Key Factors and Pedagogical Strategies for a successful Transition of TWI students from Elementary to Middle and High School

CABE 2017

Presented by Dr. Regula Sellards
Workshop Description

This workshop describes my research study soliciting experts’ opinions on key factors and pedagogical strategies that support the successful transition of TWI students from elementary to middle and high school.

& Goals

- Identify most important key factors that support elementary TWI students as they transition from elementary to middle and high school
- Identify effective pedagogical strategies for the most highly rated key factors
Your Background

- Where are you from?
- What do you do?
- What are you hoping to get from this presentation?
Outline

1. Personal Background and Experience
2. Selected Topic
3. Purpose & Research Questions
4. Methodology
5. Population/Sample
6. Data Collection
7. Analysis
8. Summary Pedagogical Approaches
9. Findings
10. Surprises
11. Conclusions
12. 15 Suggested Strategies
13. Recommended Actions
14. Concluding Remarks
15. Discussion
Personal Background

- Born and raised in Switzerland
- Moved to San Francisco in 2001 to complete MBA at SFSU
- Live in Glendale with husband Grady and twins Sebastian and Benjamin (6)
- Completed Ed.D. at Brandman (Chapman) University in Organizational Leadership, focus on Transformational Change
- Dissertation: Pedagogy and Successful Practices in Dual Language Programs
Personal Experience

- Teaching Background, 10+ years
  - Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH)
  - Junior High School
  - Adult Education
  - Mentoring

- Consulting, Training & Account Managing, 10+ years
  - Consulting & training in educational related field (K-12 and Community Colleges)
  - Mentoring field consultants in client service
Why I chose
Pedagogy and Successful Practices in Dual Language Programs

1. Personal Experience
   • Acquiring a new language and immersing in a different culture

2. Personal Interest
   • Determined to raise my twins bilingually and enroll them in Two-Way Immersion (TWI) program
   • Expand my knowledge of pedagogy for teaching higher education in the future
Need for this Study (Problem Statement)

2nd language experience and knowledge of culture is fundamental to a country’s viability (Rhodes & Pufahl, 2009)

USA: 20% of children (5-17) don’t speak English at home (Lindholm-Leary & Block, 2010)

Growth of English language learners require to find best way to meet their academic & social needs (Weintraub, 2012)

TWI is promising approach, which caused growth in these programs, in particular EL schools (Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006)

Need for more research about pedagogical approaches that are successful in promoting second language acquisition, in particular for middle and high school (Genesee, 2004; Bearse & DeJong, 2008)
Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the opinions of experts and practitioners in the field of Two-Way Immersion (TWI) programs on key factors and determine pedagogical strategies that support the successful transition of TWI students from elementary to middle and high school.
Research Questions

1. What are key factors that support current elementary Two-Way Immersion (TWI) students as they transition to middle and high school?

2. What is the relevance of the key factors identified in Research Question 1 as it pertains to the students’ continued dual language status?

3. For the most highly rated key factors identified in Research Question 2, what are recommendations for the most effective pedagogical strategies to address these factors in the future?
Methodology

- **Delphi Methodology**
  - Iterative process to collect and refine anonymous conclusions of experts using a series of data collection and analysis techniques intermingled with feedback (Skulmoski, Hartman & Krahn, 2007)

- **Rationale/Reason:**
  - Gather information and find **consensus** from those who are immersed and imbedded in the topic
  - Problem can benefit from subjective judgments on a collective basis (Linstone, 1978)
  - Appropriate when there is incomplete knowledge about a problem (Skulmoski et al, 2007)
  - Looking into the future as the number of TWI programs in the US increases
Population/Sample

• Educators and researchers with experience in TWI programs
• 422 dual language programs nationwide
• Purposeful sampling, based on convenience and willingness to participate in the study
• Site selection in US, only one Delphi panel member can be from one TWI site

• Panel of experts (16) representative of profession:
  1. 7 Researchers/Authors (published two or more articles/books)
     • Experienced professionals with an informed view on issues in field
  2. 6 Teachers (5 years of experience)
     • Primary agents of activism and reform, often left out of larger discussions about curriculum and pedagogy
  3. 3 Administrators/Principals (5 years of experience)
     • Oversee dual language program and hold social nomination and recognition
# 1. Researchers/Authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant group: researchers</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Current research/focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher 1</td>
<td>5 years as dual language curriculum specialist</td>
<td>Teacher practice and effectiveness in teaching English as a second language (ESL) and dual language students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher 2</td>
<td>2 years of teaching dual language, 20+ years in teaching educators in the dual language field</td>
<td>Teacher development for and student language development in immersion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Researcher 3</td>
<td>30 years of research</td>
<td>Student language proficiency and academic success for different subgroups of students in dual language programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Researcher 4</td>
<td>9 years in elementary dual language</td>
<td>Effective outcomes and language development in dual language programs</td>
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<td>Researcher 5</td>
<td>2 years in eighth and ninth grade, multiple years of ESL, consulting administration in the area of dual language</td>
<td>Integration of language and content instruction, cross-cultural development, and students with special needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher 6</td>
<td>Multiple years of evaluating biliteracy development of students in and creating resources for TWI programs</td>
<td>Focus on program evaluations, conference presentations, program implementation, and linguistic and cultural equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher 7</td>
<td>8 years in administration</td>
<td>Interest in how bilingual children can be positioned or position themselves in academically powerful ways within a classroom</td>
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## 2. Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant group: Teachers</th>
<th>Experience in current position</th>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expert 1</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Korean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 2</td>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, &amp; 3rd grade</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 3</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>Kindergarten &amp; 3rd grade</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 4</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>2nd and 3rd grade</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 5</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>4th grade</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 6</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>5th grade</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
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## 3. Administrators/Principals

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<tr>
<th>Participant group: Principals/administrators</th>
<th>Experience in current position</th>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Language</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expert 1</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert 2</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>Mandarin and Spanish</td>
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<td>Expert 3</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>K-6</td>
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Step-by-Step Process of Study

**Selection of Experts (16):**
7 Researchers, 3 Administrators/Principals, 6 Teachers

**ROUND 1:** Identification of key factors that support current EL TWI students as they transition to MS & HS

**ROUND 2:** Experts rate degree of importance for these key factors as they pertain to student’s designation as a DL student

**ROUND 3:** Recommendation for the most effective pedagogical strategies to address highest ranked factors
Data Collection

- Data collection occurred January 31 through February 23, 2015
- Instrumentation: Web-based tool SurveyMonkey
- 3 Rounds
  1. Identification of key factors: Open-ended question
  2. Rating of key factors: Likert-scale (very unimportant to very important)
  3. Suggestions for highly rated factors: Open-ended question
- Anonymous
Data Analysis – Round 1

- Panelists listed key factors that support TWI students transitioning to MS and HS

- Identification of 35 different key factors, assigned to 4 themes:
  1. Program/curriculum – 14
  2. Strategies – 13
  3. Support/staff – 6
  4. Culture - 2
35 Identified Key Factors: **Program/Curriculum (14)**

1. Alignment of programs among elementary, middle and high school
2. Very well-implemented continuation program at middle and high school
3. Informed middle and high school teachers about the needs of entering students. Communication between schools
4. Communication between educators at every level
5. Strong administrative support from “receiving” and “sending” school
6. Administrative support from the district
7. High expectations for fifth and sixth grade students
8. Challenging curriculum in both Spanish and English that is tied to the common core and state standards
9. TWI courses should satisfy core content requirements whenever possible so that students can take other electives
10. Reclassify students before moving to middle school so they have the opportunity to choose other electives
11. AP Spanish courses as freshman in order for the TWI student to fit into the Spanish for Native Speakers program
12. High school offers Spanish literature to allow continuation of high levels of instruction
13. Ample time, preferably 50% of the school day to teach multiple subjects in the minority language
14. Understanding the difference between advance Spanish classes in secondary school and language arts taught through an immersion methodology
35 Identified Key Factors: Strategies (13)

1. Instilling a sense of love for learning languages by supporting students’ zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky calls ZPD the difference between what learners can do without help and what they can do with help

2. Support a strong self-identity as bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural learner through teaching student to have a “growth mindset” (C. Dweck: Belief that most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work)

3. Same support any student needs with that transition

4. Development of vocabulary and writing in two languages

5. Ability to read and write in two languages at the grade equivalency level

6. Expose students to oral presentations from K-5 to build self-confidence in speaking in public and dealing with others

7. Independent learning (learning how to learn; study skills and knowing how to find information in the two languages)

8. Becoming comfortable with the norms and way of doing things within the two cultures represented by the two languages

9. Developing “funds of knowledge” (knowledge students gain from their family and cultural backgrounds, to make their classrooms more inclusive)

10. Developing students’ social skills and tolerance for cultural and personal diversity by having them collaborate with their peers inside and outside the classroom

11. Older students assist in academic and social activities with younger students or within the community allowing the more practical application of their second language, building confidence and social skills in the needed areas

12. Creation of measures across fifth and eighth grade for competency testing to regularly monitor the students’ progress as well as address the areas of the fluidity of teaching through the grade levels

13. Creative problem solving
35 Identified Key Factors: **Support/Staff (6)**

1. Parental support and education of parents, such as workshops to emphasized the importance of staying in and continuing the program and how to support students’ learning

2. Community support/community service opportunities to use the language within communities for authentic experiences with the target language community

3. Integration of TWI students with the rest of the school/taking classes with students who come from other elementary schools

4. Highly informed, engaged, and passionate teachers to keep students motivated to continue to use the minority language

5. Teachers with high level of language proficiency to provide challenging language experience for students (not foreign language teachers)

6. Staff’s belief and confidence in the program goals and in adjusting the schedule to meeting dual language (DL) student needs
35 Identified Key Factors: **Culture (2)**

1. TWI program needs to be centered in the school’s identity, representing the value on the campus and make use of the bilingual students to make the language program a centerpiece. If the program is simply an add-on, it will remain marginalized.

2. Create a culture within the school of biliteracy.
Data Analysis – Round 2

- Panelists rated key factors regarding to their relevance to the student’s designation as a dual language student.

- Areas of consistency in findings of emerging themes:
  1. Engaged teachers with high language proficiency
  2. Curriculum
  3. Communication
  4. Administrative support

Factors related to Culture not highly rated
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<td>12. Ability to read and write in two languages at the grade equivalency level</td>
<td>24. Parental support and education of parents, such as workshops to emphasize the importance of staying in and continuing the program and how to support students learning</td>
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Panelists provided recommendations for the most effective pedagogical strategies to address the highly rated factors:

- Directed content analysis (starts with a theory as guidance)
  - Vygotsky’s sociocultural pedagogy (learning through social interaction)
  - Cummins’ transformative pedagogy (interaction between educator and student)
  - Freire/Bakhtin’s critical and dialogic pedagogy (empower to question assumptions)
  - Diversity pedagogy (attend to students’ cultural characteristics)

- Non-pedagogical strategies
# Summary: Pedagogical Approaches

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
<th>Scholars</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
| Critical & Dialogic Pedagogy     | Freire (1921-1997), Brazil                                              | • Question assumptions  
• Challenge unjust treatment by engaging in a recursive dialogue with students.  
• Ask information-seeking questions  
• Treat students as capable and knowledgeable |
|                                  | Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), Russia                                     |                                                                                                                                           |
| Diversity Pedagogy (DPT)         | Sheets (Texas Tech University)                                          | • Nonjudgmental & inclusive of cultural backgrounds  
• Culture is the center of all we do in education  
• Attend to specific cultural characteristics that make students different from one another |
| Cultural Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) | Gay (University of Washington), Irvine (Emory University, Atlanta), and others |                                                                                                                                           |
| Culturally Responsive Theory     |                                                                         |                                                                                                                                           |
| Sociocultural Pedagogy           | Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), Russia                                       | • Language acquisition & learning happens through social interaction within an immediate social context  
• Children’s development is better understood through context of participation in activities, which require cognitive processing and communication |
|                                  |                                                                         |                                                                                                                                           |
| Transformative Pedagogy          | Jim Cummins (1949), University of Toronto                               | • Interactions between educators & students that foster the collaborative creation of power                                           |
Findings

- Non-pedagogical factors and recommendations seem more important than pedagogical ones.
- Identified as most important with numerous recommendations:
  - Teacher qualification
  - Curriculum/program planning
  - Communication
  - Administrative support
- In terms of pedagogy, most recommendations were assigned to the following approaches:
  - Sociocultural pedagogy
  - Transformative pedagogy
Surprises

- No noticeable difference among the 3 groups researchers/authors, administrators/principals, and teachers
- Culture was not rated as a highly important factor, nor were a lot of cultural aspects included in recommended strategies
- Non-pedagogical strategies were prominent
Conclusions

Although not directly related to pedagogy, the following factors are most crucial to support current TWI elementary students as they transition to middle and high school:

1. Engaged, highly informed and passionate teachers with high language proficiency

2. TWI program structure, such as program alignment, planning, and curriculum

3. Excellent communication and collaboration among educators and administrators across schools

4. Administrative support from school district and “sending” and “receiving” school
Conclusions (continued)

Multiple recommendations for a successful transition of elementary TWI students to middle and high school relate to the following pedagogical approaches:

1. Vygotsky’s sociocultural pedagogy where students are engaged and interactive
2. Cummins’ transformative pedagogy by placing responsibility on students
Summary: 15 Suggested Strategies

- Cooperative learning strategies
- Engaging activities that are interactive through talking or manipulating objects
  - Teacher development that helps with development of curriculum that integrates content, culture and language
- Project-based learning
  - Let students investigate what it means to be bilingual and bicultural individuals. What advice would they give to peers who are in the process of learning about and adopting new norms and values?
  - Have MS students got EL school to provide incentives to continue their dual language programs

- Engagement of students in learning opportunities in form of student-to-students, teacher-students and class-to-teacher that foster acquisition of the second language
- Develop buy-in from students
- Student involvement in the learning process, placing responsibility for success onto student as well as teachers and families
  - Allow students opportunity to express their choice for program
  - Collaboration between students and teachers to keep students informed and aware of the transitional process as well as their progression
  - Encourage students to self-monitor and self-evaluate
- Collaborative teaching across the four domains of reading, writing, speaking and listening
- Building on student experience and familiar content
  - Parental support through open house and activities that foster cultural awareness
Recommended Actions

- This study’s perceptions, observations, and recommendations should easily be made available to administrators, principals, teachers and parents to better support TWI elementary students when they transition to middle and high school.

- To establish TWI programs, the following factors should be considered:
  - Continuity and long-term plan of the trajectory of the program
  - Curriculum alignment across all grades
  - Integration of language objectives into content area objectives
  - Recruitment of engaged staff with high language proficiency
Recommended Actions (continued)

- Professional development should include strategies that support Vygotsky’s sociocultural pedagogy and Cummins’ transformative pedagogy.

- Professional organizations should continue to develop literature and research regarding key factors and pedagogical strategies that support the successful transition of TWI students from elementary to middle and high school.

- Professional development should focus on how administrators, educators, parents and the community can best support students’ enrollment in and the continuity of the trajectory in the TWI programs.
There is a growing number of TWI programs in the U.S. and dual language education is effective for all participating groups (Thomas & Collier, 2012).

This study demonstrates that experts from the field of TWI programs found the following attributes crucial for the success of these programs and their transition to higher grades:

- Recruitment of highly engaged staff
- Well aligned and carefully planned programs
- Surrounding administrative support
- Excellent communication system

This study can help newly established and existing programs how to adequately and effectively support TWI students, in particular when they transition from elementary to middle and high school.

Vygotsky’s sociocultural pedagogy and Cummins’ transformative pedagogy were identified to play an important role for dual language education and its continuity to middle and high school.
Thank you for your Attendance!

Please complete evaluation questions......

...... and stay in touch!

Regi Sellards, Ed.D.

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