Implementing a Late Immersion Program

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Proposition 58

- Proposition 58 repealed the English-only immersion requirement and waiver provisions required by Proposition 227 of 1998. In English-only programs, students learn subjects from teachers who speak only in English. Proposition 227 required English learners to take one year of intensive English instruction before transitioning to English-only classes.

- Proposition 58 no longer required English-only education for English learners.
- It allowed schools to utilize multiple programs, including bilingual education. In bilingual programs, students learn from teachers who speak both their native language and English.
- It made parental waivers no longer necessary to take non-English-only classes.
- If requested by enough parents, the measure requires schools to offer specific English learner programs.
- Under the measure, school districts and county offices of education must ask for annual feedback on English learner programs from parents and community members.

Acquiring a Second Language

- Research supports that the best time to learn two languages simultaneously is at a younger age (Krashen, Long & Scarcella, 1979)... in a non school setting.
- Research indicates that in a formal school setting, research does support that learning a language at an older age is just as effective if not more effective.

In Europe

- A study of 17,000 British children learning French in a school context indicated that, after five years of exposure, children who had begun French instruction at age eleven performed better on tests of second language proficiency than children who had begun at eight years of age (Stern, Burstall, & Harley, 1975).
Acquiring a Second Language

• This was the largest single study of children learning a second language in a formal classroom setting ever conducted.
• The investigators in this study concluded that older children are better second language learners than are younger ones.

Acquiring a Second Language

• Similar results have been found in other studies by European investigators.
• Studies of Swedish children learning English (Gorosch & Axelsson, 1964), of Swiss children learning French (Buehler, 1972), and of Danish children learning English (Florander & Jansen, 1968).

Acquiring a Second Language

• It may be that these findings reflect the mode of language instruction used in European countries, where heavy emphasis has traditionally been placed on formal grammatical analysis.
• Older children are more skilled in dealing with such an instructional approach and hence might be expected to do better.

Acquiring a Second Language

In North America

• French Immersion programs in Canada, where little emphasis is placed on the formal aspects of grammar, and therefore, older children should have no advantage over younger ones had similar results as the European studies.

Acquiring a Second Language

• The English-speaking children in late immersion programs (in which the second language is introduced in grades six or seven) have been found to perform just as well or better on tests of French language proficiency as children who began their immersion experience in kindergarten or grade one (Genesee, 1981, 1987).

Acquiring a Second Language

• The research does not always show an advantage to children who begin at an older age, but differences in performance are by no means as great as relative amount of classroom exposure would lead one to expect.
• Refuting the myth: It is better to learn another language at an early age.
Acquiring a Second Language

The one key difference is **Pronunciation**.

- Pronunciation is one aspect of language learning where the younger is-better hypothesis may have validity.
- A number of studies have found that the younger one begins to learn a second language, the more native-like the accent one develops in that language (Asher & Garcia, 1969; Oyama, 1976).

Acquiring a Second Language

- This may be because pronunciation involves motor patterns that have been fossilized in the first language and are difficult to alter after a certain age because of the nature of the neurophysiological mechanisms involved.

Acquiring a Second Language

- It may also be that we do not understand very well how to teach phonology in a second language.
- If we could develop more advanced (e.g., computer-assisted) methods of instruction, older learners might do better at acquiring a native-like accent in the second language.

Acquiring a Second Language

- Aside from the question of pronunciation, however, the younger-is-better hypothesis does not have strong empirical support in school contexts.

Acquiring a Second Language

- The research suggests that younger children do not necessarily have an advantage over older children and, because of their **cognitive and experiential limitations** when compared to older children, are actually at a disadvantage in how quickly they learn a second language-- other things being equal.

What Does this Mean for the Teacher?

- An early start for foreign language learners, for example, allows for a long sequence of instruction leading to potential communicative proficiency.
What Does this Mean for the Teacher?

• It also allows children to view second language learning and the insights they acquire into another culture as normal and integral parts of schooling.

What Does this Mean for the Teacher?

United States

• Instruction of children with limited English proficiency in the United States involves different considerations from foreign language instruction in the United States or Europe or from French Immersion in Canada.

What Does this Mean for the Teacher?

United States

• Language minority children in U.S. schools need to master English as quickly as possible while at the same time learning subject-matter content.
• This suggests that in the U.S. context early exposure to English is called for.

What Does this Mean for the Teacher?

Summary

• The research suggests that older students will show quicker gains, though younger children may have an advantage in pronunciation.

What Does this Mean for the Teacher?

Summary

• Beginning language instruction in kindergarten or first grade gives children more exposure to the language than beginning in fifth or sixth grade but exposure in itself does not predict language acquisition.
• To be fully bilingual, students need to listen, speak, read and write in the language, which also includes cultural competence.
Why was Late Immersion Created?

1. To satisfy the needs of parents who prefer that their children have a solid foundation in English as primary language or as an additional language before they undertake the late immersion program, which appears to occur among some new immigrants (Swain and Lapkin 2005).

Why was Late Immersion Created?

2. To enable those children who did not have the opportunity to start early immersion to enter the late immersion program. For example, children who arrived in a school district later can register in late immersion.

Why was Late Immersion Created?

3. To respond to the needs of parents who prefer to wait until their children are old enough and mature enough to make the decision to learn a second language themselves.

Rationale for Late Immersion

- Late immersion enables a student to learn another language and feel at ease in situations where it is used.
- Learning another language in late immersion gives students the opportunity to:
  - acquire the knowledge, learning processes, abilities and attitudes necessary for effective and confident communication in the target language,
  - acquire the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the target language through its cultural environments in order to better understand the target language-speaking communities and their cultures, as well as their own culture and those of others,
  - acquire the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of written, oral and visual works by artists,
  - explore their potential in matters relating to language learning, critical thinking and self-expression.

Understanding the Language Development of Late Immersion Students

- Late immersion students will be more stressed and frustrated than students in other language programs.
- The first months can be difficult and the days more demanding because students have to learn the target language in their core subjects.
- They will search for the words to express themselves, they will always have to be alert in class and their homework will take longer to complete.
- They will often have new friends.
- They will have no control over their environment, and they will feel lost.
- It is essential for teachers, administrators, parents and students to really understand this stage of late-immersion learning.
- Students will therefore need a lot of support.

Understanding the Language Development of Late Immersion Students

- Most of the late immersion students have already acquired language proficiency in the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in their primary language.
- They will also have learning and problem-solving strategies that they acquired in elementary school.
- They have oral and written linguistic skills, which can be frustrating for some if they have not attained the same level in the target language.
Understanding the Language Development of Late Immersion Students

- They also have to succeed in a fairly advanced general academic program (compared to elementary school) where the content requires more demanding cognitive work.
- They must therefore learn the target language in an effective manner.

Understanding the Language Development of Late Immersion Students

- As in early immersion, emphasis must be placed on learning the target language when students begin the late immersion program.
- Concentration on the target language in late immersion is essential, especially during the first year, because the students must learn the language quickly.

Understanding the Language Development of Late Immersion Students

- Teachers working with this clientele must place great importance on the development of second-language literacy through the content of their subjects.
- As soon as the students begin to learn the language, they will rapidly make progress learning the target language.

Understanding the Language Development of Late Immersion Students

- Late immersion students quickly acquire a “survival” language; they then acquire vocabulary and grammar in all the school subjects, such as the target language, mathematics, social studies and science.
- If the emphasis is placed on learning the target language in the first few months, the students will be able to communicate and work in the target language in the other subjects.

Understanding the Language Development of Late Immersion Students

- After a very intensive period of learning the target language, which generally lasts two or three years, they will often rejoin early or two-way immersion classes, so they should have developed their language proficiency sufficiently.

Understanding the Language Development of Late Immersion Students

- The work of teachers and administrators is very important in late immersion.
- In order to help the students achieve greater success, teachers and administrators are encouraged to learn more about second-language acquisition and the subject of second-language and additional language education in the context of late immersion.
- They must understand that people learn a language by practicing it.
Understanding the Language Development of Late Immersion Students

- In the classroom, teachers can use various visual and auditory tools.
- In the very beginning, students will listen and understand the language; then they will speak, write and read it.
- It should be noted that in the beginning, the emphasis is placed on listening and speaking; reading and writing are introduced afterward.
- This introduction can be made progressively from the beginning of the first week. The four skills must be developed in unison, but in the beginning the emphasis is on listening and speaking.

Understanding the Language Development of Late Immersion Students

- Most students have already acquired a solid foundation in English or in their primary language before beginning the late immersion program.
- Students can transfer these skills to the target language.
- Teachers use multiple strategies to teach another language which includes comparing the target language to the English language as one of the instructional strategies.

Promotion and Recruitment

Administrators can share with parents that:

- Learning the target language will be intense and more important in the beginning so that the students learn the target language.
- If the content is simplified during the first few months, the students will have a chance to catch up later.
- In a healthy environment, teachers will use different strategies to help the students understand little by little so that they feel at ease when they use the target language.

Promotion and Recruitment

- It is important to keep parents and students well informed about the challenges they may encounter.
- The students’ grades may be lower than they were in elementary school.
- In the beginning, the students will probably be frustrated or worried.
- Certain students may want to drop out or leave the program after a few weeks.

Promotion and Recruitment

- These reactions are normal.
- The school administration and the teachers must reassure parents and students with respect to these potential challenges.
- Individual meetings may be necessary in certain cases where the students have specific needs or the parents are overly worried.

Teaching Strategies

- Prior knowledge
- Multiple intelligences and learning styles
- The differentiated approach
- Active learning approach
- Learning centers
- Integrated technology
- Emphasis on Reading and writing
- Teaching about culture
- Critical thinking
Middle School Model Example

Target Language
- Late Immersion starts at the Grade 6 level, with 90% of instruction in the target language.
- 5 periods in the target language.
- Math, Science, Social Sciences, PE and Elective (target language).

English
- 10% subjects taught in English.
- 1 Period in ELA.

Middle School Model Example

Target Language
- In Grade 7, 90% of instruction continues in the target language.
- 4 periods in the target language.
- Math, Science, Social Sciences, PE and Elective (target language).

English
- 10% subjects taught in English.
- 1 Period in ELA.

Middle School Model Example

Target Language
- In Grade 8, 70% of instruction continues in the target language.
- 4 periods in the target language.
- Math, Science, Social Sciences, and Elective (target language).

English
- 30% subjects taught in English.
- 1 Period in ELA.
- 1 Period of PE.

Middle School Model Example

- A commitment to Secondary French Immersion is critical in order that these students may become functionally bilingual.

High School Model Example

Target Language
- High School Late Immersion is a continuation of the Middle School Late Immersion program.
- Grades 9, and 10 students receive a minimum of 50% of their instruction in the target language.
- Math, Social Sciences, and Elective (target language).

English
- 50% subjects taught in English.
- 1 Period in ELA.
- 1 Period of Science.
- 1 Period of PE.

High School Model Example

Target Language
- Grades 11, and 12 students receive a minimum of 30% of their instruction in the target language.
- Math, and Elective (target language).

English
- 70% subjects taught in English.
- 1 Period in ELA.
- 1 Period of Science.
- 1 Period of PE.
- 1 Period of Social Sciences.
High School Model

- Grade 12 students have a minimum of one course in the target language (Language Arts).
- Students completing the Late Immersion program in Grade 12 can be eligible to receive The Seal of Bilingual Literacy.

Two Pathways

Planning for a Late Immersion Program

Research and Development

- Awareness and understanding of the Late Immersion model is important for school officials (Superintendent, district and school leaders).
- District leaders should visit successful Late Immersion programs. If there is already a Dual/Two-Way Immersion program at the school district, then the concept of a Late Immersion program will be easier to understand.
- Reading the research that supports language immersion and more specifically Late Immersion program will be instrumental with the “buy in” of the program.

Planning for a Late Immersion Program

Developing the Model and Educational Pathway

- Selecting the educational model is can be discussed in a committee facilitated by district officials.
- They also need to determine the educational pathway for these immersion students attending middle school and high school.

Planning for a Late Immersion Program

Initial Communication

- Having a draft plan is essential for communicating the Late Immersion program to the community.
- Parents should be provided with a survey to determine the degree of interest in a Late Immersion program.
- A parent support committee should be formed as a support for the program.
- District leaders should plan to communicate a tentative plan throughout the targeted communities.
Planning for a Late Immersion Program

Initial Communication
- A communication and marketing plan should be developed once the program is approved from the School Board.
- Communication to all school site administrators regarding the program is necessary, especially if the Late Immersion program will be strategically placed only at certain schools.
- Additionally, more in depth training should be provided to the school leaders who will be implementing the program.

Planning for a Late Immersion Program

Approval
- Once there is enough support for the Late Immersion program, the plan should be presented to the School Board and Superintendent for support and approval.

Planning for a Late Immersion Program

Implementation
- Teacher recruitment should begin immediately once the Late Immersion program is approved by the School Board.
- Teachers are required to have the appropriate credentials to teach in the target language.
- Staffing should be determined on the program plan and for the number of students enrolled in the program.
- Textbooks and a curriculum should be selected so that the instructional staff understands instructional content and teaching expectations.

Planning for a Late Immersion Program

Implementation
- Administrator training should be provided so that he/she can effectively monitor the instruction.
- Selecting a school leader that is literate in the target language will in the best interest of the program so that he/she can provide the support needed for the program.

Planning for a Late Immersion Program

Public Relations/Marketing
- Marketing material should be developed such as brochures, newsletters, posters, a separate website or a webpage on district and school’s website etc.
- School tours should be scheduled for parents to observe the program once it has been established.
- Informational material should be distributed to parents.
- Special showcase events should be scheduled to invite parents and the community members.
- The media should be invited to Late Immersion program events to highlight the program.

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