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## The Implementation of Two-Way Immersion Programs

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# The Implementation of Two-Way Immersion Programs



Honors Thesis

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Department: Teacher Education

Advisor: Colleen Gallagher, Ph.D.

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## Abstract

As society becomes more global, educators are searching for models of education that provide students with the ability to be competitive in the global marketplace. Bilingual education offers students the opportunity to learn two languages while maintaining student achievement in other content areas. One option of bilingual education is called two-way immersion (TWI) programs. TWI classrooms are comprised of students who are native speakers of two different languages. Together, these students communicate in both languages, while receiving instruction in both languages as well. These programs have been shown to be effective in teaching two languages without lowering student achievement. Bilingual education also takes advantage of children's natural ability to acquire language. Being exposed to language at a young age is much easier than learning another language after the age of ten. TWI programs in elementary schools provide the language learning supports needed to become bilingual without detriment to other areas of content learning.

Now, the question that remains is the feasibility of implementing these programs in the United States. Societal attitudes, budget concerns and the availability of qualified teachers could pose to be challenges for TWI programs to expand. By examining these possible challenges through qualitative research, the researcher compiles evidence indicating whether or not TWI programs can be implemented practically. With this understanding, policy makers and educators can decide to implement and fund more TWI programs in the United States.

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## **Chapter 1: An Introduction to the Research Study**

### **Background of the Problem**

As the Latino population continues to grow in the United States, it is becoming increasingly important for educators and policymakers to find appropriate models of education that benefit these students. In addition, as the economy becomes more global, native English speakers are interested in developing their language skills as well. Two-way immersion (TWI) programs are a model that provides students with instruction in two languages. In addition, students in the class are a mix of half native speakers of one language and half native speakers of another. Two-way immersion programs are structured for students to be engaged in conversation with speakers of another language and because of this, students are able to acquire two languages without lowering their academic achievement.

TWI programs offer a benefit for Hispanic English Learners (ELs) because TWI allows them the opportunity to maintain their language and culture while learning another language. TWI programs are structured where half enrolled in a classroom are native English speakers and the other half are native Spanish speakers. In addition, instruction throughout the day is in both languages (Howard and Christian, 2002). Through this experience, students are able to acquire both languages. Research shows that TWI programs allow students to stay connected to their native culture through the use of language (Ballinger & Lyster 2011). By providing students with an education that supports their cultural development and their linguistic abilities, TWI is a positive option for educating Hispanic ELs.

For schools looking to implement TWI programs, more research is needed on the implementation process because it can be daunting and complex. This research will also

help promote collaboration between schools to ease schools through the implementation process. The feasibility of TWI programs will be examined by considering budget needs, the availability of qualified teachers and the attitudes towards dual-language programs.

### **Definition of Terms**

To understand the context of this study, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of the specific language associated with bilingual education. Monolingual is the ability to speak one language fluently, this can be compared to bilingual or multilingual, which is having the capacity to speak two or more languages. Dual language is used interchangeably with two-way immersion programs, but sometimes can be used to describe a program similar to TWI, but not as rigorous. Howard, Sugarman, Perdomo, and Adger (2002) describe, “Dual language programs use two languages for literacy and content instruction for all students.”

English Learner (EL) is formerly known as English Language Learner (ELL) or often referred to in governmental documents as Limited English Proficient (LEP). These are individuals learning English, usually in a classroom setting. Language-majority students are students who communicate in the language most commonly used in the area. In the United States, language-majority students generally speak English. On the other side, language-minority students are students who communicate in the language not as commonly spoken in a certain region.

The Bilingual Education Act was created in 1968 to prompt states to designate special services for ELs and to give financial support to agencies that would help implement programs to meet the needs of these students (Mavrogordato 2012). SIOP, stands for Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol. According to U.S. Department of

Education, Institute of Education Sciences it is a “framework for planning and delivering instruction in content areas such as science, history, and mathematics to English language learners as well as other students (2013).”

### **Limitations and Assumptions of the Study**

As a result of the complex workings of policies, schools and budgets, this study will not be able to fully analyze the many factors that impact bilingual education in the United States. This means that the researcher’s ability to generalize the practicality of TWI programs is limited in scope due to the size of this undergraduate honors thesis project. For example, budget considerations and a lack of qualified teachers may be a huge obstacle to the widespread implementation of TWI programs. The researcher will be unable to fully study this as a result of the size and scope of this study.

This study is also limited in that it does not draw comparisons to other EL programs. Other EL programs such as the SIOP model may be effective, especially given the available resources, but this study does not examine those programs. This study will not use observations in classrooms to study the implementation of TWI classrooms with students. Instead, this study examines literature and insights from involved adults in the program.

This thesis will only focus on TWI programs for Spanish and English speaking students. This is because the majority of English learners in the United States are Spanish speakers. Doorlag and Lewis stated that in 2007 the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs reported that over three-quarters of ELs are Spanish-speaking (2011). It is because of this that this study focuses primarily on Spanish-speaking students.

In addition, this study focuses on TWI programs in elementary schools. This study looks specifically at TWI programs in elementary schools because at this time, this is where they are most prevalent.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

TWI programs have been shown to be effective in the teaching content and language to EL students and native English speakers (Marian, Shook & Schroeder, 2013). This study will examine if TWI programs can be practically implemented in school districts across the country. Specifically, this piece of research will use a case study of two elementary schools to examine the human and material resources necessary for the successful implementation of TWI programs. This study will contribute to the knowledge of policy makers and educators who can impact how the TWI programs can be implemented in the United States. The literature review contains information about the effectiveness of TWI programs. In addition, there is information about the components needed for implementation. If students are to reap the benefits from dual language programs in the United States, there needs to be research on how that can be implemented. This study seeks to answer the question of how TWI programs can be successfully implemented by examining the necessary human and material resources.

## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

### **Introduction**

This chapter is a review of the literature regarding bilingual education in the United States. Recognizing the growing number of Hispanic students in schools, this review focuses on the challenges Latino students face and the bilingual programs that support them. In addition, this chapter examines the benefits of bilingual programs for native English speaking students. It will also summarize the history of bilingual programs, why they are needed and how they can be implemented effectively. Two-way immersion programs are a model of bilingual education that is described in detail. Later, the challenges facing two-way immersion programs are explained.

This chapter serves as the basis for the methodology for this study. The information provided in this chapter provides the background necessary for a complete understanding of the various components of the research question: what are the human and material resources needed for the successful implementation of two-way immersion programs in elementary schools?

### **Section 2: Need for Bilingual Education**

The need for bilingual education in the United States has always been present as a result of the constant influx of immigrants populating schools. In recent years, the growing Latino population has prompted a need for bilingual education. Kober (2010) explains that by 2025, it is estimated that about three in ten school-age children will be Latino. With this, it is important to note that this Spanish-speaking population will then make up a large percentage of the nation's workers, college students and voters. This means that to ensure the work-force is well educated, these students need to be receiving the best possible education so that they are prepared to active members of society.

Creating equality in education and building up populations through knowledge is extremely beneficial for the country as a whole. Research by Auguste, Hancock and Laboissere has demonstrated that had the United States fixed the racial achievement gap between African-American and Latino students with white students by 1998, the gross domestic product would have increased to \$525 billion higher by 2008 (2009). The economic benefits of closing the achievement gap are huge and the need is great. Providing Latino students with effective schools will have many positive benefits for the United States, as well as for each child and family individually.

The achievement gap is a challenge facing Latino students in the United States. Many studies have shown that Latino students are consistently scoring below their peers across subject matters and grade levels. Hemphill and Vanneman (2010) summarize, “Closing the Hispanic-White achievement gap remains a challenge. While Hispanic students’ average scores have increased across the assessment years, White students had higher scores, on average, on all assessments (p.iii).” In regards to the NAEP reading test, it states, “At the national level, reading scores increased for both groups significantly, but the achievement gap between Hispanic and White students did not change for fourth- or eighth-graders when comparing 1992 to 2009” (p. v). The Annie E. Casey Foundation reported using NAEP test scores that 2013, only 19% of Hispanic fourth graders scored at or above proficient in reading. In the eighth grade only 21% scored at or above proficient in math (2014). This number decreases even more for immigrant children. For eighth graders in immigrant families only 3% scored at or above proficient in math (2014). Clearly, the achievement gap is a major obstacle facing Latinos

today. The achievement gap, however, can be changed if schools adapt models of education that meet the needs of Latino students.

When studying the achievement gap, it is important to note the influences that affect the academic achievement of Latino students. For example, a majority of school-age Latino children are children of poverty. According to an article by Kober (2010, p. 3), “A majority of school-age Latino children are economically disadvantaged. More than one-fourth (27%) come from families with incomes below the poverty level, and another 33% are near-poor.” When looking at ways to serve Latino students in schools, it is important to consider the impact of poverty on children’s learning. In addition, Latino children when compared to other races, have the least likelihood of living with someone who has a high school diploma. In fact, Latinos are about 26% below the national average of having an education of at least completing high school (Annie E. Casey, 2014, p.11). If the achievement gap is going to be closed, policy makers and educators need to recognize the obstacles such as poverty and family education levels that may make it more difficult for Hispanic students to perform well in school.

The debate of the model is the best way to serve English learners has been deliberated for many years, and often changes in regards to the political context of the times. According to Mavrogordato, in 1968, the Bilingual Education Act was created to prompt states to designate special services for ELs and to give financial support to agencies that would help implement programs to meet the needs of these students (2012). Interestingly, while the legislation never specified how these programs should be implemented, the name of the bill implies that the instruction should be in both

languages. Bilingual education did not receive the full amount of funding, however, and funding continues to be a major challenge today.

In 1978 after the reauthorization of the Bilingual Education Act, bilingual education became highly scrutinized for its ability to be cost-effective for schools. Wood found that bilingual education cost an extra \$376 more per student, but it was not shown to boost student achievement (2008). English-only movements supporting English as a Second Language, ESL, programs began to gain popularity. As a result, states with large EL populations voted to outlaw bilingual education. California, Arizona and Massachusetts voted for English-only instruction (2008). The politics surrounding bilingual education have often made implementing bilingual programs challenging, despite the majority of research that shows that bilingual programs such as two-way immersion programs are most effective for English learners and native English speakers (Fortune, 2014, Thomas and Collier, 2003).

### **Section 3: Challenges to Closing the Achievement Gap**

Many policy makers and educators are looking to two-way immersion programs because there is a real need for effective education for English learners. Madrid states that many Latino students face overcrowding in school, lack of resources and even environmental challenges (2011). Without the proper resources and environment it will be incredibly difficult to boost Latino student achievement. In addition, Drucker stated that many educators are not equipped to work with these Spanish-speaking students of varying English proficiencies. In a survey of 3 million public school teachers, 41% reported teaching EL students. Out of this number, however only 12.5% received eight or more hours of training (2003). This means that these teachers are not getting the research-based strategies that should be used with English learners. Without appropriate teacher

training, educators will be ill-equipped to teach their Spanish-speaking students. To meet the growing education needs of Latino children, teachers need to be prepared through receiving extensive training in working with ELs.

Teacher quality plays a major role in the development of a student. Madrid's research shows that if students learn from qualified teachers, it can help close the achievement gap (2011). On the other side, a few unqualified teachers can prove to be disastrous for a student's academic achievement. Madrid explains, "Furthermore, high minority schools have four times as many underprepared mathematics and science teachers than low minority schools, and they continue to struggle to find and attract qualified teachers" (2011, p. 9). If the achievement gap is to be closed, highly-qualified teachers need to be present in these classrooms. Policy makers need to find ways to make working in these schools attractive for effective teachers. This way, these students can be provided with competent teachers, who will help them in reaching academic success.

Upon examining the achievement scores of these students, it is clear that teachers are not prepared to educate English learners. Many teachers are not using the research-based strategies that should be used when working with English learners. Teachers need to be educated on how to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. By providing teachers with the knowledge and skills to work with English learners, it is another positive step in the direction of transforming education for Latino students. It is also important for schools to collaborate with families by facilitating communication. When teachers develop a relationship with parents, it is likely that the parents will be more supportive of the student's academics in the home. Madrid explains, "Research indicates Latino students would be more inclined to not only remain in school, but also

perform well academically if they sense parents and others who care about them feel education is important” (2011, p. 11). Clearly, building relationships with teachers, parents and students can provide tremendous benefits for students.

In addition, many teachers have perceptions about Latino students that affect their view of Hispanic students in the classroom. Sometimes these educators attribute a lack of academic achievement to a low work ethic. In a study by Contreras and Stritikus, it was found that Latino students were more likely to be placed in lower level courses that lack academic rigor (2008). This could mean that these students are not being held to high standards. For these students to be successful, it is important for teachers and administrators to hold all students to high standards. In order to close the achievement gap between Latino students and students of other ethnicities, teachers and administrators need to be cognizant of their perspectives.

Another challenge faced by two-way immersion programs is testing because most state standardized tests are given in English. As a result, students in two-way immersion programs still need to be able to demonstrate an understanding of the material in English and Spanish. Also, as students are learning another language, their achievement may appear lower at first, which can be frustrating for schools. According to a 2013 study, two-way immersion programs are beneficial for minority-language students, but it can take a few years for the results to show. It states, “The minority-language students may therefore have not had sufficient English-language proficiency in the early grades to perform successfully on the English-based tests, thereby delaying the benefits in minority-language students” (Marian, Shook & Shroeder, 2013, p. 178). It takes about six years for TWI students to catch up with their mainstream English-speaking peers

because their cognitive demands are greater. (Collier, Thomas, & Tinajero, 2006). This means that schools must recognize that two-way immersion programs will not automatically create increases in student achievement, but eventually the students will gain significant academic achievement increases, making it worthwhile.

#### **Section 4: Two-way Immersion Programs**

Recognizing the need for effective classrooms to help close the achievement gap, TWI programs provide students with an appropriate education to make them the most successful in two languages. This section provides an overview of how TWI programs work and the benefits for students, teachers and families who are a part of this program. TWI programs have been growing rapidly in popularity because they have been effective in educating ELs. According to Howard and Christian (2002) there are three main criteria for a two-way immersion program.

- The program must be divided in half
  - Half the students should be native English speakers and the other half should be native Spanish speakers.
- Both populations of students must be grouped together for most or all of the day. This way speakers of both languages are conversing with each other throughout the day.
- Content instruction is provided to all students in both languages. The only exception is literacy instruction may be in the native language at first, but later it should be in both languages as well.

This criterion demonstrates that two-way immersion programs are characterized by a balanced amount of exposure to both languages, providing students with the experience to become bilingual.

Howard and Christian (2002) also discussed four main goals outlined for all two-way immersion programs. These goals provide a framework for how bilingual classrooms should be organized, which provides an explanation of how TWI programs are implemented in schools.

The four main goals of TWI Programs

- Students should develop high levels of proficiency in their native language
- Students should develop high levels of proficiency in their non-native language they are learning in class
- Students are held to the same standards as their peers in other schools and programs
- Students should develop a cultural awareness as a result of learning from other students in the class with different cultural backgrounds

TWI programs provide students with the ability to be proficient in two languages while being held to the same standards as their monolingual peers. In addition, TWI students experience biculturalism, fostering intercultural dialogue and understanding in the classroom. Tedick, Christian and Fortune (2011) explain in their work that the aim of TWI programs is to have student success in terms of bilingualism and biliteracy, as well as biculturalism. Two-way immersion programs should provide students with an education that results in high academic achievement while providing them with the language skills to be bilingual and biliterate. Achieving these goals would be beneficial

for many students. In order for bilingualism to be supported, there needs to be a commitment to dual language programs in school.

Many have expressed the advantages of bilingual education programs like the dual language model. Garcia (2009) writes, “Bilingual education has the potential of being a transformative school practice, able to educate all children in ways that stimulate and expand their intellect and imagination, as they gain ways of expression and access different ways of being in the world (p.12).” It is important to note Garcia’s choice of words as she states that bilingual education educates all children. This means that students who are native English speakers still reap the benefits of bilingual education. Lindholm-Leary and Howard (2008) explain (as cited in Fortune & Tedick, 2012, p.10), “Immersion students who begin the program as English speakers consistently develop native-like levels of comprehension, such as listening and reading skills, in their second language. They also display fluency and confidence when using it.” No matter what the student’s first language is, research shows that children benefit from bilingual education.

Two-way immersion programs have been found to be efficacious in boosting English learner academic achievement. Fortune (2014, para. 13) summarizes, “In general, research finds that immersion students whose first language is not English become more balanced bilinguals and develop higher levels of bilingualism and biliteracy when compared with English proficient students or home language peers participating in other educational programming.” English learning students who participate in immersion programs achieve higher than their peers in other programs. The effectiveness of two-way immersion programs has been supported by a variety of studies. For example, the research of Howard, Sugarman and Christian (2003) through the Center for Applied

Linguistics demonstrated that when implemented properly, dual language programs can lower drop-out rates.

Testing data has continually proved the academic benefits of dual language programs. Thomas and Collier (2003, p.4) write, “In Houston in 2000, native English speakers who had been in the two-way dual-language programs for four years scored between the 63rd and 70th percentiles in total reading scores on the Stanford 9, whereas the scores of native English speakers in the mainstream hovered around the 50th percentile.” The academic advantages of dual language programs extend to all students regardless of their first language. As a result, TWI programs can positively impact students and alleviate educational disparities. Research affirms, “By implementing one-way or two-way dual-language programs, schools can expect one-fifth to one-sixth of the achievement gap for English learners to close each year” (Thomas & Collier, 2002, p. 65).

Mickelson (2003) explained that when compared with other programs such as ESL programs, dual-language programs receive the least amount of funding. This is unfortunate because bilingual programs have been shown to make a positive difference in struggling schools. Garland (2012) explains, Geddes Elementary in California raised student test scores in English and Language-Arts and Mathematics after implementing a two-way immersion program. The school’s API scores, based off reading and math, jumped from 678 to 838 over the span of four years, going over the state target of 800. In addition, their parental involvement increased and the truancy rate dropped from 43% to 27%. This example shows how two-way immersion programs provide many benefits for students and schools.

Bilingual education benefits English learners in many ways. Shehadeh's (2011) work explains that bilingual programs are most effective in terms of academic achievement when their cultural background is part of the classroom environment. Helping students to maintain their identity and culture allows them to express themselves, and these programs are more effective in educating this population of students. Another benefit of two-way immersion programs is the facilitation of cross-cultural discourses. Students in dual language programs are encouraged to learn about their own culture. The implication of this is that students tend to be more connected to their culture and heritage, especially because they are maintaining their language as well.

In addition, students learn about the cultures of the other students in the classroom. This proves to be an invaluable learning experience for students as they are able to recognize their own culture while appreciating and learning about others. In Shehadeh's case study of Latino children in a dual language program, it was found that many parents wanted their children to participate in the program to maintain their language and culture (2011). By providing students with instruction in their native language, bilingual education provides them with the ability to embrace their culture and develop their cultural identity, while providing them with the necessary English skills and introducing them to other cultures present in the classroom.

Tedick, Christian and Fortune (2011) discuss the learning outcomes of high school students in a two-way immersion program. The native English speakers indicated that they still felt their English was better than their Spanish in reading, writing and speaking. The native Spanish speakers tended to feel that both languages were strong, but they were stronger at reading in English. The Latino students also felt more connected to

their culture, even if they were a second or third generation member of the family. The native English speakers felt more culturally aware, but not bicultural. As mentioned by López and Tápanes, many parents and students noted that they liked the two-way immersion program because it allows the student to remain connected to their culture through language (2011). Many parents fear that learning English will cause their son or daughter to lose their Spanish-speaking skills, resulting in a loss of culture for the family. Two-way immersion programs allow the student to maintain those cultural ties while learning English.

Two-way immersion programs are also effective in promoting biculturalism. In two-way immersion programs this biculturalism generally manifests itself as a supportive environment where students are encouraged to practice their culture while appreciating and encouraging the culture of others. Saucedo (1997, p.7) described the views of parents in terms of culture in dual language programs explaining, “98% of the parents concurred that cross-cultural attitudes and appreciation is enhanced through dual language immersion.” This means that not only do parents feel that two-way immersion programs benefit students academically, they also support students culturally.

Cultural support is a major benefit of two-way immersion programs. Ballinger and Lyster (2011) say that bilingual schools were often observed supporting the students’ cultures in some way. For example, one teacher had prominent Spanish-speaking members of the community come talk with the students. In addition, the eighth grade students took a trip to Puerto Rico. While there, the students began speaking only Spanish. Teachers also did projects with the students such as family trees, and led discussions about culture and language. Biculturalism is an important aspect of bilingual

education and two-way immersion programs. Bilingual programs implement cultural supports to teach students about their own culture and other cultures.

Another benefit of two-way immersion programs is the facilitation of cross-cultural discourses. Students in dual language programs are encouraged to learn about their own culture. The implication of this is that students tend to be more connected to their culture and heritage, especially because they are maintaining their language as well. In addition, students learn about the cultures of the other students in the classroom. This proves to be an invaluable learning experience for students, as they are able to recognize their own culture, while appreciating and learning about others. Shehadeh (2011) explains that in a case study of Latino children in a dual language program, it was found that many parents wanted their children to participate in the program to maintain their language and culture. By providing students with instruction in their native language, bilingual education provides them with the ability to enact their culture and develop their cultural identity, while providing them with the necessary English skills and introducing them to other cultures present in the classroom.

Implementing bilingual programs in schools has been found to be advantageous for students, making it an attractive option for the education of English learners. In the United States today, the growing number of Spanish-speaking students in public schools is prompting a need for policy makers and educators to find types of instruction to educate this population of students. In addition, as the world becomes more and more connected through easy travel and technology, the need for multilingual workers is also becoming necessary.

In their article Marian, Shook and Schroeder provided evidence that two-way immersion programs do benefit both minority and majority language students. The article states, “While both the majority-language and minority-language TWI students exhibited reading and math advantages over their non-TWI peers, these benefits manifested at different times in the two groups” (2013, p. 178). This means that the program was effective even though the benefits were seen at different times for the two groups. The study found that the benefits were observed earlier in the language-majority students, usually around the third grade. The benefits were observed later for the language-minority students, being noticed in the fifth grade. Based on this data, TWI programs increase student achievement for both language majority and minority students in reading and math.

Students enrolled in TWI programs showed additional achievement in mathematics as well. Marian, Shook, and Schroeder said that this could be because bilingual students have demonstrated better executive functioning skills compared to their monolingual peers (2013). This is because executive function helps students to remember problems more easily and remain focused on solving them. Two-way immersion programs provide bilingual students with the executive functioning skills needed to improve learning reading and mathematics, making it advantageous for students.

The benefits of TWI programs can be seen in a study of junior high school students who participated in TWI programs. Cobb, Vega and Kronauge (2006) expresses that dual language programs are effective for all students. The authors states, “Dual language schooling, when implemented properly by schools, must be considered at least equally as effective in core academic achievement areas as traditional elementary

schooling, and is probably more effective in the long term (p.41)” This study indicates that two-way immersion programs provide students with the content knowledge needed to be successful in the core academic areas, while allowing the student to use two languages. It is important to note that significant gains in student achievement in dual language programs were found in reading and writing. To a lesser extent, mathematical gains were also shown. This study provides evidence that using dual-language programs in schools helps boost student achievement, while allowing all students to practice two languages (Cobb, Vega and Kronauge, 2006). By providing students with this type of education, schools are giving children the ability to communicate in different languages without hindering their achievement in other subject areas.

One argument for the implementation of two-way immersion classrooms is that learning languages is best done at an early age. Research (e.g. Ghasemi & Hashemi, 2011), indicates that children who learn another language before the age of ten are able to speak the language as fluently as a native speaker (2011). In this early stage of development, young children are able to acquire languages easily because their brains are wired to learn languages. Providing students with instruction in different languages at a young age and then allowing them to continue using the language means that the students will be able to communicate in the languages fluently. Basically, learning a second language is as easy as acquiring a first language. For adults, the process is much more difficult. Bilingual education programs take advantage of children’s natural abilities to acquire language and help them to become bilingual whether they are a language-majority or language minority student. Being able to speak multiple language has benefits

for these students, especially in a world where their ability to speak another language is an asset for businesses in this global economy.

As dual language learners require additional supports, there are many ways teacher can provide effective instruction, while collaborating with families. For example, visual representations can be utilized to help students understand and reinforce vocabulary. It is also important that parents are included in the language learning process as well. Teachers should talk to parents to discuss what language is used at home. Teachers and parents can support the child in becoming bilingual, recognizing the positive cognitive and cultural effects it has for children. Teachers collaborating with parents create a cohesive support system and a clear line of communication about the child's needs, which helps the students to learn and grow bilingually.

Despite the many benefits of TWI programs, there are many political obstacles making implementing them difficult. Menken & Solorza (2014) discuss the educational policies that have required a decline in bilingual programs in New York City. No Child Left Behind legislation prompted an increased emphasis on accountability through high-stakes testing. This created a large amount of changes for many students in the United States, especially bilingual children. Schools in New York City began eliminating bilingual programs and replaced them with English-only classrooms. This occurred despite bilingual education traditionally having support in the city.

When examining the implementation of bilingual programs in the United States, it is important to recognize the political implications that surround it. For example, as a result of the emphasis on accountability through testing, emergent bilingual students are required to demonstrate progress in content assessments in English and in English

language proficiency (Menken & Solorza, 2014). Failure to do well on these exams could result in loss of funding or even school closures. Students could be retained or not allowed to graduate. This accountability testing could play a major role in the country's ability to add in TWI programs because of the fear that bilingual students may not be able to perform as well on these English exams.

Race to the Top also uses some of these same accountability measures that pose problems for emergent bilingual students. NCLB and Race to the Top rely heavily on testing to evaluate student progress. It is important to note that the performance of emergent bilinguals is affected because of language proficiency. This means that these students might be "low-performing" on tests in English. It is because of this that school administrators face enormous pressure to educate emergent bilinguals in only English, despite research that indicates that bilingual education can be more effective. The assessment system penalizes emergent bilinguals and the schools that serve them. Currently, many New York City schools are struggling to serve their bilingual students (Menken & Solorza 2014). The few principals who believe strongly in bilingual education maintain a strong commitment to bilingualism despite the stress of accountability. Emergent bilingual students have been neglected in New York City due to policies that unfairly hold schools accountable for their academic progress.

### **Section 5: Factors Affecting the Implementation of TWI Programs**

There are many potential factors that could impact this study. For example, legislation relating to immigration could change the Hispanic population demographics, thus changing the need for bilingual education in certain areas. In addition, funding for EL services could be affected by federal and state legislation. Without adequate financial

support, this could highly impact the ability for two-way immersion programs to be implemented in schools. Finding teachers who are qualified to teach in dual-language classrooms could be a challenge when implementing these programs. This is because these teachers need to be fluent in Spanish and English in order to teach in these classrooms. These teachers need to be comfortable and experienced in working with EL students and knowledgeable about processes of second language acquisition and methods of integrating language and content.

There are also many other factors that could deter schools and school districts from implementing dual language programs. Having a sufficient number of qualified bilingual teachers makes implementing dual language programs difficult. The Ohio Department of Education shows that there are currently no bilingual education endorsement programs in the state (2015). This means that currently there is no formal way for teacher education students to prepare to work in dual language programs at any Ohio universities. Without formal training, bilingual educators lack the pedagogical knowledge needed to teach in TWI programs, creating a major challenge for schools looking to implement TWI programs.

This teacher shortage is not limited to Ohio. School districts all over the country are looking for ways to attract bilingual educators. In the *Compensation Resource Book* (2013-2014) by the Dallas Independent School District, they are in critical need of bilingual teachers. There, bilingual elementary teachers can receive an additional stipend of greater than \$2,000 and even signing bonuses. School districts are willing to give extra incentives to bilingual teachers. This means that while bilingual staff members are difficult to find, districts are willing to take steps to acquire them.

Howard, Sugarman and Christian (2007) wrote specifically in *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education* about educators in dual language program. It states, “There is an integrated process of recruitment, hiring, and retention that is systematically coordinated with district-level staff and takes long-term program goals into account. The program works with local universities to train dual language teachers who can work in their program.” Here, it is evident that there are many pieces in two-way immersion programs in regard to teachers. Not only do teachers need to be able to recruit, hire and retain qualified educators, but they also have to examine the program’s goals and their alignment with the goals of the staff. In addition, they make a point about teacher education programs playing a role in this implementation process. Without sufficient training, bilingual teachers lack the support needed to teach bilingually and effectively. As mentioned earlier, this is a challenge because bilingual certificates are lacking in teacher education programs, with none available in the state of Ohio (Ohio Department of Education, 2015).

### **Section 6: Next Steps**

The literature search began with an analysis of the student achievement of Latinos in the United States. After identifying an achievement gap between Latino children and children of other races, it is apparent that there needs to be a more effective way to educate these students. Two-way immersion programs have been identified as the most effective in boosting Latino student achievement while providing allowing the child to maintain their native language and culture. TWI programs are also found to be effective because they offer the opportunity for native English speakers to learn another language while practicing biculturalism in the classroom. This is particularly interesting because

studies have found that language acquisition is the easiest before the age of ten. This makes TWI programs an effective option for English learners and native English speakers alike.

With the amount of research that has been completed on ELs, bilingual education and classroom practices, there are still gaps in the research. There is still a need for more research on the practicality of implementing TWI programs in schools. Many questions need to be addressed, such as, are there enough qualified teachers to fill TWI programs? Do school budgets allow for these programs to be widely-implemented? Research shows that TWI programs are successful, but if they cannot be implemented widely due to practical constraints practically, then these programs will be of limited benefit students.

This study's goal is to identify the human and material resources necessary for the successful implementation of TWI programs in elementary schools. Based on this review of the literature, the anticipated findings are that schools lack the ability to recruit and hire qualified bilingual educators. This is based off the research the teacher education programs in Ohio do not provide any bilingual licenses so it is unlikely there are many professionals able to fill these positions. It is also expected that schools will be challenged to find additional sources of funding for TWI programs given the turbulent historical background of bilingual programs and the economic disparities that are faced by schools. In addition, TWI programs need to have interested students, teachers and families. Without the community buy-in, schools looking to implement these programs will struggle to attract the student population that is necessary for these programs.

## Chapter 3: Methods

### Review of the Research Question

The research question is, “What factors are associated with the successful implementation of a Spanish and English two-way immersion programs in an elementary charter school and public school?”

### Setting

This study was conducted in a mid-sized Midwestern city with a population of approximately 140,000 people. According to census data, about 50.5% is white, 42.9% is African-American and 3% of the population is Hispanic or Latino. 2.9% is two or more races, .9% is Asian and .3% is American Indian and Alaska native (U.S. Census Bureau). This study was conducted at two urban elementary schools, one charter and one traditional public school.

At the charter school, Lake Academy, the student population is 43% African American, 29% white and 19% Hispanic. The rest is not calculated because there are fewer than 10 in the group. In addition, 83% of the school is considered economically disadvantaged. Currently, the school serves students in Kindergarten, first grade, second grade, third grade, and fourth grade. This school is new, starting its program in 2013. In their first year, they enrolled about sixty students and have been growing since then. The school does not currently have a two-way immersion program, but is in the process of preparing to implement one. They do have daily Spanish instruction using a Spanish language curriculum. They also have bilingual staff members.

The public elementary school, Reynolds Elementary, has a student population that is 54% white, 21% Hispanic, 16% African American and 6.8% multi-racial. The

remaining population was not calculated because less than ten were in each group. 100% of the students are considered economically disadvantaged. 27% of the student population is deemed Limited English Proficient (LEP). According to the state report card, the school received a performance index grade of D and an F for indicators met. 76% of the third graders scored proficient on the state Reading test. The dual language program has been in place for three years. Each year, a grade has been added, starting with Kindergarten. Each dual language classroom has a native Spanish speaker teacher and the Kindergarten classes have paraprofessionals for additional support. In addition, there are 2 ESL specialists in the building and a dual language coordinator. These staff members provide support for the dual language program such as instructional resources, strategies and small group instruction for struggling students.

### **Research Design**

This is a qualitative case study that utilizes some quantitative data. This study uses interviews of experts to provide a better understanding of the necessary components of the successful implementation of two-way immersion programs. As this is a case study, the research focuses on a variety of interrelated factors that affect the implementation process.

### **Participant Selection**

Two interviewees from the charter school, Lake Academy were recruited through e-mail. Both interviewees serve as administrators for a group of bilingual charter schools. They serve on the board and coordinate the bilingual component of the schools. These individuals were selected because they are currently in the process of implementing two-way immersion programs. As a result, they are very familiar with the challenges and resources

that are part of the implementation process. Both individuals are bilingual themselves and believe strongly in helping others to become bilingual.

The interviewee from the public school, Reynolds Elementary, works as an ESL specialist, working individually with students and providing additional supports for dual language teachers. This individual was selected for this interview through a referral. She was part of the implementation process when the school first decided to start a dual language program. As a result, she has a working knowledge of the many components necessary for two-way immersion programs.

The participants of this study are people with an understanding of various components of dual language programs. To protect their anonymity pseudonyms are used. In addition, any identifying details about the person were omitted from the study.

### **Data Collection**

Interviews of experts are used to convey the practical implications when beginning a two-way immersion program. The researcher conducted interviews to gain a better understanding of two-way immersion programs. The questions that were asked were developed to answer the sub-questions which relate to the factors necessary for the successful implementation of two-way immersion programs. The first few questions were related to the unique budget concerns facing dual-language programs. As two-way immersion programs require some extra resources, the experts were asked what they thought would be necessary for these programs in terms of finances.

In addition, the experts were asked a few questions about the attitudes of teachers, administrators and parents that surround dual-language programs. For these programs to be successfully implemented, positive community attitudes towards the program would

be advantageous. The experts were asked to gauge the amount of community support they would receive for this program. They were also asked what they thought were the concerns of parents, teachers and administrators related to these programs and how they would be handled.

Finally, the experts were asked questions about the human and material resources that would be needed for successful two-way immersion programs. One major concern of schools is the lack of qualified teachers to work in bilingual classrooms. The experts were asked about this concern. In addition, they were asked what special resources might be needed in these classrooms.

The interviews were then transcribed using the audio recording. After this, common themes and ideas were identified through highlighting points repeated throughout the study. Through asking these questions, the common themes were identified in terms of the necessary components for two-way immersion programs and the practicality of implementing them.

Online data such as the state school report card was also used to obtain information about the school population. The school websites were utilized to provide more specific information about test scores and the school population. The schools also provided documents about budget, curriculum and resources they use.

### **Ethical Issues**

Confidentiality was maintained throughout the entire interview and analysis process to ensure that the identity of the experts remained anonymous. In addition, this study was exempted by the University of Dayton's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Through this exemption process, it was examined if there would be any risk or harm to

the participants before the interviews were conducted. Each participant signed a consent form through the IRB, which explained the expectations of the research study.

Pseudonyms were also used to protect the identity of the participants.

### **Summary of Chapter 3**

In conclusion, this qualitative study was a case study on the practicality of implementing two-way immersion programs. Using the expertise of participants who are familiar with two-way immersion programs, this study examined the various factors associated with the successful implementation of dual-language programs.

## Chapter 4: Findings

### Introduction

This study examined the factors that affect the implementation of two-way immersion programs in schools. By looking at online resources and conducting interviews with professionals working on implementing dual language programs, observations were made regarding what human and material resources are necessary and what other factors contribute to the successful implementation of two-way immersion programs in schools.

### Research Question

The research question is, “What factors are associated with the successful implementation of two-way immersion programs in elementary schools in a midsized town in the Midwest of the United States?” This study examines the human and material resources needed for the implementation process of two-way immersion programs in schools.

### Findings

Based on the data collected, there are a number of findings about the resources necessary for the implementation of two-way immersion programs. This case study examines the various components of two-way immersion programs including the implementation process and the financial, material and human resources.

The following table provides a comparison of some of the key components in the implementation of two-way immersion programs at Reynolds Elementary and Lake Academy. This table shows the distinguishing characteristics of each school of how they are different and the same.

**Table 1-1**

**A Comparison of Two-Way Immersion Programs in Case Study**

Reynolds Elementary	Lake Academy
Third year with dual language program	In the process of starting a dual language program
Provides instruction in math and science in Spanish and some classroom routines, activities and specials (art, music, gym)	Separate time specifically providing instruction in Spanish

incorporate Spanish	
Has difficulty recruiting Spanish-speaking teachers	Has difficulty recruiting Spanish-speaking teachers
Utilizes bilingual paraprofessionals	Would like to utilize bilingual paraprofessionals
Only public school in district with dual language program	One of five connected charter schools that have bilingual programs
Public School	Charter School

### **Implementation**

Reynolds Elementary decided to implement its two-way immersion program after observing a growing need from students to support their language learning process. After interviewing parents and researching two-way immersion programs, they began the implementation process, starting with Kindergarten and adding on each year. Currently, Reynolds Academy has extended its dual language program to the second grade. Generally math and science are taught in Spanish, while social studies and English language arts are taught in English. They also included Spanish-speaking paraprofessionals in every Kindergarten, who floats between the first and second grade class.

The parents of the students in the dual language program must opt in to the program. There is one class in each grade that is not an immersion program so students who do not want to join the program do not have to. The importance of parent involvement was emphasized by the interviewee. She explained that for a dual language program to be successful there must be parent and community support. She explained that currently, parents play an active role in the classroom, supporting biculturalism through sharing about their culture.

Lake Academy's program is a different from Reynolds Elementary in that the program is still going through the implementation process. In fact, it is technically not a dual language program, rather it is working towards one in the future. Instead, Lake Academy currently dedicates specific instructional time for Spanish instruction, with some integration woven throughout the day. To teach Spanish, Lake Academy utilizes *Descubre el Español*, a Spanish instructional program. Using this curriculum, Lake

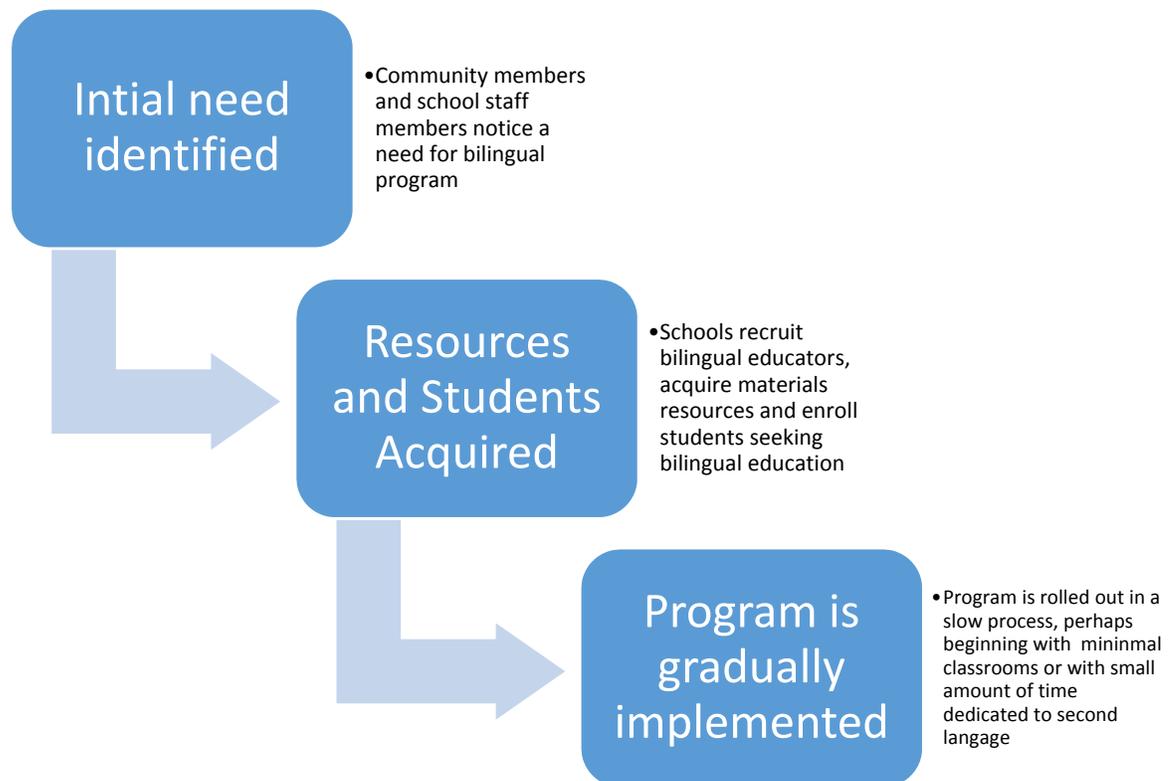
Academy incorporates Spanish language learning into the school day even though it is not teaching content in Spanish. This differs greatly from Reynolds Elementary which teaches content (math and science) in Spanish. Lake Academy is looking to expand their program, but also emphasized that like Reynolds Elementary, they need to respond to the needs of their students. This means that they need the support of parents and students before moving into a formal dual-language program with instruction in Spanish and English. When asked how their program differs from an average elementary school, the bilingual coordinator at Lake Academy responded, “The biggest difference for us is that Spanish is a core part of our curriculum, we offer it every day. Whereas most schools if they offer it, it’s probably a couple of times a week; that is the biggest difference” (unpublished data). He also emphasized that they encourage Spanish-speaking in the hallways and outside of instructional time. Unlike Reynolds Elementary, Lake Academy does not have a true two-way immersion program, but the administration is taking steps to implement a dual language program. For example, they are incorporating explicit instruction in Spanish, recruiting bilingual staff members and working in the community to attract native Spanish and English speakers.

Reynolds Elementary has a three year established dual language program, while Lake Academy is currently in the process of creating a two-way immersion program.

Based off the interviews, the progression for implementation seems to follow the process illustrated on the following chart.

Chart 1-2

## The Implementation Process of Two-way Immersion Programs



This chart demonstrates the basic process of implementing dual language programs in schools. First, schools start by recognizing community attitudes that would support having bilingual students and programs. For example, both schools identified that there were both native English and Spanish-speakers seeking to become bilingual in the area and then planned accordingly. The second step is more practical, identifying and gathering necessary resources. Schools look at budgets and make decisions about what their program can afford. Administrators begin looking for bilingual educators. In the case of Lake Academy, they even hired bilingual office workers and custodians. Schools provide information about their program and ask families to enroll their students in the program. Finally, schools slowly implement the program. Usually this process takes many years. For example, Reynolds Elementary adds one grade each year to the program, making adjustments each year and allowing time for new hires and arrangements to be made.

Many pieces of literature support this basic structure of implementing two-way immersion programs. For example, *The Dual Language Program Planner: A Guide for Designing and Implementing Dual Language Programs* by Howard, Olague and Rogers (2003) provides guidelines for implementation. It first asks teachers and administrators to identify their motivation for the program. They also ask if there are different reasons for different people involved in this program. They ask, “Are there any patterns, such as different motivations of different sub-groups? (e.g. different motivations of teachers compared with administrators, or parents of native English speakers compared with parents of language minority students, etc.) If so, what are they?” Just like with the schools interviewed, schools first look at their reasons for the program, identifying expectations for all parties involved.

Next, schools look at the implementation of human and materials resources. The program planner asks questions about qualified teachers, funding, textbooks, professional development and instructional strategies (Howard, Olague, Rogers, 2003). Similarly, at Reynolds Elementary, the interviewee explained their resources stating, “We use many different online resources such as LearningABC. Many times we make their own resources or look to what they can pull from online. We also recycle a lot of our resources from year to year” (unpublished data). Lake Academy is still navigating the implementation process and is currently answering these questions. They are determining whether they have the funds, teachers, resources and student population to go through with implementation. Throughout the implementation process schools have to look at a variety of resources that affect the dual language program.

Finally, schools roll out the dual language program. Once formally started, the process is generally gradual, but varies from school to school. At Reynolds Academy, one grade was added each year. Based on the literature, most schools follow a similar process, identifying a need and making decisions based on the resources available. Regardless of the method, schools make decisions about how quickly to implement the program and the methods to do so. In both the literature and in this case study, schools followed a similar implementation process when making decisions about TWI programs.

## Recruiting

Both schools described the difficulty in finding quality teachers who are bilingual. Reynolds Elementary has recruited Spanish-speaking teachers from multiple Hispanic countries, while Lake Academy is looking to hire teachers from Spanish-speaking countries in the future. Lake Academy also expressed the importance of having Spanish-speaking staff in the school, even stating that their custodian and secretary are Spanish-speaking.

Reynolds Elementary discussed how they use creativity to solve this problem of having a lack of qualified, bilingual educators. To have a two-way immersion program, the students switch classes so only one teacher, in this case the math and science teacher, needs to be a fluent Spanish speaker. One challenge faced by Reynolds Elementary is resistance from teachers who were hired before this program. When this program was first implemented, many teachers feared they would lose their jobs as they were not Spanish-speakers. The interviewee explained though that no teacher has lost their job as they have been able to adjust each year as the program has expanded.

Another component of two-way immersion programs is the desire for bilingual paraprofessionals. Lake Academy emphasized that ideally there would be a bilingual teacher in every classroom. The next best option, they explain, is to have bilingual paraprofessionals who lead small group activities and work under the supervision of the classroom teacher. In both schools, the interviewees strongly agreed that recruiting bilingual educators was the most daunting challenge while implementing dual language programs.

Currently, there are no university programs in Ohio where teachers can obtain a bilingual endorsement. There are TESOL programs in universities in Ohio, but there are no programs specifically for bilingual educators in the state of Ohio (Ohio Department of Education). Both Reynolds Elementary and Lake Academy said that ideally they would hire teachers with a bilingual endorsement, but since no universities offer one, they cannot make it a qualification for the job. Instead, they rely on interviews in Spanish and English during the hiring process to observe their language proficiency and teaching abilities.

## **Material Resources**

In terms of material resources, both schools have specific curriculum materials in Spanish. Reynolds Elementary teaches math and science in Spanish and English language arts and social studies in English. Their math textbooks and supplemental materials are in Spanish. In science, the school has not yet been able to purchase science textbooks. As a result, the dual language teachers need to rely on additional resources.

Lake Academy uses their instructional Spanish program to teach Spanish during the day. Besides this class, the rest of their textbook materials are in English. Supplemental materials are also in Spanish and serve to provide additional instruction in Spanish. Eventually, Lake Academy hopes to teach content in Spanish like Reynolds does. Currently, however, they do not have the student population or an adequate number of Spanish-speaking teachers to do so.

In addition, while there are some professional development opportunities related to two-way immersion programs, there does not seem to be much professional development. As a result, the teachers are responsible for figuring out how they will implement and run their bilingual program. Consequently, there seems to be some variance from classroom to classroom on how they use language. For example, in one classroom at Reynolds Elementary instruction is in English, but vocabulary words are presented in Spanish and students have to read the book in Spanish. In another, students might be required to only speak in Spanish during certain class times. This variance could be attributed to a lack of professional development for two-way immersion programs. While professional development is an important component of two-way immersion programs, it can be difficult to have in a district. This is especially true in a Midwest city like this one where there is only one two-way immersion program in the entire public school district and there is minimal additional funding.

## **Community Attitudes**

In terms of attitudes towards dual language programs, Reynolds Elementary emphasized the importance of community buy-in. This is because the school relies on community support and resources. For the program to be successful, parents have to want to put their children in it. As parents can decide whether or not their child is in the program, they can decide if they think the program is effective. Lake Academy explained

that they work very hard to present a positive image in the community because they believe that their reputation is the best way to continue recruiting students into their school. Schools like Reynolds Elementary currently have many programs to engage families. Reynolds Elementary's ESL coordinator explained, "To keep their community bond strong, we hold many different events. For example, our school has family literacy nights, parent meetings and even language classes." Similarly, Lake Academy also would like to have more events at their school that families can attend. Lake Academy expressed the difficulties of finding the right demographics to support a two-way immersion program. The ideal for two-way immersion program is to have half the student population with Spanish and their first language and half the student population having English as their first language. This can be difficult to find in a Midwestern city like Dayton, Ohio, where the percentage of Hispanics or Latinos is about 3% (US Census Bureau). As a result, schools looking to implement two-way immersion programs need to identify if there is a perceived need in the community for a bilingual program. If there is, schools still may struggle to have a sufficient Spanish or English speaking population to meet the needs of a two-way immersion program.

As both schools continue to grow and look for ways to improve their programs, they will have to address the needs of all their learners regardless of their language background. When asked about responding to the needs of students through dual language the Spanish language coordinator at Lake Academy expressed, "It depends on numbers. It also depends on space" (unpublished data). He then went on to give examples of how they have adjusted classrooms and programs depending on the student population in the school. For example, their school in another city has a more developed two-way immersion program because there are more native Spanish-speakers there. This is in contrast to Lake Academy which has a more limited number of Spanish-speakers, which makes implementing dual language programs more challenging. As a result, it appears that in order for dual language programs to be implemented, there needs to be a community buy-in and a sufficient population of language speakers.

## **Discussion**

As has been reported, the greatest challenge faced by two-way immersion programs is the lack of bilingual educators. Reynolds Elementary and Lake Academy

both emphasized the difficulty in finding teachers fluent in Spanish, but also who were qualified to teach in the licensure area needed. Both schools explained that in some ways it is a “chicken and egg” situation. This is because many preservice and current teachers were not taught two languages in Reynolds Elementary and as a result, most of the current teacher workforce is monolingual. Conversely, in order to have a bilingual workforce, more bilingual programs in schools are necessary.

In terms of material resources, both schools described funding as an issue, but did not emphasize it as an obstacle to two-way immersion program. For example, Lake Academy explained that while other schools might invest in music or art programs, they put additional money towards bilingual materials. Also, Reynolds Elementary received additional funding through a Title Three grant. According to the interviewee, all schools districts receive funds from Title Three based on the number of English learner students they have. This funding can be used for additional enrichment resources such as bilingual or picture dictionaries and professional development for teachers.

There are also a few additional challenges in regards to the implementation of two-way immersion programs that are important to note, but do not necessarily stop a program from beginning. One of these concerns is substitutes. Substitutes may have difficulty interpreting the Spanish used in textbooks, worksheets and classroom routines. Another challenge is students who transfer into the program in the middle of the school year. Two-way immersion programs are difficult to adjust to and many times incoming students are not prepared or even aware of the dual language program they are walking into. Lastly, teachers and parents need to work together. If the parents of students do not speak the language the homework is given in, they require additional support such as translations. As a result, schools need to be prepared to handle the additional challenges that may be faced once the program has been implemented.

#### **Summary of Chapter 4**

This study investigated the implementation of two-way immersion programs through a case study analysis. The research question, “What factors are associated with the successful implementation of two-way immersion programs in elementary schools in a midsized town in the Midwest of the United States?” was answered through interviews of professionals working in these schools. After analyzing the data, it appears that while

there are many factors related to the successful implementation of dual language programs, the most difficult challenge faced by these programs is recruiting bilingual, qualified educators. Based on the literature review, this finding was unexpected. Most of the literature does not describe challenges in finding bilingual educators. This could be because the majority of two-way immersion programs are in areas where there is a higher Hispanic population. As this study was conducted in a Midwest town with a lower Spanish-speaking population, it is likely that recruiting bilingual educators is much more difficult than in other areas with a higher Spanish-speaking population.

It was also predicted that funding would be a major obstacle for two-way immersion programs. Interestingly, the data indicated that funding could be a challenge, but in general it was not holding programs back. This means that while schools with dual language programs could use more funding, they are able to find ways to get around financial obstacles. For example, Reynolds Elementary was able to use district money from Title Three. Lake Academy is a charter and gets money from donors. Interestingly, both schools also talked about how they use creativity to save money, such as buying textbooks that were already bought in Spanish or just minimizing other programs and putting money towards bilingual materials.

In conclusion, the interviews conducted indicated that there are a variety of human and material resources necessary for two-way immersion programs. The data shows that recruiting bilingual educators poses the greatest challenge for dual language programs. Funding, community attitudes and resources also play a role in the ability of the school to implement these programs. In terms of human and material resources needed to implement two-way immersion programs, human resources seem to be the most challenging obstacle to implementation.

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

### Introduction

This section provides an analysis of the findings in regards to the human and material resources necessary for two-way immersion programs.

### Findings

Based on the findings described in Chapter four, there are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from the research in regards to the successful implementation of two-way immersion programs in schools. In general, this study agreed with most of the findings in the literature in terms of human and material resources necessary for two-way immersion programs.

### Recruiting Qualified Teachers

This study found that the greatest challenge facing two-way immersion programs is the availability of qualified teachers. A lack of qualified teachers is a major challenge for Reynolds Elementary and Lake Academy. This is likely because of the paradoxical situation in that there is a lack of bilinguals because bilingual education is not commonplace. There is, however, a strong need for bilinguals to start strong bilingual programs. As a result, schools face the challenge of recruiting bilingual individuals from a smaller applicant pool. If more bilingual programs are implemented, the workplace will have more bilinguals to continue staffing these programs.

Some of the literature reflects the difficulty in finding bilingual teachers. Garcia (2009) writes, “A major variable, difficult to meet as bilingual education expands, is finding sufficient qualified subject-matter teachers capable of teaching through another language” This sentiment has been echoed by many everywhere. Camera (2015) writes, “A 2013 report by the Council of the Great City Schools, a policy and advocacy group that represents most of the nation’s largest school systems, found that about half of large city school districts either have a shortage of teachers for those learning English, or will have one within the next five years.” According to the literature, finding and recruiting qualified bilingual individuals will be the greatest challenge facing dual language programs.

The ability to find qualified teachers is the most challenging obstacle for implementing dual language programs based on the interviews in this case study. This

finding was surprising because there are so many other important components of a dual language program, finding teachers did not seem to be the most pressing. Funding or negative community attitudes were thought to have much more negative impacts than a lack of qualified educators. Instead, the interviewees both stressed this difficulty. It is likely that this concern stems from the location of the case study. As this study takes place in the Midwest where there are traditionally less Spanish-speakers, bilingual educators are more difficult to come by. This sentiment though is commonplace when looking at two-way immersion programs.

A review of the research by the Center for Applied Linguistics echoed that the lack of bilingual educators and support staff make implementing two-way immersion programs difficult (Howard, Sugarman, Christian 2003). Clearly, the need for bilingual educators is growing as two-way immersion programs continue to expand. Without the workforce to support the growing need, these programs will not be able to be successful. One possibility to remedy the lacking number of bilingual individuals is to recruit teachers from areas with high Spanish-speaking populations. For example, Camera (2015) explained, “Puerto Rico has become a particularly fertile recruiting ground for school districts, especially since its teachers are already U.S. citizens, they don’t require green cards, and the island is slogging through an economic downturn. But that solution, many dual language educators say, is neither sustainable nor good policy.” Similarly, Reynolds Elementary recruited teachers from Colombia, Spain and Puerto Rico (unpublished data). While schools can look to other areas to recruit, this solution is not perfect and is not always possible as a long-term solution to the problem.

### **Community Support**

Another major finding of this is the need for community support. Both schools in this study indicated that when first starting their program, the need arose from the community. The schools then responded by implementing this program. Some studies have shown that parents are hesitant to send their children into bilingual programs because they are worried it will hurt the child’s academic achievement (Lewis, 2000). In the Reynold interview, the ESL coordinator briefly mentioned that some parents are nervous about sending their child into the program, but for the most part, parents are very supportive. If the schools in this case study had not received interest from parents from

the beginning, they would not have wanted to create two-way immersion programs. In Blanchette's study, the parents in a New York City two-way immersion program had more positive feelings for bilingualism and language learning. This is compared to the parents in the school's corresponding English-only (EO) program, where parents were less interested in bilingualism (1994). This means that two-way immersion programs foster a stronger inclination towards bilingualism.

This was also apparent in the interviews conducted. The ESL coordinator at Reynolds Elementary explained how families tend to get more involved as a result of the dual language program. She explains, "Attitude-students and parents take pride in their language and culture and share it with others. Many parent volunteers want to get involved as well." This is likely because of the emphasis on biculturalism in two-way immersion programs. Students and families can express their culture freely in a supportive environment. She continues, "There's a much bigger parental involvement since the switch to immersion. I believe that because we have incorporated cultures and made the families feel more included" (unpublished data). Based on this understanding, it can be understood that two-way immersion programs promote parental and community involvement by supporting different cultures and languages.

Lake Academy also described the importance of the community. One of the reasons they are in the process of implementing a dual language program rather than having one now is that they do not have the population and community support. The dual language coordinator is looking for ways to engage in the community and develop interest. He emphasized the importance of bringing in the community for many reasons. For example, a major component of the community is bringing in enough students. Also, to have the cultural experience for the students, the schools need to be a center for the community and a place where parents and family members feel comfortable. As Lake Academy continues to build its program, it will continue looking for ways to engage with the community and build support for their program.

One way they might choose to do this is to present parents with the research on two-way immersion programs that demonstrate the advantages for students. Administrators can pull on the research of Thomas and Collier, who have demonstrated the effectiveness of two-way immersion programs numerous times. To sum up their

research, Thomas and Collier (2003) state, “Our research in 23 school districts in 15 states and our analyses of more than 2 million student records show that dual-language programs can close the achievement gap for English learners and provide a superior education for native English speakers.” By providing families with the evidence that proves the effectiveness of two-way immersion programs, schools looking to implement these programs can get the community buy-in they need to get started.

### **Recommendations**

There are a number of recommendations that can be made as a result of the findings of this study. As the biggest challenge for the implementation of two-way immersion programs is recruiting bilingual educators, this is the greatest area of need. To accommodate the need for these educators, colleges need to provide a bilingual license that will prepare teacher to work in this field. Currently no colleges in Ohio have a bilingual license program (Ohio Department of Education). A bilingual license would provide teacher with the skills need to instruct in two languages, helping students to truly become bilingual. Without the proper teacher education programs, this is impossible. It should be noted that being bilingual and being able to teach does not always mean that the teacher is able to work in a two-way immersion classroom. This means that there is specific training and skillsets that are needed by a bilingual educator. They must be able to accurately convey content, while providing support for development in both languages.

The National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) created a set of teacher preparation standards for bilingual educators. These standards provide guidance for teacher preparation programs in a variety of areas. For example, these standards include (1992)

1. Institutional resources, coordination and commitment
2. Recruitment, advisement and retention of potential teachers,
3. Bilingual/multicultural coursework and curriculum
4. Language proficiency in English and Non-English Languages and Abilities to Teach in Those Language
5. Field Work and Practicum Experiences in Bilingual/Multicultural Classrooms
6. Life-Long Learning and Commitment to Professional Involvement

These standards also contain indicators. For example, one indicator for coursework is, “Instructional methods courses which include teaching in English and non-English languages and developing a large repertoire of active teaching/learning strategies” (1992). In regards to language proficiency, the indicator is, “For widely spoken world languages such as Spanish, Chinese, or French, a standardized measure such as the ACTFL Advanced Level Exam may be used” (1992). Some indicators may logistically be difficult for some teacher education programs to comply with. For example, the indicator related to field experiences states, “Classroom teacher and university supervisors who supervise candidates’ field experiences are themselves bilingual/multicultural teachers and have had academic preparation and successful experience in teaching children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds” (1992). As previously discussed, finding bilingual educators is already challenging, so finding bilingual educators to mentor incoming bilingual teachers may be difficult to find.

Another recommendation is to think creatively when recruiting teachers and other staff members. This may mean recruiting staff members from other countries. It may also mean incentivizing bilingual individuals to work in two-way immersion programs. To attract bilingual individuals into the profession, administrators and teacher preparation programs need to advertise the benefits of teaching in bilingual education and help them through the process.

Teacher education programs and school districts with a need for bilingual educators may consider working together to educate and incentivize preservice teachers. Partnerships could be formed to ensure that preservice teachers are familiar with employment opportunities within bilingual education and school districts are an active part of the training process. This would benefit future teachers because they could have better job connections after graduation, but it would also aid school districts in acquiring qualified teachers to work in dual language programs.

There are also steps that can be taken in terms of community attitudes to help in the implementation of two-way immersion programs. Schools can become more active in the community to help boost interest in their programs. Schools should seek out centers for culture and recruit for their program. This would help put attract more students and parents into the program and perhaps result in acquiring more community resources.

**Limitations**

This study's limitation is that it is a small scale undergraduate honors thesis that was only able to examine two schools. As a result, the conclusions were made based off the evidence provided by the two schools and data found online. Another limitation of this study is that because it takes place in the Midwest there is a historically smaller bilingual population. This makes finding out information on bilingual education more challenging.

**Conclusion**

The successful implementation of two-way immersion programs in elementary schools requires creativity, coordination and a variety of resources. This study found that schools had to use creativity to solve problems when implementing their programs. For example, Reynolds Elementary simply ordered a Spanish translation of a math textbook instead of English when the district opted to buy new books. To combat the challenge of finding bilingual educators, Reynolds has only one Spanish-speaking teacher per two dual language classes. The students switch, each class receiving half of their instruction for the day with their Spanish-speaking teacher and half of their instruction with their English-speaking teacher.

The implementation of two-way immersion programs also requires the careful coordination of many different people and organizations. Teachers and administrators develop programs that utilize the resources available to them. Lake Academy uses every staff member to help students become bilingual. A conversation in the office or an interaction with the custodian is an opportunity to speak in Spanish.

Dual language programs also utilize every resource available to them. Dual language coordinators use online resources and many supplemental materials to have the instructional supports they need. They also utilize the members of their community. Reynold Elementary brings in parents to talk about their culture, enriching the biculturalism in the classroom.

In conclusion, two-way immersion programs require a significant amount of effort to implement, but with the proper resources and management, they can be applied in schools successfully.

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