves define vision as “the ability to see the present as it is and formulate a future that grows out of and improves upon the present” (1994, ¶6).

The criteria is defined as “The school has published and disseminated statements of expectations to the school community that create a vision and set of goals that define the achievement levels of all students, including LEP students. Staff, parents and students, including language-minority parents and students, can state the purpose of the school in their own words” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 34).

Current situation in KPS: A Strategic Plan is available on the Kalamazoo Public Schools web site. This plan, available in pdf format for all to download, provides clear expectations for the community, educators, parents, students, and support staff. The Strategic Plan is divided into five separate pdf files, each of which provides a different component of the Strategic Plan. These components include expectations for: Community, Educators, Parents, Students, and Support Staff. Each file contains between 3-16 pages; the largest files are that of the expectations for parents and that of the expectations for students. The Strategic Plan, with all of its components, is readily available at the following address:

<http://www.kalamazoopublicschools.com/education/components/docmgr/default.php?sectiondetailid=20662>

School Climate

Description and criteria: According to Montecel et al. (2002), School Climate, with regards to a bilingual education program, involves the following characteristics:

- “All of the schools are safe and orderly;

- All of the administration, faculty, staff, parents and students feel responsible for maintaining a safe and orderly climate;
- ‘Order’ operationally looks different in the different settings: ‘orderly chaos’ in some, structured and well-defined in others; but the underlying ‘order’ of well-defined expectations, responsibilities and roles are clear and understood by all;
- ‘Safe’ includes personal safety as well as safety to innovate, change and communicate;
- All of the schools affirm and value racial and cultural differences;

All of the schools have a climate of caring, belonging and friendliness” (p. 35).

The criteria is defined as “The school climate is safe and orderly. A safe and orderly climate is a shared goal that is articulated by educators, students and community members as a whole.

Everyone feels responsible for maintaining a safe and orderly school climate for all students” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 46).

Current situation in KPS: The Strategic Plan that is available on the Kalamazoo Public Schools web site provides a set of goals to be shared by educators, students and community members as a whole. Also, Ms. Devers feels that all schools need to work “constantly and consistently” to make the school climate safe and orderly. One new program she mentions, the alternative middle school program, is part of making school orderly. She states that middle school students whose behavior is a disruption in the classroom and the school will attend this alternative school for a marking period (or longer), and will receive intensive assistance and support to facilitate their orderly re-entry to their home school.

Linkages

Description and criteria: Linkages, according to Montecel et al., deals with the connections between staff within the school setting. These linkages can be vertical, between

central office staff and school staff, or horizontal, where members of each subset work together. Bilingual teachers are fully integrated into the school system (2002). High levels of communication, exchanging and sharing of ideas, and a shared focus on the achievement of all students are prevalent (Montecel et al., 2002).

The criteria is defined as “Clearly articulated roles and responsibilities, dynamic two-way communication, and focused and sustained supports between central office and school level staff provide strong leadership, credibility and respect for the bilingual program” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 38).

Current situation in KPS: Ms. Devers believes that the bilingual program has great credibility and respect in most of the schools, especially those with a large number of ESL students. The schools rely on bilingual staff to help with conferences, MEAP tests, as well as to provide needed academic support. She feels that the bilingual program has “many wonderful staff members, and its their dedication and skills that have brought the program the respect and credibility.”

School Organization and Accountability

Description and criteria: School Organization and Accountability, according to Montecel et al., deals with how well the bilingual program is integrated into the school’s academic plan (2002). It also deals with how well the bilingual program is supported by school staff and administration, and the strength of the accountability system with regards to the success of all students, including English language learners (Montecel et al., 2002). The criteria is defined as “The bilingual program is an integral part of the school’s academic plan and is widely respected by the school’s administration. There is strong accountability for the success of all students, including LEP students” (Montecel et al., 2002, p.40).

Current situation in KPS: Ms. Devers feels that all of the above is true for Lincoln.

However, she speaks only for Lincoln, where she is located, and points out that this varies with each individual school and it is not a question that can be answered at the district level.

Support

According to Montecel et al. (2002), the Support dimension includes professional development, parent involvement, staff accountability and student assessment, staff selection and recognition, and community involvement.

Professional Development

Description and criteria: Professional Development refers to the degree to which bilingual teachers are fully credentialed and continue to seek and acquire new knowledge with regards to current research on the best known bilingual practices (Montecel et al., 2002). In the ideal scenario, all teachers are included in the sharing and receiving of information with regards to curriculum development and strategies for helping all students, including bilingual students, to succeed (Montecel et al., 2002). The criteria is defined as “Fully credentialed bilingual education and ESL teachers are continuously acquiring new knowledge regarding best practices in bilingual education and ESL and other best practices in curriculum and instruction and receive appropriate training in the students’ native language. All teachers in the school regularly receive information about bilingual education, ESL strategies, and students’ cultural and linguistic characteristics that serve as assets to their academic success” (Montecel et al., 2002, p.44).

Current situation in KPS: Ms. Devers attests that KPS bilingual and ESL teachers are all certified by the state and receive professional development every year. Some receive professional development through the KPS bilingual program, some receive it through their schools, and some receive it by attending state and national conferences.

Parent Involvement

Description and criteria: According to researchers at the University of Houston – Clear Lake, language minority parents often “remain alienated from the school system due to a variety of circumstances, including: (a) work interference; (b) lack of confidence; (c) lack of English language skills; (d) lack of understanding of the home-school partnership and (e) insensitivity and hostility on the part of school personnel” (Bermudez, Rakow, & Ensley, 1992, p. 1). This is an unfortunate fact given that others, such as Rudy Careaga of the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA), have concluded that parent involvement can substantially increase the effectiveness of ESL programs (Careaga, 1988). Thus it is no surprise that teachers often list low parental involvement along with poverty and poor study habits when asked what makes it difficult for them to help students succeed (The Urban Institute, 2004). The criteria is defined as “All parents, including parents of students in bilingual education and ESL programs, know the rationale and the critical components of bilingual education and ESL programs and are strong advocates of the programs” (Montecel et al., 2002, p.46).

Current situation in KPS: Ms. Devers states that when new students are identified as being bilingual, their parents are notified. Those parents are informed about support that is available and that they may call with questions. The KPS bilingual program also hosts parent meetings several times a year.

Staff Accountability and Student Assessment

Description and criteria: The term “accountability,” when referring to education, is often associated with the No Child Left Behind Act and its consequences, but accountability, at its core definition and implementation, entails much more. As stated by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, accountability can be defined as “an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility

or to account for one's actions" (Merriam-Webster, 2008). Montecel, Cortez, Cortez, and Villarreal point out that in the ideal bilingual setting; teachers hold themselves accountable for all students. They know each student on an individual basis, using each student's needs and strengths to adjust their instructional strategies (2002). Meanwhile, classroom assessment is defined by the University of Northern Iowa's Office of Academic Assessment as a "participatory, iterative process that:

- Provides data/information you need on your students' learning
- Engages you and others in analyzing and using this data/information to confirm and improve teaching and learning
- Produces evidence that students are learning the outcomes you intended
- Guides you in making educational and institutional improvements
- Evaluates whether changes made improve/impact student learning, and documents the learning and your efforts" (2006, ¶1)

The criteria is defined as "Staff holds themselves accountable for the academic success of all students, including LEP students. The school uses appropriate measures to describe academic success for all students, including LEP students. Rigorous academic standards apply to *all* students. Assessment measures include measures in the students' native languages. All measures are aligned with the approved curriculum and related standards" (Montecel et al., 2002, p.48).

Current situation in KPS: Ms Devers points out that assessment isn't normally available in native languages except in special cases such as those she previously mentioned for other categories. She states also that "the elementary math program does come in Spanish, so some schools use the Spanish assessments on occasion" and that ELL students are held to the same standards as other students."

Staff Selection and Recognition

Description and criteria: Montecel, et al. feel that teachers in exemplary schools should be selected for their enthusiasm, commitment and openness to change and innovation (2002). They are also recognized when their students succeed and demonstrate a tendency to stay in their schools as a result (2002). The criteria is defined as “Staff selection and development includes screening to ensure full written and oral proficiency in both languages and training for teachers to adjust the program to ensure that all teachers are able to serve LEP students. Teachers feel strongly supported and free to innovate. Teachers are frequently recognized for their successes” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 50).

Current situation in KPS: One limitation of this research was that individual teachers were not interviewed; thus, as this category cannot be analyzed without comprehensive input from such teachers, it cannot be accurately assessed.

Community Involvement

Description and criteria: Ideally, communities surrounding schools with successful bilingual programs are not only aware that the bilingual programs exist, but they strongly advocate them (Montecel et al., 2002). Members of the community form connections with the schools, and the schools in return work to keep the community engaged (Montecel et al., 2002). Brannon (2008) affirms that “when parents are involved, the effects on students are clearly positive” (p. 56). The criteria is defined as “Community members know the rationale and the critical components of bilingual education and ESL programs and are strong advocates of the program” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 52).

Current situation in KPS: Ms. Devers doesn’t believe that most community members know much about the bilingual/ESL program.

Programmatic and Instructional Practices

According to Montecel et al. (2002), the Programmatic and Instructional Practices dimension includes program model, classroom climate, curriculum and instruction, and teacher expectations.

Program Model

Description and criteria: In an exemplary school, regardless of the type of model implemented, it is essential that the program model be grounded in sound theory and the best practices (Montecel et al., 2002). This is to say that before administrators and educators choose to employ any particular bilingual program model, they should investigate whether the program model shows strong evidence of success in current research and if the program is, in fact, the best choice out of many. They should also examine whether the program model aligns with previously established instructional theory. The criteria is defined as “Teachers and community members participated in the selection and design of a bilingual/ESL program model that is consistent with the characteristics of the LEP student population. The program model is grounded in sound theory and best practices associated with an enriched, not remedial, instructional model. Administrators and teachers believe in the program, are well versed on the program, are able to articulate and comment on its viability and success, and demonstrate their belief” (Montecel et al., 2002, p.56).

Current situation in KPS: According to Ms. Devers, several models are implemented: Two Way or Dual Language Immersion, Developmental Bilingual Education, and ESL. As KPS has over 50 languages, and KPS cannot offer education in all of those languages, ESL is the most often used program. Teachers are trained and continue to receive training.

Classroom Climate

Description and criteria: According to Montecel et al., classrooms in exemplary schools reflect the climate of the school as a whole – high expectations are held for all students; cultural and linguistic differences are recognized; students are active participants in their own education; parents and the community are actively involved in the classrooms by tutoring, sharing experiences, etc. (Montecel et al., 2002).

The criteria is defined as “The classroom environment communicates high expectations for all students, including LEP students. Teachers seek ways to value cultural and linguistic differences and fully integrate them into the curriculum” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 58).

Current situation in KPS: Ms. Devers did not clarify whether or not the above is true, only that she hopes that it is.

Curriculum and Instruction

Description and criteria: Montecel et al. Claim that in successful schools, the bilingual program is designed to meet student needs with alignment between curriculum standards, assessments, and professional development. Teachers are actively involved in curriculum planning and meet regularly for that purpose, with the support of administration (Montecel et al., 2002).

The criteria is defined as “The curriculum reflects and values the students’ culture. The curriculum adheres to high standards. Instruction is meaningful, technologically appropriate, academically challenging, and linguistically and culturally relevant. It is innovative and uses a variety of techniques that respond to different learning styles” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 60).

Current situation in KPS: Ms. Devers did not clarify whether or not the above is true, only that she hopes that it is.

Teacher Expectations

Description and criteria: Teacher Expectations refers to the idea that, in the ideal school setting, teachers expect all students to succeed. They value diversity and draw on its strengths, thus creating an accepting, valuing and inclusive environment (Montecel et al., 2002).

The criteria is defined as “Teachers expect all students, including LEP students, to achieve at high standards and are willing to do whatever it takes to reach this goal. They value diversity and know how to create an environment that is accepting and inclusive” (Montecel et al., 2002, p. 62).

Current situation in KPS: Ms. Devers did not clarify whether or not the above is true, only that she hopes that it is.

Program Articulation

Description and criteria: Montecel et al. found that successful schools had common instructional programs across grade levels that were aligned with developmentally appropriate practice and student language proficiency levels, both in English and in the native language of the students. This was accomplished with strong linkages across all levels (grade, principal/faculty, school/central office) and through coordination and communication (Montecel et. al, 2002).

The criteria is defined as “There is strong evidence of a common program of instruction that is properly scoped, sequenced and articulated across grade levels and has been aligned with developmentally appropriate practices and student language proficiency levels in English and the students’ first language” (Montecel et al., 2002, p.64).

Current situation in KPS: Ms Devers points out that KPS uses state standards and benchmarks and that staff have worked together to ensure that things are sequenced across grade levels. Staff also selected priority standards to focus on for each of the four levels of ESL.

Elementary and secondary staff also recently decided to purchase some new material from Hampton Brown, and staff will be receiving training in a couple of weeks (as of October 16th, 2008).

Limitations

One limitation of this study was that only one staff member was interviewed, and that the staff member who was interviewed was a member of district personnel. More and different information might have been available if others were also interviewed. Further study could include the opinions and observations of teachers, administrative personnel, students, and members of the community.

While Julie Devers, Bilingual / ESL specialist for Kalamazoo Public Schools, was able to provide very useful opinions and examples of how each standard / outcome is articulated in the Kalamazoo Public School district, it would have been helpful to have statistical data more readily available. It may be useful for KPS to provide data so that families whose first language is not English can make a better informed decision of where to send their students.

Finally, all of the criteria for this study came from one research study; to get a more extensive, well-rounded view of Kalamazoo Public Schools' bilingual program, one could use research from other studies as well and compare/contrast the criteria that different researchers feel is important to consider when analyzing a school's bilingual program.

Implications

While the Kalamazoo Public Schools web site provides a brief outline of the different bilingual programs that it provides in its bilingual centers, it may be useful to provide families with more detailed information about how each program works and how it is implemented in the different schools, or at least to provide links so that families can do research

on their own. This could help families of bilingual students make informed decisions about where to send their students. These decisions may include: whether or not they would like to place their students in Kalamazoo Public Schools; and if they choose to do so, where they would like to send their students within the Kalamazoo Public School District. It could also be useful to provide such information in Spanish, as a number of families may not be able to understand the information if it is presented only in the English language.

It appears, nonetheless, that Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) has a very competent, friendly, and helpful bilingual staff that not only has a strong understanding of the program that they run but also works continuously to improve that program. It would be helpful for other districts to look at how KPS models each standard from the rubric designed by Montecel et al. to get ideas on how each standard can be implemented in a real-world setting. It would also be helpful for other districts to look at the basic profile of the KPS district so as to keep in mind that they may need to tailor their programs somewhat differently due to differences in demographics, finance, etc.

Conclusion

While this research study provides a more in-depth look at the bilingual program in place at Kalamazoo Public Schools, it also opens a door to more extensive research on many levels. It is my hope that this research shows the reader two main points. The first point is how much needs to be considered when analyzing the effectiveness of a bilingual program. One cannot simply look at test scores, demographics and administrative reports to decide whether a bilingual program is truly effective. One must research the types of bilingual program in place, and take a deep look into how it is being implemented at all levels – everyone plays an important role, including the students, the community members, teachers and other staff, and administration.

The second point is how much effort the Kalamazoo Public School district has already made toward increasing its own effectiveness for the students it serves. Kalamazoo Public Schools has developed numerous bilingual centers at all school levels, and implements programs that have been well-researched, including Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), English as a Second Language (ESL) and Two Way Language Immersion Programs. The staff also makes information on their programs readily available and was more than willing to share information about their bilingual program for the purposes of this study.

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