

CURRICULUM FOR SECONDARY PRE-LITERATE SPANISH SPEAKERS

by

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of the Requirements for the Degree
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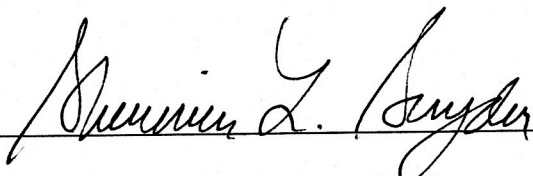
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ABSTRACT

Currently there are over two million limited English students in the United States school system. Some of those who come from poor backgrounds, namely rural areas in Mexico, often have suffered disruptions in their education. Pre-literacy in one's native language is one of the consequences of limited schooling. Learning to read and write English is difficult when students have little foundation in their native language. If pre-literate adolescent students' native skills are not addressed, they will not reach higher cognitive skills in English. The end result will be bilingual illiteracy. On the other hand, if native literacy skills are developed, students will then be able to more easily transfer literacy into a second language, specifically English. This is because language skills transfer.

The researcher developed a curriculum intended for pre-literate adolescent Spanish speakers because of a lack of a Spanish for Native Speakers course at the school in question. The course is designed to develop native literacy skills as well as address cultural issues in the Hispanic world. Students will be encouraged to be both bilingual and bicultural which is a definite advantage in the world today.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

In the world today, over 100 million children from ages six to eleven do not attend school (Tucker 1994). When families are extremely poor, children must work instead of attend school. In the United States, one can often earn in an hour what takes an entire day to earn elsewhere. Consequently, many people decide to come to the United States for educational and financial reasons. They cross the border for opportunities not possible in their homeland. As of 1993, there are over 11 million legal and illegal immigrants in the United States (Gray 1993). If they are poor, the children, like their parents, have had little, if any, schooling and cannot read or write in their native language. According to James Cummins' interdependence hypothesis, students who are proficient in their native language can transfer literacy skills into their second language (Crawford 1991). However, when students are not literate in their native language and are transitioned prematurely into English, cognitive development in both languages will likely be retarded.

Development of the Problem

As of 1993, there are over two million limited English students who require English as a second language (ESL) or bilingual services (BLE) in the United States school system (Gray 1993). Furthermore, when parents have little or no schooling and are unable to read, it is difficult for them to support their children when the children are learning to read. Minority adolescents, who have low reading skills in either their native language or English, face the risk of not graduating from high school. Hispanics, including both immigrants and first or second generation minorities, have the highest dropout rate in this country. Over 30 percent of Hispanics do not complete their schooling (United States General Accounting Office 1994). Without an education, the cycle of poverty continues.

This study investigated the teaching approaches that may be effective for bilingual students. Schools need to incorporate different approaches because traditional teaching methods no longer prove effective for minority students. Minority students who are limited in English are "... 1.5 times more likely than their English language counterparts to have discontinued school before completing twelve years" (Crawford 1991, 14).

Some of the many factors that contribute to dropping out of school are economic background, home environment, illiteracy and limited English (McWhirter 1993). It is difficult for schools and teachers to directly change family situations or economic status, but they can work to improve the learning environment. When teachers improve the learning environment, they improve literacy and English acquisition (McWhirter 1993). Teachers need to change the learning environment because the learning styles of at-risk students may differ from the instructional methods of their teachers.

Many teachers continue to lecture and promote independent learning although their students no longer learn in this manner. At-risk students generally do well in cooperative learning and hands-on activities (O'Neil 1990). Because of this gap between teaching and learning styles, many students are not successful in the classroom. According to Howard Gardner's research of multiple intelligences, when teachers incorporate different learning styles into their lessons, all students, especially limited English students, benefit (Lazear 1987, vi).

The United States, for many, still promises to be the land of opportunity. This is not so in Mexico, however, where a handful of people control the economy and the rest of the population struggles for a better life. Over 15 million people face inadequate health and educational services (Ross 1994). According to Sara Chavez-Mercado (1996), a principal in a San Felipe elementary school, most children in Mexico, if poor, complete only the primary years of their schooling. They drop out to work and help support their families. Education in Mexico is enforced through sixth grade only. Secondary education, although required, is not enforced. Consequently, many students do not continue their schooling after sixth grade. Instead, they choose to work and help support their families. Furthermore, the fees for secondary education, which are equivalent to fifty dollars a year, are too much to pay for a family who is already struggling economically (Chavez-Mercado 1996).

Because of the economic and educational problems in Mexico, immigration to the United States is often both economically and educationally motivated. When families come to the United States, they require services including health and educational

assistance. Parents place their school-aged children in local schools. Schools in the United States normally place incoming students in an age appropriate class, despite their educational background. For example, an adolescent who is fourteen or fifteen would be placed in high school although his or her academic level might be much lower. This creates a challenge for both the students and the teachers.

When immigrant students are pre-literate in their native language, namely Spanish, English language acquisition, including verbal and written skills, proves extremely difficult (Collier 1995). According to Virginia Collier (1995), placing pre-literate students in an English only program without giving them support in their native language hinders the learning process. These students have little foundation on which to base their second language learning. Cognitive development of the first language directly affects learning a second language. "The key to understanding the role of first language in the academic development of second language is to understand the function of uninterrupted cognitive development" (Collier 1995, 6).

Minority adolescents who have experienced interruptions in their education, and as a result are pre-literate in their native language, experience difficulty in learning English (Collier 1995). When they do not have higher cognitive skills in Spanish, they are unable to transfer literacy skills into English (Collier 1995). If their native literacy skills are not addressed and higher cognitive skills in Spanish are not developed at the cognitive-academic language proficiency level (CALP), they will not reach higher cognitive levels in English, resulting in limited basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) levels in both

languages. According to the United States General Accounting Office (U.S. GAO 1994), limited English, along with recent immigration and poverty, directly contribute to students' dropping out of school before the twelfth grade.

Need for the Study

Because the United States continues to grow more culturally diverse, schools must be involved in promoting success for minority students. Overall, Spanish is the most common language other than English, spoken by nearly 15 million United States residents (Green 1993). Nearly one third of all Hispanic students are not completing their schooling in the United States (U.S. GAO 1994). When the students are immigrants, one of the principal reasons for not finishing school is because of limited English (U.S. GAO 1994). Many of these students remain limited in English because they have never fully developed their literacy skills in Spanish, which is where their thought processes are, and thus have been unable to transfer reading and writing abilities (Cummins 1981). According to Cummins (1981), because they have no foundation in either language, they are limited in both languages, making learning and consequently graduating from high school extremely difficult.

When students fail to graduate, they lose their ability to become more productive citizens and are relegated to low-paying jobs with poverty level incomes. Developing a curriculum that would help ensure literacy in Spanish would support literacy in English as well because reading and writing skills transfer (Cummins 1981). Thus, bilingually assisting Spanish-speaking students who are pre-literate would help ensure them success

in school (Collier 1995). Furthermore, promoting bilingual literacy as well as verbal skills would increase the job opportunities for these students, especially in the Southwest (Barry 1996).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to develop a curriculum for a secondary Spanish for Native Speakers course designed for students who speak Spanish fluently but cannot read or write it.

Research Question

What is the design of the curriculum for a secondary Spanish for Native Speakers course?

Definition of Terms

Affective filter-That which inhibits learning a second language (Crawford 1991).

Age-appropriate- Placing incoming students in the grade level corresponding to their age regardless of their educational background (U.S. GAO 1994).

At-risk - In danger of not graduating from high school (McWhirter 1993).

Bilingual education -A language acquisition program in which a student's native language is maintained while learning English (Crawford 1991).

Cooperative learning - Learning in groups where every member has a task and all work together to achieve a particular goal (Lazear 1991).

English as a second language instruction - A language acquisition program in which English proficiency is the objective (Crawford 1991).

English immersion -The act of placing non-native speakers of English in an English-only environment (Crawford 1991).

Hands on - Refers to classroom activities that allow students to actually handle or manipulate an object (Lazear 1991).

Multiple Intelligences -Howard Gardner's theory of seven intelligences which are linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal and intrapersonal (Lazear 1991).

Second language acquisition - The act of learning or acquiring a second language (Crawford 1991).

Pre-literate - One who speaks a language well but cannot read or write it (For the purposes of this paper, pre-literacy refers to secondary age students who are in grades seven through twelve.) (Collier 1995).

Total Physical Response (TPR) - Physically acting out a concept or vocabulary word (Lazear 1991).

Two-way immersion -A program in which speakers of both languages are placed together in a bilingual classroom in order to learn each others' language (Crawford 1991).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter discusses the history of bilingual education and Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA). In addition to the history of bilingual education, its purpose and theory were examined, along with its relationship to English as a second language education. The researcher investigated the state of adolescent pre-literacy in native Spanish speakers and their educational performance.

The Mexican school system in a rural immigrant-sending community is discussed with respect to pre-literate Spanish speakers who have immigrated to the United States from Mexico. According to Macias (1990), a common phenomenon in Mexico is transnational immigration which entails families leaving Mexico to live and work in the United States due to economic hardships in their homeland. A Mexican community is considered immigrant-sending when nearly every family has relatives in the United States. Furthermore, the researcher examined the academic progress of native Spanish speakers who have immigrated to the United States as well as first and second generation Spanish speakers whose families have come from Mexico. This chapter concludes with the limitations and challenges associated with bilingual education, with respect to pre-literate Spanish speakers and their educational needs.

History of Bilingual Education

According to Ovando and Collier (1985), bilingual education has been around since at least the early 1800s. Depending on the demographics of a particular area, schools were known to offer content-area instruction in languages other than English. In parts of the Midwest, for example, German, Swedish, and Norwegian, among other languages, were offered; while in the Southwest, schools taught different subjects, such as math and science, in Spanish. However, as Ovando and Collier point out (1985), the bilingual method of instruction virtually vanished around the end of the 1800s. "Toward the end of the 1800s, European nationalism began to exert its influence on the United States, with increasing fears resulting in the call for all immigrants to be assimilated into one cultural and linguistic mold" (Ovando and Collier 1985, 24).

Due to this push for a more monolingual environment, schools were expected to teach English-only and to promote a more "Americanized" culture (Ovando and Collier 1985). Consequently, several decades passed where immigrants went without language services. According to Ovando and Collier (1985), the "sink or swim" approach of immediate immersion into English more often resulted in sinking. This was due to minority language students' inability to acquire a second language without any assistance from the establishment (Crawford 1991). Ovando and Collier note that it was not until the 1950s that ESL services began to grow (1985).

An influx of immigrants and international university students prompted the growing need for ESL services. Although the ESL methodology improved the learning environment, it did not address the cultural differences that students encountered between

their home and school environments (Ovando and Collier 1985). Moreover, the ESL approach did not help to develop or maintain the students' native languages. Because of this, something more needed to be done to address these issues (Ovando and Collier 1985).

Purpose of Bilingual Education

The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was signed into law by President Johnson with the intent to accommodate minority languages that had previously been neglected in the United States (Crawford 1991). The "sink or swim" philosophy for those attempting to acquire the language of the majority, namely English, had caused the minority drop-out rate to escalate. More students proceeded to sink instead of swim in the educational system (Crawford 1991). In light of this problem, the United States Congress decided that action should be taken in order to develop programs that would support minority language learners in their native languages while they learned English (Crawford 1991).

The first legislation of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA). The legislation acknowledged for the first time on a national level "special educational needs of children of limited English proficiency" (Ovando and Collier 1985, 26). The legislation began with three main goals: to increase English skills, to support and nurture native language skills, and to promote the cultural background of minority students (Ovando and Collier 1985). Title VII began with a budget of 7.5 million dollars in 1969 directed towards 27,000 children. Services were to be provided for students whose dominant language was not English and from "families

with incomes below \$3000 per year" (Ovando and Collier 1985, 27). In 1987, over \$130 million were budgeted for Title VII grants, reaching nearly 200,000 students (Crawford 1991). In 1995, approximately \$150 million in federal funding supported nearly 600,000 limited English students (Headden 1995). The funds were and are intended to provide supplementary services for non-English-speaking students (Headden 1995). As of 1993, there are over 2 million students with limited or non-English capabilities in the United States, although a large percentage of them do not receive bilingual or ESL services (Gray 1993).

The overall goal of a Title VII grant is to help immigrant students keep up with their English-speaking counterparts in the crucial content areas, such as math and science, while they acquire basic English skills (Crawford 1991). Bilingual support enables them to learn challenging concepts in their native language, helping them to stay at grade level instead of falling behind (Crawford 1991). According to Cummins (1981), it takes five to seven years for a non-native to reach native speaking fluency and demonstrate grade-level proficiency in a second language in the content-areas. This time line applies to immigrant students who have had two or more years of education in their homeland. Furthermore, in Collier and Thomas' research, students in a successful bilingual program, instead of an English-only program, "typically score at or above grade level in their first language in all subject areas, while they are building academic development of second language" (Collier

1995, 5). Therefore, an effective bilingual program provides "extensive cognitive and academic development in students' first language" and thus ensures second language academic success (Collier 1995, 8).

Theory of Bilingual Education

Cummins' theory of a common underlying proficiency (1981) in languages supports the need for bilingual education. This theory proposes that while languages are different at the surface, they are similar at the base. Language learning, in general, regardless of the specific language, takes place in the same part of the brain. Therefore, Cummins' (1979, 1980, 1981) research indicates that a first language actually supports a second language. On the other hand, the separate underlying proficiency theory states just the opposite, that native language instruction would be at the expense of English instruction, because of a belief that languages develop in different parts of the brain (Crawford 1991). A George Mason University study, which researched 42,000 limited English students over a period of four years, supports Cummins' theory of a common underlying proficiency rather than the separate underlying proficiency. The study found that native language instruction helped give students a "solid academic foundation on which to build any language" (Barry 1996, A18).

Cummins' (1976) interdependence hypothesis predicts that native language skills, such as reading and writing, will transfer into second language skills. This theory reveals that if students have not reached a threshold level of proficiency, namely a minimal cognitive level in their native language, they will not be fully proficient in their second

language. Consequently, when students are prematurely transitioned into English, both languages will likely be retarded. Cummins proposes that a child who is at the basic interpersonal communications skills level (BICS), understands in a context-embedded, face-to-face interaction. Body language and a lot of visuals are used, making communication possible. On the other hand, the higher, more crucial level of proficiency, cognitive-academic language proficiency level (CALP), is a level where one is able to understand in a context-reduced environment where abstract language and higher thinking take place (Ovando and Collier 1985). According to Cummins (1976), students should be at the CALP level in order to be considered truly proficient in a language. Moreover, assuring that students are at this higher cognitive level in their native language will help them reach higher cognitive skills in a second language.

While Cummins research (1976, 1979, 1981, 1982) demonstrates the need for bilingual education, Krashen's (1981) comprehensible input theory looks into how students actually acquire language. This theory can be applied to first and second language learning. In order for language learning to be successful, Krashen (1981) suggests that teachers use a natural and meaningful approach, instead of a grammar-based one. Krashen (1981) proposes that learners acquire language and structure through the need and desire for understanding, much like children do while learning their first language. Therefore, it is through a message containing new grammatical structures that students learn language. With this in mind, Krashen (1981, 1982) suggests that teachers focus on the message instead of the form and not directly teach the grammatical

structures. Krashen (1981, 1982), furthermore, recommends that teachers provide students with background knowledge in their native language, helping them to utilize any resources they might have.

A silent period of up to six months can be expected in language acquisition, according to Krashen, Long and Scarcella (1979). They note that speaking is not necessarily language acquisition. On the contrary, speaking actually follows language acquisition. Consequently, forcing students to speak before they are ready will create an uncomfortable atmosphere and hinder the learning process. Instead, Krashen, Long and Scarcella note (1979) that teachers should be patient and not push for oral production immediately. By creating a comfortable and meaningful environment, the affective filter, or that which interferes with second language acquisition, is lowered, making language acquisition more possible and, thus, successful (Krashen 1981). A high affective filter impedes language learning (Krashen 1981). To avoid this, Krashen recommends that teachers concentrate on communication, instead of correcting errors, in order to avoid a rule embedded approach. In this manner, language acquisition is based on a more natural approach, much like the manner in which children acquire language.

Adolescent Pre-literacy in Native Spanish Speakers

Regarding second language acquisition and the role of native language, Collier and Thomas (Collier 1995) have come up with a conceptual model that demonstrates the second language acquisition process with four interdependent dimensions. The conceptual model examines the language minority students who come from homes where

a language other than English is spoken. These students, consequently, live in two worlds, that of school and the dominant language (English) and that of home and the minority language. The dimensions of the conceptual model include sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive and academic processes. The sociocultural dimension focuses on the home, school and community environments, and their positive and negative effect on the students. The language and cognitive processes deal with the acquisition of oral and written language and the ability to think at a higher level in that second language. Finally, the academic level centers on the students' performance in the different subject areas, and whether or not they are at grade level compared to their English speaking peers. In their conceptual model, Collier and Thomas (Collier 1995) stress the role of the students' native language in the acquisition of English, believing that it "must be developed to a high cognitive level at least through the elementary-school years" (1995, 3). In their research (Collier 1995), Collier and Thomas reach the same conclusions that Cummins (1981, 1991) does in his studies on pre-literate students. If a native language is not cognitively developed, including reading and writing skills, students will experience cognitive challenges in their second language, namely English. Collier and Thomas indicate, as Cummins does previously, that native literacy skills transfer to a second language and thus should be developed to a high cognitive level for strong literacy skills in English (Collier 1995; Cummins 1981, 1991).

Mexican School System in an Immigrant-sending Community

When Spanish speaking immigrants enter the United States school system from Mexico, they are generally placed in an age appropriate grade level, regardless of how little schooling they have had in their homeland (Crawford 1991). Since the number of bilingual teachers in the United States is limited, many limited English students are enrolled in ESL programs, receiving little or no services in their native language (Crawford 1991). Collier and Thomas point out that when students have not acquired higher thinking skills in their native language, due to limited education, they will struggle cognitively in a second language (Collier 1995). Students who come from a poor background, with interruptions in their education, bring with them "special social, emotional, and academic needs" (Collier 1995, 6). According to Julio Moguel (1996), nearly 40.3 million Mexicans live in poverty. This is approximately half of Mexico's overall population. Of that forty-eight percent of the population, nearly twenty percent live in indigency, or severe poverty. Moguel (1996) reveals that most of those twenty percent live in the rural areas of Mexico.

San Felipe, in Baja Mexico, is one such environment. It is a small fishing village of approximately 20,000 people. Located on the Sea of Cortes, it also relies heavily on tourism. Because of its proximity to the United States border, about 120 miles south of Calexico, California, it is an immigrant-sending community. Almost every family in San Felipe has a relative that is living or has lived in the United States (Lopez 1996). Due to the lack of jobs and financial security, many people in San Felipe decide to come to the United States. According to Macías (1990), lack of economic security is the main

motivation for leaving one's homeland. "It is within this economic context that individuals and families...migrate to the United States in search of the work, security and mobility that are unavailable to them in Mexico, particularly in rural areas" (Macías 1990, 297-298).

According to Chavez-Mercado in a lecture (1996), the economic hardships only multiply in the outskirts of San Felipe at the ejido, which is a community outside of a city.

Chavez-Mercado (1996) explains that the particular ejido approximately ten miles outside of San Felipe was formed twenty-eight years ago, in 1968, by 214 people who asked the government to give them parcels of land. Most of these 214 people do not live on the ejido and instead have tenants (Chavez-Mercado 1996). This particular ejido is the largest, with respect to land, in all of Latin America. Its resources include cattle, agriculture, fishing, mining, rock and sand, and tourism (Chavez-Mercado 1996).

However, according to Chavez-Mercado (1996), the living conditions are difficult if not impossible, due to lack of water, and in many instances, electricity. In a lecture, Chavez-Mercado (1996) pointed out that this particular ejido has sixty established families and a total of 320 habitants. Most are not the actual landowners.

Of the sixty families living on the ejido, Chavez-Mercado (1996) notes that forty of those families have students in the elementary school, Plan Nacional Agrario, servicing grades one through six. The school is a multigrade school with seventy-five students and three teachers, who each teach two grade levels in one classroom (Chavez-Mercado 1996). Chavez-Mercado is both the principal and third/fourth grade teacher of Plan Nacional. She teaches and acts as principal there in the morning, while teaching at another school in the afternoon. Most teachers in San Felipe have two jobs due to low pay in the

teaching profession (Lopez 1996). The average base pay for a teacher in Mexico is \$160 a month (Teachers in Mexico end strike 1996). As Chavez-Mercado points out (1996), in Mexico there are urban, semi-urban and rural schools. Plan Nacional is considered a rural school. It does not have water or a phone. Until five years ago, it did not have electricity.

While the federal government pays for electricity and water, if it exists, for all schools, it does not pay for maintenance of the schools. Any funding for a project, educational or structural, must be requested through a grant by the teacher or school. Teachers' salaries come from the state and federal governments. Unlike the United States, schools in Mexico do not receive a certain amount of money for each student (Chavez-Mercado 1996). ISEP, which is Mexico's department of education, supplies each school with a national curriculum, with some variations for regional history and geography. In this manner, every student in Mexico learns the same material (Chavez-Mercado 1996). However, as Chavez-Mercado reveals (1996), in her particular situation, she receives one copy of classroom activities, or curriculum, per month from ISEP. She does not receive any materials or handouts for the students. Since, the school has no Xerox machine, much of the instructional time is spent having students copy information into their notebooks (Chavez-Mercado 1996).

Chavez-Mercado (1996) explains that in the rural areas, children suffer extreme poverty and a lack of educational support in the home. Most parents have attended little or no school so it is difficult for them to help their children in their studies. Due to lack of parental support or simply the need to work, truancy is also a problem, creating

interruptions in a child's schooling (1996). According to Chavez-Mercado (1996), it is also extremely difficult financially for an already struggling family to have their child continue school beyond the sixth grade. Besides needing the extra income gained from having that child work instead, many families cannot afford to pay the tuition required to attend secondary school (Chavez-Mercado 1996). Yearly tuition for secondary school, grades seven, eight and nine, is approximately 150 pesos a year plus the purchase of a required uniform (Lopez 1996). Until 1993, those students who wanted to continue their schooling after the sixth grade also needed to find their own transportation into town. Often, this was impossible, since most families living at the ejido do not own a car (Chavez-Mercado 1996). Now, according to Chavez-Mercado (1996), there is bus service into town to both of the secondary schools in San Felipe, making it more possible to continue school after the sixth grade. Economic hardships, however, continue and in many instances the students must work instead (Chavez-Mercado 1996).

While the primary schools service ages six through twelve, or grades one through six, the secondary schools are intended for grades seven through nine or ages twelve through fifteen. The next level after the secondary schools is the college preparatory or technical school. This optional level is for students in grades ten through twelve or ages fifteen through eighteen (Lopez 1996). To attend, the average tuition is 350 pesos a year (Lopez 1996). According to Lopez (1996), although primary and secondary education are required by law, the government only enforces primary school. Kindergarten, for children ages three to six, is optional. Lopez also notes that if students from San Felipe

wish to attend a college or university, the closest schools are in Mexicali, approximately ninety miles away. There is no financial aid in Mexico, and university scholarships are reserved for the top academic students (1996).

In San Felipe, Lopez indicates that the higher the grade level, the more exclusive the education (1996). Thus, those that make it to the college preparatory level are considered the "best," according to Lopez (1996), and are extremely serious about their studies. All others have dropped out and opted to work instead (Lopez 1996). Because of this, Lopez states that there are few if any discipline problems and parental support is evident (1996).

While San Felipe does have a school for special needs children, there is no bus service to and from the ejido. Often, those particular students go without services (Chavez-Mercado 1996). Lopez further notes that in San Felipe there is no alternative schooling for at-risk students, who instead simply drop out of school (1996).

According to Lopez (1996), drugs, such as cocaine, are a serious problem in the community of San Felipe. He notes that San Felipe is a passageway to the United States for transporting drugs. Because of this, Lopez has witnessed students dropping out of school in order to make a substantial amount of money by carrying drugs across the border, as much as \$25,000 for one trip (1996). Lopez points out that although lucrative, it is a dangerous and often deadly job (1996). In a community as economically burdened as San Felipe, Lopez confirms that people are desperate to survive and, for many, staying in school is not the answer to meeting financial needs (1996).

Statistics in the United States on Immigration and the Minority Drop-out Rate in Schools

As of 1993, there are over 11 million legal and illegal immigrants in the United States (Gray 1993). As Hornblower (1995) points out, of the nearly 44 million students in the school system, approximately 2.6 million are non-English speakers. Currently, \$156 million help fund the bilingual and ESL programs specifically designed for these students, although not all are serviced with these funds. According to Gray (1993), about 600,000 limited English students benefit from these federal funds, while the remaining 2 million do not.

Because of the high Hispanic dropout rate, Congress requested that an investigation be done. The congressional report was based on the 1990 census. The July 1994 report, "Hispanics' Schooling: Risk Factors for Dropping Out and Barriers to Resuming Education," (United States General Accounting Office 1994) found that of the 1.15 million Hispanic dropouts age sixteen to twenty-four, seven of ten are of Mexican origin. Moreover, forty percent of those 1.15 million Hispanic dropouts speak either limited or no English. Recent immigration to the United States directly contributes to dropping out: "64 percent of the young Hispanic dropouts were persons born outside of the United States. Recent arrivals were at the greatest risk of dropping out " (U.S. GAO 1994, 7). With respect to recent immigrants, the report finds the educational process to be disruptive for them because they are unable to understand or speak English. In addition, they are encountering other difficulties due to recently coming to the United States, such as adapting to a new culture along with finding housing and employment. Furthermore, the GAO report (1994) finds that the older the student, the more difficult

the schooling is. "This educational disruption may be especially difficult for youths arriving in the United States in the later high school years, when the need to acquire skills for graduation...may be particularly daunting" (U.S. GAO 1994, 7). Along with the problem of limited or no English, the report also determines low family income to be a contributing factor to the high Hispanic dropout rate, noting that "Hispanics age 16 and 17 from poorer families had higher dropout rates" (U.S. GAO 1994, 7). According to Senator Edward Kennedy, the congressional report was intended to analyze the Hispanic dropout rate in order to help others find preventative strategies to combat the problem (U.S. GAO 1994). The 1994 report did not give any suggestions for reducing the high dropout rate among Hispanics, nor did it compare its findings with the findings of other racial groups.

Bilingual Education's Challenges and Limitations

Bilingual education can be more effective than ESL according to the Arizona Republic article, "Immigrant kids may learn best in own tongue" (1996). The article is in response to the four-year national study of bilingual education conducted by Virginia Collier and Wayne Thomas, of George Mason University. The researchers conclude that "native language instruction gives students a solid academic foundation on which to build in any language, but that English immersion's greater focus on English acquisition causes those students to lose ground in other subjects" (Immigrant kids may learn best in own tongue 1996, A18). The study looked at English immersion programs as well as native-language and two-way immersion programs. Two-way immersion programs are programs

in which speakers of both languages are placed in a bilingual classroom in order to learn each others' language (Crawford 1991). Overall, the two George Mason University professors looked at 42,000 students in three types of language learning programs. According to the Arizona Republic, bilingual advocates contend the George Mason University study to be conclusive that bilingual education is more effective than English-only education for limited English speakers because it gives them a foundation on which to build their second language. Bilingual advocates believe the study should answer, once and for all, nagging questions about how to teach the nation's immigrant children" (Immigrant kids may learn best in own tongue 1996, A18).

Despite the four-year study done by Collier and Thomas, bilingual education still receives constant criticism from English-only advocates (Immigrant kids may learn best in own tongue 1996). According to Headden (1995), misplacement or non-service of LEP students and lack of trained and true bilingual teachers are common problems in the schools. "Misplacement, however, is only part of the problem. At least 25 percent of LEP students, according to the United States Department of Education, get no special help at all. Other children are victims of a haphazard approach" (Headden 1995, 46).

According to Headden (1995), the dropout rate for Hispanic students continues to increase despite bilingual services. According to Collier (1995), language is only one aspect of the situation. "Much misunderstanding occurs because many U.S. policy makers and educators assume that language learning can be isolated from other issues and that the first thing students must do is to learn English" (Collier 1995, 1). The conceptual model developed by Collier and Thomas helps to explain the different factors that contribute to

the learning process--sociocultural, language, academic and cognitive development. All four are interdependent, and if any of the four are neglected, a student's overall success in school, as well as in society is threatened (Collier 1995). Given the various factors involved in educating LEP students, Collier and Thomas highly recommend that educators and schools "provide a sociocultural context that is supportive while academically and cognitively challenging" (Collier 1995, 8). In this manner, bilingual education will be even more successful for the second language learners. (Collier 1995).

Summary

This chapter examined the history of bilingual education and Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) and its impact on the second language learner. Before the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, a "sink or swim" philosophy was the practice. The ESEA legislation mandated schools to support second language students and their "special educational needs" (Ovando and Collier 1985, 26). The purpose of bilingual education was and is to support immigrant students in their native language in the crucial content areas such as math and science while they acquire basic English skills (Crawford 1991). Once second language students have acquired higher thinking skills in their native language, they will more successfully transfer into English (Cummins 1976). If a native language is not cognitively developed, Collier and Thomas (Collier 1995) conclude that second language learning will prove challenging.

The chapter also looked at adolescent pre-literacy in second language students. Immigrant students who have suffered interruptions in their education due to difficult economic situations in their homeland are often pre-literate in their native language. Students who come to the United States from rural areas in Mexico sometimes have needed to work instead of go to school due to poverty. As a result, they may not have developed higher cognitive skills in their native language. According to Collier and Thomas (Collier 1995), adolescent students who are pre-literate need to develop literacy skills in their native language before learning to read and write in English. Premature transfer into English could result in bilingual illiteracy (Collier 1995).

The minority drop-out rate was examined based on data from a 1994 congressional report "Hispanics' Schooling: Risk Factors for Dropping Out and Barriers to Resuming Education" (U.S. GAO 1994). The report concluded that recent immigration to the United States directly contributes to dropping out of school before the twelfth grade. According to the GAO report (1994), of the 1.15 million Hispanic dropouts age sixteen to twenty-four, seven of ten are of Mexican origin. Furthermore, forty percent of those 1.15 million Hispanic dropouts speak either limited or no English (U.S. GAO 1994).

The chapter concluded with bilingual education's challenges and limitations noting the ongoing debate between bilingual versus English-only instruction. According to a comprehensive four year study conducted by Collier and Thomas (Collier 1995), bilingual education may be more effective than English-only instruction. The study done by Collier

and Thomas looked at 42,000 second language students and their educational progress in English-only versus bilingual programs. In the study, two-way immersion programs were found to be the most effective.

The curriculum presented in chapter four targets pre-literacy in adolescent native speakers, offering strategies to help develop literacy skills in Spanish. In particular, goals two through seven offer strategies to improve reading and writing in Spanish. As noted by Cummins (1976) and Collier and Thomas (Collier 1995), native literacy skills should be developed in adolescent second language students in order to achieve literacy in both Spanish and English. If native pre-literacy is not addressed and second language students are prematurely transitioned into English, they will most likely never reach higher cognitive capabilities in English (Cummins 1976; Collier 1995). A solid foundation in one's native language facilitates a smooth transition into English (Cummins 1976; Collier 1995).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to develop a curriculum for a secondary Spanish for Native Speakers course designed for students who speak Spanish fluently but cannot read or write it. The question to be addressed in the study is: What is the design of the curriculum for a secondary Spanish for Native Speakers course?

Research Design

The research design selected was descriptive. "Descriptive research is the most common form of research used in adult education. Because of immediate need to define and describe the fields of practice, the methodology will continue to be important in advancing knowledge" (Merriam and Simpson 1995, 71). With respect to this study, the first step was the collection of data from texts and journals, as well as conferences and workshops. The researcher also obtained information from two field studies in San Felipe, Mexico. Secondly, the researcher identified the need for a Spanish for Native Speakers course at the secondary level due to the large number of pre-literate Spanish speakers in the school system. The third step was the examination of the current curriculum in the foreign language program in her school system and why it was not

effective for pre-literate Spanish speakers. Finally, the researcher investigated the Mexican school system and literacy levels at the elementary school level, through two field studies in San Felipe, Mexico.

Source of Data

Initial data for this study came from journal articles and texts on bilingual education. Information from bilingual education (BLE) and English as a second language (ESL) conferences and workshops also contributed to the study. In particular, the researcher attended two National Association of Bilingual Educators (NABE) conferences in 1994 in Los Angeles, California, and in 1995, in Phoenix, Arizona. At each conference, the researcher attended workshops and lectures by experts in the BLE field.

San Felipe was chosen because of its demographics. San Felipe is a small rural town of about 20,000 people and is approximately 150 miles south of the United States border. Because of its location and its stagnant economy, many families in San Felipe have at least one member who has crossed the border in search of work and economic stability, which is true in most poor rural areas in Mexico. Two educational trips to San Felipe, Mexico, provided the researcher with observations of Mexican schools and communities. While in San Felipe, the researcher observed classes at the primary and secondary levels, conducted interviews and attended lectures by Mexican teachers and administrators. The interviews and lectures focused on the Mexican school system, community characteristics, educational background of the students' parents, community

support for schools, and federal and state funding for schools. The researcher was also able to obtain writing samples from a combined fifth and sixth grade class at a rural primary school with the intention of examining literacy levels in this age group.

Procedure

The researcher traveled to San Felipe, Mexico the first week of June, 1995 and the first week of June, 1996. The purpose of each trip was to observe and learn about the school system and community in a rural Mexican setting close to the United States border in order to develop a curriculum for secondary immigrant students. During the 1995 trip, secondary and college preparatory schools were visited daily in the morning in the town of San Felipe. Both teachers and students were observed. In her observations, the researcher concentrated on teaching styles, student learning styles, materials, classroom management, curriculum and overall school structure. Every Ottawa student during this trip chose a peer teacher from the San Felipe school system with whom to work. Information about both school systems, that of the United States and Mexico, was shared. The purpose of this exchange of information was to better assist immigrant students who come to the United States from Mexico and to help develop curriculum.

Along with school visits, the researcher attended a Bilingual Methods course offered by Ottawa University. The course required that the students meet twice in San Felipe and three weekends in Tempe, Arizona, before and after the Mexico trip. As part of the course requirements, the researcher created bilingual materials for the San Felipe schools, kept a journal and wrote a final report about the schools and community in San Felipe.

The Bilingual Methods classes in Arizona focused on bilingual teaching strategies and materials. The purpose of the meetings in San Felipe was to discuss general observations of the Mexican school system, as well as student performance. The overall intention of the school visits was to discover instructional strategies used in Mexico that might be implemented to help Mexican immigrant students in the United States schools.

Therefore, while in the classrooms in San Felipe, the students of Bilingual Methods closely observed teaching strategies that could be beneficial for ESL students in the United States.

The researcher traveled again to San Felipe in June of 1996 to conduct more research for a Spanish for Native Speakers course. During this trip, the researcher taught a fifth/sixth grade combined class for the entire week at the Plan Nacional, a rural elementary school approximately ten miles outside of San Felipe. The opportunity to teach at Plan Nacional was made available because a teacher was ill and was unable to teach for an extended period of time. In San Felipe's school system substitutes are non-existent. School lasted from 8:00 A.M. until 12:00 P.M. The students had a thirty minute break every day at 10:30 A.M. During class, the students read short stories and wrote their own stories, enabling the researcher to investigate literacy levels at this grade level. The researcher videotaped the students as they read their stories and talked about themselves. The students also worked on geometry and word problems.

On Thursday, June 6, 1996, Sara Chavez-Mercado, who is Plan Nacional's principal, and a combined third/fourth grade teacher, gave a fifty minute lecture in Spanish to Ottawa students on rural schools in Mexico. She discussed rural schools in comparison to city schools; topics of discussion included the number of students at the school and

history of the school and community as well as the community's economic resources. The lecture took place at the school site. She answered several questions from the Ottawa students regarding funding from the government, community support, educational background of the parents, curriculum and textbook availability. The lecture was videotaped by the researcher.

The researcher gathered information to assist in developing the target curriculum by attending and videotaping another lecture at the Cobach on Tuesday, June 4, 1996. The lecture was in both English and Spanish and lasted two hours. The Cobach is a college preparatory school or "prepa" in San Felipe. The school is voluntary. Teachers and administrators from the Cobach spoke about the school system at the college preparatory level. The speakers discussed teacher evaluations, school structure and funding, curriculum, assessment, teaching and learning styles and college placement. Statistics were given on the drop-out rate and college attendance rate. Questions were answered at the end of the discussion. Both the Cobach personnel and Ottawa students exchanged information about their school systems in order to try to better assist immigrant students in the United States school system.

The two trips to San Felipe, Mexico provided the researcher with background information about the immigrant students who come to the United States from rural settings in Mexico. During the visits to Mexico, native literacy levels, learning styles, school atmosphere and parental involvement were examined closely before writing the curriculum for a Spanish for Native Speakers class. The researcher included cooperative learning activities in the curriculum based on observations of the Mexican school system.

Instead of working individually, Mexican students generally work in groups. As Macías points out (1990), a silent classroom in Mexico is rare, instead "students talk throughout the class period; teachers are always available to repeat, explain, and motivate; silent seat work is rare; and often a crescendo of sound-some noise, to be sure-is indicative of instructional activity" (304). Examples of cooperative learning activities can be found in chapter four, goals four, seven and eight, where students work together in order to accomplish a given task.

Along with cooperative learning activities, hands-on activities were included in the curriculum. Due to a lack of instructional materials in rural Mexican schools, students often make their own instructional aids. Thus, students are accustomed to learning from hands-on activities (Macías 1990). Examples of hands-on activities can be found in chapter four, goals ten and eleven, where students do projects such as travel brochures in order to explore their own cultural heritage.

Strategies to develop native literacy skills were also incorporated into the curriculum, as noted in chapter four, goals one through seven. Students develop literacy skills by reading and writing about a variety of literary genres in Spanish including poetry, prose, drama and periodical literature. As noted by Cummins (1976), when ESL students have developed higher cognitive skills in their native language, they will then be able to transfer those skills, namely reading and writing, more easily into English.

CHAPTER 4

CURRICULUM FOR PRE-LITERATE SPANISH SPEAKERS

Introduction

The curriculum that follows is intended for orally proficient Spanish speakers who are not literate in their native language. The course is designed to benefit native speakers for many reasons including cultural awareness and pride of their heritage, as well as promote literacy skills in Spanish. Literacy skills in Spanish should, in turn, strengthen literacy in English. According to Cummins (1978, 1980), literacy in a native language directly leads to literacy in a second language, creating both a bilingual and biliterate person. Language skills transfer. Placing pre-literate native Spanish speakers in a beginning level foreign language class has long been the practice in public schools, unless the school has a program specifically prepared for these students (Blanco, Contreras and Márquez 1994). The school in question, an urban high school in Phoenix, Arizona, does have a class designed particularly for literate native Spanish speakers. To qualify for the course the students must pass the Spanish National Exam with a score of 70% or higher to demonstrate literacy in the target language.

The school district in question has no literacy skills program specifically designed for pre-literate native Spanish students. Instead, these students are placed in the same classes with non-native Spanish speakers who have very little, if any, knowledge of Spanish.

Unlike non-native speakers who are learning Spanish for the first time, native speakers bring with them verbal and listening skills to the classroom. Their ability to understand and speak Spanish places them at a completely different level from a non-native student. A native Spanish class for pre-literate students would promote communicative skills with the objective of developing native literacy (Walqui-Van Lier and Barraza 1995).

Because of native speakers ability to already speak and understand Spanish, the approach of the course would be a to strengthen reading and writing skills. Language acquisition would be a focus. Instead of being the center of the curriculum, grammar would serve as a tool for communication. Traditional foreign language teaching usually places grammar at the core of a program. Grammar often dictates which text the teacher will utilize and the classroom activities in which the students will engage (Walqui-Van Lier and Barraza 1995). Pre-literate students would utilize the skills they already possess in the learning process, namely understanding and speaking Spanish. Oral and aural (listening) proficiency in Spanish would aid in decoding print and sound (Walqui - van Lier and Barraza 1995).

Spanish is an extremely phonetic language, where words are spelled as they are pronounced, aiding in the reading process. Speaking and listening skills of pre-literate students would be assumed skills and could be used to increase their literacy skills. Successful students would learn a more formal Spanish and the appropriateness for using either formal or informal language. Often, the Spanish spoken at home is informal,

similar to English spoken at home. It is important for all students, regardless of their language, to learn the formal, more standardized language and be able to use it whenever necessary, such as in the professional world (Barry 1996).

In addition to native language literacy skills, which should promote second language literacy, the curriculum should also develop cultural awareness and pride with a study of Hispanic literature, customs, history and geography. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), students experience more success when they are proud of their background. When minority students are able to maintain their native language and culture, and, in essence, be both bilingual and bicultural, they experience more self-esteem. Self-esteem leads directly to a successful school experience. Lack of self-esteem and limited English, along with poverty and single parent households, are major contributing factors for dropping out of school (McWhirter 1993). The dropout rate for Hispanics is approximately 30 percent based on a 1994 report to Congress. Mexican immigrants are at the greatest risk for dropping out, representing 43 percent of the overall Hispanic dropout rate (U.S. GAO 1994).

In conclusion, schools must address bilingual students' needs. A course that promotes bilingual literacy and biculturalism should help ensure student success and hopefully combat the staggering dropout rate the minority language students suffer. Schools cannot continue to ignore the increasing number of minority student dropouts.

Next to English, Spanish is the most common language spoken in the United States. In Arizona alone, of the 700,000 people that speak a language other than English, nearly 500,000 are Spanish speakers (Green 1993). Being bilingual and biliterate proves to be

an asset in the workforce, especially in the Southwest and Florida. By promoting multilingualism and affirming different cultures, the United States should be "better able to compete in the increasingly global marketplace" (Green 1993).

Course Description

Number of Semesters. The course would consist of two semesters.

Course Title. The name of the course would be Spanish for Native Speakers

Grade Level. The grade levels serviced would be ten, eleven and twelve.

Enrollment Criteria. Enrollment would be based on specific testing in order to establish the appropriate level as determined by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Spanish National Exam. ACTFL would be used to examine verbal and listening proficiency while the Spanish National Exam would assess literacy and listening skills. Proficiency guidelines from ACTFL would be utilized for the purpose of placement. Placement in the course would be reserved for students scoring between the intermediate and advanced levels in oral proficiency and below 70% on the Spanish National Exam. Any student who scores 70% or higher on the Spanish National Exam would be eligible to take the Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish course.

Course Description. This is a course designed to develop literacy skills in native Spanish speakers. The students will develop reading and writing skills in the target language through the help of various literary genres, such as novel, short story, poetry, and essay. The students will expand their speaking and listening skills, as well, by reading aloud and listening to others while they read aloud. The course offers the students an

opportunity to better understand Spanish culture and civilization. Students will explore their ancestral background and famous Hispanics. This opportunity will help students to develop an appreciation for their own heritage.

Goals. The overall goals of the course would be to develop biliteracy skills in Spanish and English; to promote a bicultural setting; to develop a greater awareness and respect for one's heritage; to develop positive and constructive attitudes among the students toward school and community; and to improve the students' self-esteem through cultural and language learning.

Curriculum

Pre-test and Post-test: Students will take the Spanish National Exam upon entering and exiting the course in order to establish native literacy levels prior to and after one semester of coursework. The exam will be utilized to determine the students level of reading and writing in Spanish and to assess their growth after one semester.

1.0 Goal: Students will demonstrate a greater mastery of Spanish grammar.

1.1 Objective: Students will develop an understanding of Spanish grammar through communicative activities.

1.1.1 Performance indicator: Given a particular literary work, such as a poem or short story, students identify and apply particular grammar points in a contextualized manner.

2.0 Goal: Students will demonstrate a greater mastery of reading in Spanish

2.1 Students will assimilate appropriate strategies, for example pre-reading, reading through a text and follow-up activities, in order to become confident, independent readers.

2.1.1 Students use reading strategies (pre-reading, reading through a text and follow-up or extension activities) in order to comprehend a particular literary text.

3.0 Goal: Students will demonstrate analytical skills through exposure to a variety of literary genres in Spanish including poetry, prose, drama and periodical literature.

3.1 Students will read and analyze a variety of texts in Spanish including poetry, prose, drama and short story.

3.1.1 Given a literary work, students identify major characters, events and issues in the work.

3.1.2 Given a passage from a work, students offer an interpretation, or an application of the work to their own lives.

3.2 Students will infer the author's intent from a close reading of the work which could include short stories, poems, drama and novel.

3.2.1 Given a work of literature, students make interpretations regarding the author's intent in presenting various characters through different literary theories such as reader-response criticism.

4.0 Goal: Students will actively respond to the central works through integrated writing, speaking and listening activities, for example debates and presentations.

4.1 Students will use writing, listening and speaking as tools for understanding and appreciating a variety of literary texts.

4.1.1 Given a literary text, students keep a journal including self-selected passages and personal responses to the passages.

4.1.2 Given a literary work, students identify difficulties in understanding written materials and write interpretive questions concerning the difficulties as the basis for small group discussion.

5.0 Goal: Students will write in Spanish in a variety of modes including poetry, essays, journals and letters for various occasions.

5.1 Students will write to develop their own voice and style through the practice of writing and giving speeches, telling stories and reciting poetry.

5.1.1 Given a passage written in a distinctive style, such as modern or medieval, students translate it into their own words.

5.2 Students will demonstrate the ability to express a point of view on a particular issue by responding to a specific topic question.

5.2.1 Given a topic, students write an essay analyzing the particular issue and supporting one side of it.

5.3 Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively about a personal experience.

5.3.1 Given models from literature and the opportunity to reflect on a period of their own lives, students write an essay which recalls and analyzes the event.

5.4 Students will write a solution to a problem.

5.4.1 Given models from literature and a situation requiring reform, students write a proposal which identifying a problem and justifying a solution.

5.5 Students will write an analysis by comparing and contrasting two or more phenomena.

5.5.1 Given models from literary works, students write an analysis comparing and contrasting phenomena.

5.5.2 Given two or more literary works, students write an essay identifying similarities and differences and discussing their significance.

6.0 Goal: Students will learn the writing process in Spanish, including stages called prewriting, drafting, revising and editing.

6.1 Students will extend some written assignments through all the stages of the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising and editing) before submitting a final draft.

6.1.1 Given a writing prompt, for example an essay, students complete all the stages of the writing process.

7.0 Goal: Students will write correct prose in Spanish.

7.1 Students will participate in peer response situations which give them an opportunity to give and receive feedback, and which will assist them in revision.

7.1.1 Given the opportunity for peer feedback in editing groups, students revise drafts to produce a final product that reflects current appropriate standards of correctness.

8.0 Goal: Students will develop the communicative skills of speaking and listening in Spanish.

8.1 Students will participate effectively in small groups. Students will have a specific role in order to accomplish the given task.

8.1.1 Given a task and predetermined criteria regarding effective small group work, students within small groups successfully complete the task.

8.2 Given a classroom discussion and criteria for effective participation, students engage in the discussion with sustained involvement, productive responses and shared participation.

8.2.1 Students will participate effectively in whole classroom discussion through note taking, expressing opinions and drawing conclusions.

8.3 Students will record information delivered through oral or media presentations.

8.3.1 Given information delivered through oral and media presentations, students record the information in a useful way.

8.4 Students will analyze and evaluate audiovisual material such as film, videotape or a filmstrip.

8.4.1 Given a film, videotape, filmstrip or recording, and a set of criteria, students analyze and evaluate the material.

8.5 Students will prepare and deliver an oral presentation which clearly expresses their ideas.

8.5.1 Given the appropriate assignment and a set of criteria, students deliver an oral presentation. Presentations may vary in length from two to ten minutes.

8.6 Students will learn to listen critically.

8.6.1 Given an oral presentation, students recognize main ideas through active listening skills.

9.0 Goal: Students will expand their vocabulary in Spanish.

9.1 Students will study vocabulary words in the context of literature.

9.1.1 Given a literary work, students compile a list of words they cannot understand from the context, define those words, and incorporate them into their personal vocabularies.

9.2 Students will define vocabulary in the target language.

9.2.1 Students develop vocabulary through the use of synonyms, antonyms, cognates, idioms and colloquial expressions.

10.0 Goal: Students will demonstrate an appreciation of their heritage.

10.1 Students will participate in culturally-oriented activities.

10.1.1 Students investigate and report on famous Hispanics and their accomplishments.

10.1.2 Students find cultural differences between Hispanic and United States culture presenting simulated cultural situations, for example attitudes towards family and mealtimes.

11.0 Goal: Students will discover other Spanish-speaking countries and their demographics in order to better understand their heritage.

11.1 Students will research and identify Spanish-speaking countries and their demographics.

11.1.1 Given a blank map of the western hemisphere, students locate Spanish-speaking countries and their capitals.

11.1.2 Students create a travel brochure of a Spanish-speaking country.

11.1.3 Students give an oral presentation on an assigned Spanish-speaking country.

11.2 Students will identify major indigenous tribes in Mexico, Central America and South America.

11.2.1 Students identify major historical native populations in Mexico and Central America before Cortes, including the Mayans and the Aztecs.

Summary

The curriculum presented in chapter four is designed to target the purpose of the study, which is to improve reading and writing skills of pre-literate adolescent Spanish speakers at the secondary level. In the curriculum, goals two, three and nine correspond with improving native reading skills, while goals four, five, six and seven target native writing skills. The curriculum also addresses native speaking and listening skills in goals four, eight, nine and ten. In addition to the above mentioned skills, the curriculum incorporates the students' own cultural heritage in goals ten and eleven.

As with any curriculum, speaking, listening, reading and writing skills can and often are integrated in a given activity. For example, students give oral presentations of reports they have written. While the reports are being presented, the other students listen for specific pre-determined information. Improving native reading and writing skills, however, is the primary intention of the curriculum presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of the study was to develop a curriculum for a Spanish for Native Speakers course designed for students who speak Spanish fluently but cannot read or write it. The curriculum was established by observation, research and participation in two field studies to San Felipe, Mexico. The curriculum in chapter four delineates the process by which these goals were sought.

As of 1993, there are over two million limited English students in the United States school system (Gray 1993). Those who come from a poor background, namely rural areas in Mexico, often have had limited academic exposure. Due to extreme poverty, work often takes precedence over school in order for families to survive economically. One of the consequences of limited schooling is pre-literacy in a native language. Consequently, minority adolescents, who are recent immigrants from Mexico and have low reading skills in their native language, struggle to learn written and spoken English. Having no solid foundation in Spanish severely limits them in English, making learning burdensome and often frustrating.

Much of the data for this study came from journal articles and texts on bilingual education. The researcher also obtained information from bilingual and ESL conferences

and workshops she attended. The data from journal articles, conferences and workshops provided the researcher with background information in bilingual education and teaching strategies for the classroom. Students who live in rural areas in Mexico such as San Felipe often suffer interruptions in their education due to poverty. The dropout rate for Mexican students in a rural area after sixth grade is extremely high (Chavez-Mercado 1996). When native literacy skills are at or below the sixth grade level, learning to read and write in English is extremely difficult. (Collier 1995). In order for second language learners to successfully transfer into English, native literacy skills should be addressed (Collier 1995).

The researcher attended all the required bilingual education courses through Ottawa University in fulfillment of a Masters in Education. Two field study trips to San Felipe, Mexico, greatly contributed to the study, allowing for observations of the Mexican school system in a rural, immigrant-sending community. While in San Felipe, the researcher visited several schools at the elementary, secondary and college preparatory levels in order to observe the dynamics of the Mexican school system. The researcher also attended lectures given by administrators and teachers, and interviewed them so as to obtain specific information regarding San Felipe's community and demographics. In June of 1996, the researcher taught a fifth/sixth grade combined class in Spanish for a week at the Plan Nacional Agrario, an elementary school approximately ten miles from the town of San Felipe. This experience enabled her to witness literacy levels and obtain and assess writing samples from fifth and sixth graders in a poor, rural community where education is limited in the home and community.

The lack of a Spanish for Native Speakers course at the school in question motivated the development of a curriculum intended for pre-literate, native Spanish speakers. The researcher's goal is to implement the curriculum at an urban high school in Phoenix, Arizona, in order to more effectively service, pre-literate, native Spanish speakers. As of 1996, at the school in question, native Spanish speakers are placed with non-native Spanish speakers in a foreign language class.

Conclusions

Current research indicates that bilingual education is more effective than English as a second language education, especially when adolescent LEP students are pre-literate in their native language. Developing literacy skills in Spanish enables native Spanish speakers to become literate in English. When limited English proficient adolescents are pre-literate in Spanish, native literacy skills should be developed before expecting them to learn to read and write in English. Immediate immersion into English has resulted in limited proficiency in both languages, if students have not reached a threshold of proficiency in their native language.

With respect to second language acquisition and native language preservation, Collier and Thomas' four dimensional conceptual model demonstrates the need for bilingual education (Collier 1995). Furthermore, Collier's and Thomas' conceptual model confirms that language is but one of the four dimensions in the education of second language learners, which include: sociocultural, linguistic, academic and cognitive dimensions.

Students from homes where other than English is spoken live in two separate worlds, using both a dominant language (e.g. English), and a minority language (e.g. Spanish). As discussed in chapter two, forcing LEP students into English, without giving them support in their native language also shuts out students' families from the educational process. When students do not have family support in their education, academic success is extremely difficult and often results in failure (McWhirter 1993).

The Spanish for Native Spanish Speakers course would develop native literacy skills by utilizing the students' oral and aural fluency. The goal of the course would be to develop biliteracy skills. The course would also address cultural issues in the Hispanic world, allowing the students to discover and take pride in their own heritage. In order for the students to better understand their heritage, the curriculum would include Hispanic civilization and culture.

Recommendations

Due to difficult economic and political conditions in Mexico, and other countries, immigrants continue to come to the United States for both work and an education. When LEP students come from a poor background, they need additional services due to the interruptions in their education, namely native language development (Collier 1995). In addition to specific curriculum, other considerations should be looked at including more bilingual teachers, aides, materials and training in order to service these students. More materials should be developed that are age-appropriate and culturally meaningful to immigrant students. Schools should aggressively seek and hire bilingual instructors and

aides. Furthermore, schools should offer more staff training and workshops in order to better service LEP students in all their courses. Offering a Spanish for Native Speakers course would benefit students not only in Spanish but also in English. After successfully completing the course at the school in question, the students would be encouraged to take the Advance Placement (AP) Spanish course which requires native literacy skills. Pre-literate students would have a bridge to cross over and become truly bilingual.

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