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Putting Languages on a Level Playing Field

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Abstract
Dual language programs can reverse the school segregation that results from tracking students by language ability. Such programs have been effective in positively influencing Latino students’ educational achievement. This research report draws attention to the quest of school leaders and parents to achieve successful academic results for immigrant students. In contrast to prevalent schooling practices in the United States, dual language programs are supportive in teaching children a new language. The purpose of these programs is to strengthen academic achievement and language competencies for all students, while promoting the maintenance of students’ native language and culture. Through interviews with a variety of stakeholders and classroom observations, this study explores seven dual language programs in Manhattan that operate independently from one another. It shows how these programs, in response to changing urban communities, are reshaping their original designs as they serve newcomers. The dual language programs continue to evolve in four ways identified through the research: flexibility, innovation, community involvement, and cultural enrichment. Within the schools, dual language programs represent academic innovation since they must necessarily engage in continuous renewal and improvement in order to serve the needs of their changing communities. The investigation found that the empowerment networks of community actors that take part in education decision making—which include parents, community education councils, and the schools’ leadership—have led a process of academic innovation as they have reshaped and improved the schools’ design to serve their students.

Putting Languages on a Level Playing Field

In contrast to prevalent schooling practices in the United States, dual language programs are supportive in teaching children a new language. These programs are part of teaching and learning strategies designed to promote the long-term academic achievement of non-English speaking students and to nurture the strengths of the students’ homes and communities in their learning processes. Research on the education of Latinos demonstrates how the current school practice of tracking students according to their English language proficiency negatively influences academic achievement. Of specific concern is how self-contained English as a Second Language (ESL) classes deny students necessary exposure to content area skills and contribute to students’ isolation from their schoolmates. As a result, most Latino students in such classes have minimal daily interaction with native English-speaking peers through formal and informal contacts. Dual language programs can reverse these negative school experiences, and they have been
particularly effective in positively influencing Latino students’ educational achievement.

The empowerment networks of community actors that take part in education decision-making—which include parents, community education councils, and the school leadership—are the main focus of this essay. The research was conducted with support of a grant I received from the New York Latino Research and Resources Network (NYLARNet) through one of its partner centers, the Institute for Urban and Minority Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Even though the demand for a dual language high school in English and Spanish has not yet led to the creation of such schools at the high school level, the seven independently-operated dual language programs within schools portrayed in this paper are helpful for understanding the sustainability of programs. The findings are useful for researchers, program developers, and curriculum writers because they identify program needs and essential elements that can inform program design and implementation as well as the development of appropriate teaching and learning materials. For practitioners, the study indicates how schools with dual language programs, and their teachers, must be innovative and flexible in order to support their students’ academic achievement. Indeed, at the opening of the interviews, school principals and teachers were initially shy about publicizing their dual language programs to the community because they did not precisely reflect the two-way 50-50 model (the students are 50 percent from one non-English linguistic group and 50 percent from an English-speaking background) that researchers view as the standard. However, through the administrators’ and teachers’ efforts to make the programs significant for their students, they are working effectively and their flexible approaches are reaching a larger number of students to meet the needs of changing communities.

The existing dual language programs operate independently from one another and are self-designed. To assess their effectiveness and replicability, it is important to know how they are organized, what resources they have, how their leadership operates, what their support system is, how their curriculum is developed, and what kind of professional development opportunities exist for teachers using both of the languages. Since dual language programs are designed and implemented to meet the specific needs of the communities they serve, and respond to constant demographic change, the ways in which they work require ongoing adjustments.

The paper contributes to the literature on educational reform by showing how the most promising of the strategies to support English learners, the dual language classroom, has taken root in individual schools. Some of these schools are now among the few top-scoring schools in New York City in Language Arts, Math, and Science. The New York City Progress Report gives grades to schools in the School Report Card that range from A to F depending on their scores. Only the top-scoring schools received As and Bs in Academic Year 2009-2010, and several of the dual language schools in this study were in that category. This New York case study shows that even within a highly centralized public school system under mayoral control, local innovation supported by community networks is an achievable goal. The implications of these findings for English learners cannot be underestimated and are highly consequential in improving the education and life chances of Latino students.

The paper first describes the study. Next it highlights the academic and socio-cultural benefits of dual language programs as documented in earlier research. It then portrays the networks of community actors that are supporting the programs in the schools by discussing their four main characteristics, as identified in this research: flexibility in enrollment and classroom composition; innovation through models of instruction, instructional materials, and teacher recruitment and certification; the role of the community networks; and cultural enrichment.

The Case Study

The goal of this paper is to increase understanding about how dual language programs are responding to community needs and how demographic changes are reshaping program design and development. The data sample, based on the geographic lines of New York City Planning (2010) drawn from Upper Westside of Manhattan on neighborhoods in New York City with significant demographic shifts, comprises seven schools in two school districts that operate dual language programs. The research started by obtaining approval from the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) Institutional Review Board and written consent from the seven school principals for researchers to observe dual language classrooms and conduct interviews with school personnel.

The study used several qualitative sources of data: interviews with teachers both within the classroom and outside and administrators—dual language coordinators, principals and assistant principals in the seven schools; interviews with representatives in various divisions of the NYCDOE Office of English Language learners, the office of ELL compliance; interviews with parents.
participating in the community education councils and in event such as the annual New York City special conference for parents of English learners; interviews with parents of students in dual language programs; and interviews with researchers in New York City and California. During the interviews, two teachers spoke about their former teaching jobs in Texas and Massachusetts that were part of dual languages programs in those states. In addition, during the classroom observation the teachers spoke about availability of curriculum materials (e.g., textbooks, planning sheets), available policy data, and reports from the NYCDOE.

Data collected from April to June 2010 address five areas of inquiry, based on a research model of effective dual programs: program structure, curriculum, instruction, assessments, quality of educational personnel, professional development, and family and community partnership that support the school programs (Howard, Sugarman, Christian & Lindholm-Leary, 2007). The inquiry areas include: (1) the demographic characteristics of districts and neighborhood in the Upper Westside of Manhattan, (2) the program models, (3) the nature and analysis of student assessment procedures, (4) student learning and achievement outcomes, and (5) the extent of professional development opportunities and teaching resources available for teachers in both languages.

**Research Support for Dual Language Instruction**

The benefits of dual language education have been widely documented in the research literature, particularly its impact on academic achievement and socio-cultural enrichment for all students. The studies cited below indicate the effects of dual language programs on students as documented by extensive research.

**Academic Benefits**

Several large-scale longitudinal studies have demonstrated measurable gains in academic achievement for students participating in dual language programs. One such study, conducted by Thomas and Collier (1997) on the language acquisition of 700,000 English language learners from 1982 to 1996, aimed to find out how long it took students with no background in English to speak like a native. The study found that the most significant variable for learning English was the number of years of schooling that students received in their native language. Comparing different education programs for non-English speaking students, the authors found that dual language programs were particularly effective in assisting students in those programs reach and exceed the average level of academic achievement for all students, and they are able to accomplish this in both their native language and English in all subject areas. Moreover, students were able to maintain and improve their academic achievement throughout their schooling. Thomas and Collier (2002) also confirmed that non-English speaking students enrolled in dual language programs were academically ahead of those in English-only programs, and their dropout rate was lower in those programs when compared with similar students in English-only programs.

Another large-scale longitudinal study (Howard, Christian, & Genese, 2004), commissioned by the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE), demonstrated that non-English speaking students in two-way dual language programs scored nearly on par with native English speakers on English oral, reading, and writing measures. The study showed that both native English speakers and native Spanish speakers scored the highest possible measure for English oral proficiency in the English Language Arts test. Spanish oral proficiency scores were also high, with the majority of students receiving the maximum possible score or close to it.

Both of these studies provide significant empirical evidence for the academic potential of dual language programs, demonstrating high achievement in both languages for all students as well as evidence supporting their long-term academic success.

For dual language programs, socio-cultural elements play a key role in increasing students’ linguistic and academic skills both to reinforce student’s home language and family cultures and to promote intercultural understanding. Cultural enrichment refers to the ways through which diverse cultures are engaged and valued in the programs, and its two most relevant functions are evenly balanced culture and language and cooperative learning environments.

**Languages on a Level Playing Field**

Dual language programs improve the general school culture by promoting intercultural communication across different domains beyond academic achievement. They help create a culture of inclusion by bringing together teachers, administrators, and parents of all backgrounds (Thomas & Collier, 2003; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). This means that dual language programs try not to operate in isolation, but instead create connections not only between participants but also with students who are not in the programs but can still benefit from them.

Proficiency in a native language is perceived and treated as a resource,
rather than a problem to be overcome. The programs are designed to encourage students from diverse backgrounds “to maintain their language and heritage and teach all students the value of cultural and linguistic diversity” (Howard, Sugarman & Christian, 2003, p. 37). Dual language programs provide diverse cultural experiences and stimulate the use of language and development of language skills for all students and their families, and become an asset to support family resources of non-English speaking student's classroom learning (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

A fundamental element of dual language programs is the way that they are designed to put on a level playing field the status of the languages they use. Within schools, for example, Spanish and English have the same value within the programs. Howard et al. (2003) have reported that if the status of one of the two languages is lower, the program will fail to provide students with the same opportunity for high-level language arts instruction in their native language. Thus, having a balanced cultural environment is not only an important purpose of dual language programs, but also a key factor in their success. Gándara (1995) explored successful academic results in immigrant students, concluding that “across various immigrant groups, the most academically successful students were those who remained most closely allied with the culture of their parents” (p. 7). Gándara’s findings demonstrate that having language and cultures on a level playing field promoted by dual language programs not only enhances the self-perception and well-being of students but also supports academic achievement.

Cooperative Learning Environment

Cooperative learning environments avoid segregation by encouraging students to develop cross-cultural competence through learning together and from each other. Learning environments that emphasize peer interaction through cooperative learning strategies provide a supportive foundation for two-way dual language programs (Christian, 1996). In dual language education programs, non-English speaking students are not separated from their English-speaking peers. Dual language education seems to be the only model that stresses linguistic integration in the classroom by placing English speakers in a second language learning environment (Ovando & Collier, 1985). Combining children from two groups is a way to end the linguistic isolation of many children.

Native English-speaking children and their parents are central to the success of the program. The commitment of monolingual English-speaking parents to the acquisition of Spanish by their children is essential. The 7- or 8-year-old children who can speak and understand Spanish are supporting the creation of a community of learners in the schools and gaining cross-cultural understanding. Dual language programs develop competence among native English speakers in a second language.

Immersion in dual language programs helps students to develop cross-cultural competencies, reflected in positive culturally-inclusive attitudes and behaviors (Howard et al., 2003). Cross-cultural competence “is the ability to interpret and evaluate inter-cultural encounters with a high degree of accuracy and to show cultural empathy” (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997, p. 53). A cross-culturally competent person can go beyond his/her cultural parameters—cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally—and share a profound connection with others. Such a connection includes not only

A genuine appreciation for cultural differences but also active opposition to all forms of discrimination (Bennett, 1995). The diversity of dual language program students, who are all learning together in the same room and engaging in the same activities, makes it possible for them to learn about different cultures and offer multiple opportunities to develop and practice cross-cultural skills (Cazabon, Lambert, & Hall, 1993; Freeman, 1998).

Howard et al. (2003) point out that although the school can have a desegregated structure—with no differentiation of students by their linguistic or socio-cultural characteristics—their efforts may not be complete unless an integration process is in place at the same time. Teaching and learning strategies within dual language programs promote desegregation by encouraging cooperative learning environments.

While the literature on dual language programs focuses on aspects of academic achievement and cultural enrichment, as I reflect on the role of community networks of parents and teachers in the following sections, I place my analysis within the context of the “Cautionary Note” in an article by Guadalupe Valdés on dual language education. She writes: “For minority children, the acquisition of English is expected. For mainstream children, the acquisition of a non-English language is enthusiastically applauded. Children are not aware of these differences” (1997, p. 417). As I write about the neighborhood coalitions of parents and educators that support the schools, it is clear that the strongest supporters of the dual language education are the monolingual English speaking parents but also professional middle-class families that are Spanish-speaking and would like their children to be bilingual.
School Leadership in Support of Language Learning

Community networks are central for the sustainability of the dual language programs. These networks of support begin with a strong commitment to innovation by principals and teachers, and an unambiguous commitment to serve local communities. This pledge to serve the school’s immediate communities may often constitute a challenge, given the constantly changing configurations of its student population. In fact, changes in student demographics—whether the result of gentrification, which produces an influx of a higher percentage of affluent English-dominant speakers, or a change in the opposite direction, which produces a higher percentage of lower-income and Spanish-dominant speakers in the student population—are one of the most urgent matters of concern for researchers of dual language education, according to the Dual Language Consortium (2008). This matter is especially relevant since dual language programs are designed to serve their communities and promote linguistic and cultural desegregation.

Demographic shifts have an impact in the way that programs can be implemented, given that they rely on the presence of two different linguistic groups: Spanish and English native speakers.

The changing characteristics of the community are reshaping the structure of dual language programs. Dual language programs are school-wide strategies since they are nested in the changing dynamics of the schools, their communities, and the demographic shifts that influence their environment. The targeted research on seven schools on the Upper Westside of Manhattan sought to gain insight into the factors that are influencing the implementation of dual language programs and the ways that schools are responding to them.

In New York City 96 dual language programs operate in different grades (New York City Department of Education, 2009). Of those 96 programs across all of New York City’s five boroughs, this study focused on seven in Manhattan, all located on the Upper Westside. All the programs studied were dual language programs, although there were variations in their design and operation. Challenges in both implementation and assessment of program operation are explained by their unique differences: each school’s dual language program might have a different model, might have duration of just one or two years, or might be combined with gifted and talented programs. As Table 1 demonstrates, each of the programs was unique in its design, resulting from flexible approaches as they aligned themselves to characteristics of the communities they served.

Shifting Demographics and the Need for Multilevel Flexibility

Even though dual language programs historically emerged in diverse socio-cultural and demographic contexts, the characteristics of student populations today constitute the criteria for their model of instruction and institutional support. The programs have become adaptable structures that change according to the particular environment in which they operate. Flexibility enables them to make necessary adjustments in order to be successful with the demographic group they serve.

School communities are delineated by different cartographic guidelines, such as district, catchment zone, and neighborhood. Mapping these spaces is relevant to understanding how dual language programs work and to identifying the particular challenges schools face in light of current demographic shifts in the Upper Westside of Manhattan. Students who live in a certain school catchment zone are eligible to attend a local school in it. The fact that catchment boundaries were randomly established by city government planning councils has generated multiple challenges with regard to the populations that would like to attend schools outside the catchment areas. The general rule is that by living within the catchment zone families have the right to enroll their child in a specific school within the zone and admission to the general education program of the catchment area school is likely, if not guaranteed. Admission for dual language programs in those schools, however, is often more competitive.

The schools in the sample are located in the New York City Community Districts 7 and 10. Figure 1 shows the locations of these two community districts in Manhattan.

Changes in the composition of the city neighborhoods generate challenges for enrollment and structure of dual language programs in different catchment zones of Manhattan. Dual language programs have been considered effective because they pair groups of students of different socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Howard, Christian & Genese, 2004). The traditional model is that students are 50 percent from one non-English linguistic group and 50 percent from an English-speaking background, but the native language of the students in the schools did not always permit use of this model.

The ethnic composition of the population under 18 years old has changed drastically in the two community districts. The most remarkable shift, between 1990 and 2000, occurred in District 7; it is evidenced by a 22 percent decrease
in the African American population, a 16 percent decrease in Latinos, and 17 percent increase in Whites. District 10 shows a different trend: a 96 percent increase in the Latino population (New York City Department of City Planning, 2010). These statistics confirm the different experiences reported by administrators in terms of the shortage, or disproportionately large number, of Latino students in their schools. Specifically, until 2000, Community District 7 had a large number of Latino students under age 18. As the number of luxury high-rise buildings increased there, so did rents and the cost of services, resulting in a large number of Latinos leaving the neighborhood to move further north. Principals thus reported difficulty in maintaining a 50-50 dual language model since the Latino populations traditionally served in their schools could no longer afford to live in the area. Principals and teachers worried about maintaining the preferred model for its pedagogical applications and demonstrated effect on literacy development (Thomas & Collier, 2004).

These two occurrences—the rise of Latino students and overcrowding of the programs in some parts of the district and the loss of Latino families and closing of the dual language programs in other neighborhoods—were, far from divergent incidents, a reflection of demographic shifts and their impact on dual language programs. While some of the schools have not experienced the problem of maintaining a program balance between the two languages, others were faced with the possibility of closing their programs altogether because they did not have enough Latino students. One alternative that was often chosen was changing the dual language program into a transitional bilingual model in order to accommodate the students requesting participation in an English language program. Transitional bilingual programs, one of the options offered by the NYCDOE for English Language Learners (ELLs), start by using students’ native language but then transition entirely to English.

By starting a dialogue with the NYCDOE, school districts in Upper Westside Manhattan were working on understanding how to better address demographic shifts. In particular, the community education councils were in dialogue with the NYCDOE through their different constituents and they were represented by the multilingual committee in the district.

An important initiative from the community councils has been the engagement of NYCDOE. In a memorandum of understanding with the New York City Department of Education Office of English Language Learners, school districts have made public their need to change enrollment policies that limit Latino students to their immediate zone, as well as express their need for continuous support from the NYCDOE to sustain their dual language programs. Representatives of the NYCDOE have responded positively to these initiatives and the discussions continue to move forward as the city prepares for the following school year.

The above-described major demographic shifts in Community Districts 7 and 10 demand two complementary levels of flexibility from dual language programs: students’ enrollment and classroom composition.

**Enrollment**

The demographic shifts are forcing schools to engage in diverse strategies for student enrollment in dual language programs. In high-demand schools, principals have given priority to students labeled as English Language Learners (ELLs). Once the English learners have been enrolled in the program, the remaining seats might be assigned through a lottery system.

The method by which students are assessed and labeled as English learners obviously influences the final composition of the program. In New York City, the method is multilayered. It begins with the Language Allocation Policy, which is a process that has multiple steps in every school. First, eligibility as English learners results from determining whether a language other than English is spoken in the home, a situation that is assessed through the Home Language Identification Survey that is administered in every school at the beginning of the school cycle. Each student also takes the Language Assessment Battery—Revised (LAB-R). If a student scores below a state-designated level of proficiency, he or she is labeled as English learner. The process of identification continues throughout the students’ educational trajectory, since they are periodically retested to assess their progress.

There are numerous challenges in the labeling and assessment of English learners and how these affect their eligibility for a dual language program. For instance, if students scored slightly above the standard in the LAB-R, they would not be considered English learners and would be labeled as “former ELL” for the record. As such, they would not receive priority in the assigned slots for dual language programs and would be placed into an English-only program. This exclusion disadvantages those students in their learning of academic English, which in turn contributes to the fact that English learners as a group continue to be low performing, given that as soon as they achieve a minimum level of English proficiency on the English Language Art test, they are no longer considered English learners (Menken, 2008) and are given lower priority.
to enter dual language programs that would not only enhance their academic achievement but would also empower the language spoken at home as a crucial element of their academic learning.

Understanding the process of labeling English learners is relevant to the study of dual language programs insofar as many of the schools give enrollment priority to such students. While the process through which dual language programs filled their slots varied from school to school, schools lobbying for the change in enrollment policies had common procedures in their enrollment policies for dual language programs. In an attempt to counter the policy of the NYCDOE that public elementary schools must enroll residents from their local catchment area, the dual language schools have sought to balance the student population in language and cultural background by enrolling students with the desired characteristics from outside the catchment areas. Most of the principals followed the strategy of giving priority to recent immigrants who, according to the NYCDOE guidelines, have been in the U.S. for three years or less. In second place are English learners as established by the LAB-R, followed by students who may not be labeled English learners but come from families where a language other than English is spoken at home. Finally, attention was paid to maintaining the balance of composition, so slots were filled by trying to secure an equal number of students who spoke English and spoke Spanish.

Principals were seeking more flexibility in enrollment policies because they could be facing one of two scenarios. First, their programs might be in very high demand, leaving them with limited strategies for selecting eligible students in a fair way. Lotteries or waiting lists were not effective because dual language programs by nature were filled with students selected on the basis of their linguistic background. The second scenario is a lack of a sufficient number of students of one or the other languages abilities (i.e., Spanish-speakers) to provide a balanced composition in the classroom. To respond to both cases, principals were lobbying for more flexible guidelines that would allow students to go outside their catchment areas in order to enter a program. This would reduce the overflow for those programs that were in high demand and provide more students for those that lack speakers of the other language in their programs.

By law, students labeled as English learners must enroll in one of three options offered by schools: (a) a dual language programs, (b) freestanding English as a Second Language (ESL), or (c) a bilingual transitional program. Only two of the three programs are considered bilingual education: dual language programs and bilingual transitional programs. ESL is not considered a bilingual program, since the only language of instruction is English with no support for the native language. Parents and families have the final say about the kind of program their children attend, since they must indicate their program preference at the beginning of the year in a language identification survey. While the guidelines establish that this survey is available to all parents, during a city-wide workshop targeting parents of English learners it became clear that most were not aware that they had a choice. Many students were pushed into ESL or transitional programs, and the distinction between the three kinds of programs, despite NYCDOE’s proactive efforts to provide information, had not yet been clearly understood by the parents, as reflected by the number and nature of the questions they posed. The failure of parents to choose because they did not realize they could, and the shortage of dual language programs, resulted in the very high number of English learners who were tracked into ESL programs, which was detrimental to their educational achievement and on time graduation rates.

A recent research report published by NYLARNet focused on non-compliance of bilingual education in New York State Schools. In this report, schools were evaluated on how they complied with the mandate that a bilingual option—dual language or transitional bilingual—be offered in schools with 20 or more students speakers of the same language. The report found that most schools with 20 or more students in the same grade who spoke the same native language did not provide bilingual education programs; instead they tracked their students to sheltered ESL programs by default (Woodward, 2009). A final recommendation in the report advocated for stronger measures to support parents’ learning their rights to demand a bilingual option in their school and, more specifically, their right to access a dual language program. If the school in their catchment zone did not have a dual language program, provisions could be made for students to attend a school outside it in order to participate in a dual language program if their parents so desired.

The complexity of dual language enrollment policies is an important variable in schools where overcrowding is making entry into the program a competitive process. An interview with one of the parents whose child was left out of a dual language program because she was not classified as English learner revealed an ongoing tension between the mission of the program, the student populations they target, and the challenges they face in the midst of growing demographic shifts in their communities.
All the school principals interviewed in this study asserted that demographic changes had a direct impact on dual language programs because their existence relied on the actual composition of the neighborhood and community they served. Their response illuminated the nature of dual language programs as reflected in their history throughout the U.S. and reaffirmed in the literature: dual language programs went beyond learning a second language. Those who adhered rigorously to the founding principles of this model did not like to consider it a foreign language alternative or program; rather, they placed emphasis on ensuring that the two languages were given equal status and, more importantly, served the culture and community within which these schools are embedded.

Classroom Composition

The point of departure for understanding the operation and implementation of dual language programs is their composition. Scholars and policy-makers have taken multiple positions about which model constitutes the most effective way to develop literacy in a second language while maintaining or further developing the first (Howard et al., 2003). Most of the theories documented in the literature point to the two-way dual immersion or 50-50 model as an effective design because it makes the languages equal in status, promotes balanced instruction, and generates cultural integration among two groups (Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

As noted, though, the schools in Upper West Side of Manhattan faced changing classroom compositions every year, which drove most of them to embody a more flexible perspective towards their classroom composition.8 In the words of one third grade dual language program teacher interviewed:

This year I’ve had to differentiate instruction and modify curriculum to meet the needs of my students. Eighty percent in my class is Latino, but many don’t speak Spanish, and I have one student who speaks Swahili and another one who speaks Garifuna. I have to look at my composition at the beginning of the year. So yes, ideally there might be a model, but in reality, we just have to work with what we have.

Other teachers and principals echoed the situation described above and revealed an important finding of the study. While classroom composition based on the two-way immersion 50-50 model has been the foundation for effective language programs, demographic shifts have forced teachers to be creative in their use of differentiated instruction. More importantly, teachers acknowledged that an effective dual language program model did not necessarily require a balanced 50-50 division. By effective models, teachers and principals referred to the type of model that provided significant learning experiences for their students, helped them stay on grade level, showed evidence of their English and Spanish skills development, and, most importantly, included students’ backgrounds and cultures in their learning processes. Programs that did not operate on a 50-50 basis could be on either side of a spectrum: either with a majority (e.g., 80 or 90 percent) of Spanish-speaking students or a majority of English-speaking students.

Innovation

Schools with dual language programs were centers of innovation, creatively using teaching and learning resources. Beyond the flexibility exercised in enrollment and classroom composition, the model of instruction, instructional materials, and teacher recruitment were areas in which schools were rethinking...
traditional designs and making efficient use of their resources in line with the needs of their students.

**Models of Instruction**

Dual language programs employ a wide range of instructional models. None of the schools in the case study employed a traditional two-way model in which students learn Spanish 50 percent of the time and English the remaining half; however, the time for the two languages may be divided in different ways, such as alternating by days, weeks, or even months.

The rollercoaster model is half a day in Spanish and half a day in English, alternating the order every day. This approach has proven useful for teachers to team-teach and is commonly used to increase collaboration and communication across the program. Many programs divided the language by time, trying to allocate the same number of hours to each language in an effort to give them equal status. Other schools, however, divided the language by subject, for example, teaching math in English and Language Arts in Spanish.

Another type of instructional model involves the physical spaces of the classroom. “Side-by-side” models have two teachers who work with each class: one focuses on English instruction, the other on Spanish. This model, requiring two separate classrooms, each with books and materials only in the language of focus, tends to be more costly since it requires double the space and number of teachers. Self-contained classrooms require the use of only one classroom and one or two teachers may teach in both languages; this model tends to be more efficient.

A school principal working with a self-contained model acknowledged that it was not the preferred choice, but adaptation to the school infrastructure was necessary, as asserted by a school principal whose school had a dual language program: “If you ask me, the most effective setting is a side-by-side program, but it is not always the easiest to implement. We do not have the space here, so we work self-contained, and I think it works out just fine.”

In addition, respondents acknowledged that the instructional model used to be a concern when dual language programs initially emerged, but by now research has gone beyond the specific model to focus on the role of the program as a larger academic structure within the school. When asked about the instructional model, a dual language coordinator responded: “We know enough about the models by now. We know what works, we know what doesn't. What we need is adequate professional development, adequate materials, and adequate integration. It’s not all about the model.”

Ideally, the model of instruction for dual language programs is the result of careful pedagogical choices, but the instructional models of the schools in this study tended to be selected on the basis of their day-to-day circumstances, resources, and material conditions. About half of the schools in the sample were using a side-by-side approach; the rest used a self-contained model, in particular, the rollercoaster model. While the model of instruction has specific pedagogical implications, a common characteristic across all schools was the fact that language did not overshadow the emphasis on the acquisition of academic literacy and content-area exposure. The findings revealed that although the model of instruction may still be part of scholarly debate (Lindholm-Leary, 2001), teachers and principals were well aware that the best model of instruction was the one aligned with student demographics and availability of their teachers and most importantly the possibility of enhancing content area development in their students.

**Instructional Materials**

For students developing literacy in a second language, the range of instructional materials in the classroom is important for engaging them. In particular, early elementary school grades depend strongly on word walls, posters, and additional written materials that are usually pasted around the classroom. Most of the time teachers craft these resources themselves and complement them with literature and textbooks. In the case of dual language programs, these materials become all the more essential to support the learning process. Most schools used two textbooks, one for each language and, in addition, provided books for the reading corners so that teachers could engage in read-alouds and students could engage in quiet reading time.

Classroom observations revealed that there was a lack of culturally-relevant instructional material in Spanish. The lack of material hindered the process of engagement with different kinds of texts, in particular children’s literature, a problem noted widely by teachers and principals alike, who expressed their frustration with the lack of authentic materials in Spanish. As one of the principals asserted, “It’s not the lack of resources—we have funding for books, but we just don’t have access to genuine children’s literature.” Another teacher, also expressing her concern for this issue, said she had to buy the books herself when she visited Mexico or the Dominican Republic: “Sometimes I prefer to make the stories myself; I make the material myself, because what we have is usually a bad translation, or just a translation of the Disney stories…” When teachers referred to the lack of “authentic” material, they described...
literature that draws on the students’ native culture, often describing situations in their countries of origin, using vocabulary, settings, and situations that are familiar to the children, and speaking of an environment that is relevant to them. In their recent study on early childhood literacy, García and Miller (2008) cited evidence that children’s familiarity with the content of reading material strongly promotes reading comprehension. However, this familiarity is possible only if students are given access to authentic reading material that takes into account their family’s background and culture.1

The lack of instructional material was acknowledged as an important challenge for the operation of the programs in all seven schools, and accompanied by concerns about teacher preparation, professional development, and necessary qualifications to teach in dual language programs. For the most part schools produced their own instructional materials. According to most principals, teachers devoted a substantial amount of time designing them in Spanish or tweaking what is already available to provide more authentic resources for their students.

Teacher Recruitment and Certification

All the schools in the study had certified teachers but recruiting them was a major challenge. The lack of certified teachers turned out to be an additional variable in the complexity of a program’s operation. With few teachers it was more difficult to teach all the courses in both languages. Schools were innovative in their recruitment of teachers given the challenges all the schools had in finding bilingual certified teachers.

Dual language programs require highly-qualified teachers; they must have a New York State certificate in order to be employed in the State’s public schools in addition to an ESL/ESOL certificate. The State certificate, issued by the Office of Teaching Initiatives, certifies that an individual has met required degree, coursework, assessment, and experience requirements to be a teacher (New York State Education Department, 2010a). In addition to the State certificate, teachers must have an ESL/ESOL certificate, which can be acquired through different private programs and requires extensive coursework in linguistics, sociolinguistics, methods of teaching a second language, teaching language through content, and foundations of bilingual and multi-cultural education (New York State Education Department, 2010b).

The shortage of teachers reported by school principals was also a finding of the NYLARNet report mentioned above. In it, Woodward (2009) asserts that bilingual education and bilingual special education are the two certification areas with the largest percent of full-time equivalent teachers without appropriate certification in the entire state (28% and 19%, respectively). Furthermore, of the 448 full-time bilingual teachers who were not properly certified, 360 were in the New York City region; this statistic does not include the 52 improperly certified teachers teaching bilingual special education, 38 of whom were also in the New York City region. Although Woodward states that New York offers different incentives to recruit bilingual teachers (e.g., tuition assistance, loan forgiveness, grants), this is not what interviewees reported. According to the respondents, there was no major incentive to become a bilingual teacher: they had to work more than their colleagues. “They [had] to prepare every lesson twice [once for each language],” one program coordinator reported, and they did not receive a bonus or special privileges. The teachers in the observed programs expressed that they felt fulfilled by their job, but nevertheless acknowledged it was often much more work than mainstream classrooms, although compensation was the same.

Teachers who worked under Collaborative Team Teaching systems (CTT) required an additional number of hours to meet with their counterpart, prepare classes, design and document their curriculum, and also translate or do work in both languages. Doing all this work becomes an unsustainable burden for some, which is why the turnover may be higher in these settings.

A history of collaboration with higher education institutions influenced the schools’ ability to recruit bilingual certified teachers. Through in-service training students learned to become teachers. Partnerships with higher education institutions guaranteed a school’s ability to recruit their teachers, thereby improving their leverage for recruiting qualified teachers for their programs.

In addition to the problems concerning teachers’ certification, García and Miller (2008) assert that there is also “a need for more teachers who are very knowledgeable about the cultures of the children that they serve…it is important for teachers to understand children’s cultures not only for effective communication with the children and their parents, but also from a curriculum and instruction standpoint” (p. 34). Congruently, all of the teachers interviewed expressed the need for more professional development geared not only toward a better understanding of Spanish grammar, literacy, and didactics, but also of socio-cultural knowledge.

Community Networks in Support of Language Learning

The community is a crucial factor in
the operation of the programs. Community is defined for purpose of analysis as the network of actors that take part in educational decisions. It includes: (a) parents; (b) institutionalized boards, such as committees and community education councils; (c) the schools themselves through their outreach efforts with the city, the DOE; and (d) empowerment networks and affiliated organizations.

Parents

Dual language programs have a long history of parental and community support. In fact, many of them were created in response to lobbying by the community. In an interview, one of the administrators of the Office of English Language of the NYCDOE shared multiple examples of organized initiatives by an increasing number of groups of parents who were demanding dual language programs in their schools. In addition, all of the principals in the school agreed upon how these programs were serving the needs of the community, as in the case of a French dual language program which was created in response to the needs of the children, and through the efforts a group of organized Haitian parents. In the words of the principal in a school with a dual language program: “We already had a Spanish-English dual program; we honestly were not thinking about the French at that point. But a group of parents from the community came together, we listened, and the program is up and running since then.”

The level of community involvement observed revealed a culturally and economically diverse group of parents that felt that they were strongly supported by the school and their voices were heard. One of the challenges that dual language programs continue to face is that English monolingual middle-class parents tend to pull out their students in third grade, for fear of having them miss out on standardized testing. Transferring students to another program, persistently described by school principals in the study, resulted in an effort called by one of them as a “comprehensive parental education component” to their dual language programs. Teachers and principals were in agreement about how parents started feeling the pressure of testing in the early years of their children’s education, and that while they may have valued the role of the dual language program, many were still unaware of the concrete benefits that the program may have for the English academic literacy of their children. Schools were thus trying to engage in different outreach efforts to inform parents about how the programs would help their children when they were tested. Some schools were having parents sign a commitment letter stating they would not pull out their students until the end of the program (for some schools, this was fifth grade, for others it was earlier). Other schools were having monthly meetings where they showcased progress made by their students and specifically highlighted the development of their English skills to emphasize how dual language programs were actually a resource for preparation in testing. These different strategies aimed to promote a better understanding of the ways that dual language programs foster academic literacy for all students.

School Outreach

English Language Learners have a choice of three programs, ESL or English as a Second Language with only English instruction, and two others that can be considered bilingual programs: dual language programs and transitional bilingual. The NYCDOE established dual language programs as one of two options for bilingual education. The other is transitional bilingual education, whose programs provide support in students’ native language but have the final goal of preparing them for moving entirely to English instruction. While the two programs differ in pedagogical design and implementation, according to the NYCDOE, they should both be considered bilingual education. However, many of the schools were resistant to advertise their programs as bilingual education, partly because it may be confused with transitional bilingual. As one principal stated, “We do not advertise our dual program very well, but when we do, we avoid the use of bilingual education. Parents are put off by that.” A review of the online information about these schools revealed that only four of them explicitly mentioned their programs and they called them dual language program, dual-immersion language programs, or even dual language gifted and talented program. A common feature in the schools’ website descriptions was the lack of information regarding the complexity of, and benefits offered by, dual language programs (see Table 1).

While the debates over terminology may seem innocuous, the different ways of labeling programs were deemed by schools principals as quite relevant to the ways that schools designed the pedagogical foundation of the model, the manner in which they publicized their programs, and the extent to which they may be eligible for state or New York City funding for dual language programs. In addition, the labeling of the programs influenced the way that parents bought into the model and chose among the alternatives for their children. Some of the different ways that the schools in Manhattan termed their programs were dual language immersion, two-way dual language, and one-way dual language (a program in which 80% of students were Spanish-dominant). In addition,
some of the schools caught the parents’ interest in enrolling their children in an “enrichment” program, and thus created a dual language gifted and talented program. Gifted and talented programs are by nature programs that stimulate cognitive capacities in students. Having a dual language that is additionally labeled gifted and talented has earned many detractors who argue that a dual language program by definition is a gifted and talented one, given its engagement with students’ developmental stages and the demands it places on students. All but one of the schools in the sample removed the labeling of gifted and talented from the dual language programs; these schools kept their dual language programs but no longer called them “dual language gifted and talented.” Since the schools considered the second label repetitive, without doubt, the label gifted and talented was added to attract middle-class families looking for a more exclusive academic program for their children. Despite these efforts, gifted and talented programs continued to be important assets for the school to attract other segments of the community and act much like a magnet component for these schools.

**Community Councils**

All seven schools had strong connections between their dual language programs and their communities, which included not only the students’ families but the organized and institutionalized neighborhood groups such as the multilingual committees or the Community Education Councils (CECs). Examples of an ongoing dialogue were reflected in the active participation of CECs in evaluating the needs of the programs, designing activities, organizing district-wide events to promote language awareness, and even lobbying and advocating for flexibility in enrollment policies and the possibility of attracting students outside their catchment area. These networking efforts were supported by school principals, district superintendents, leaders of parental associations, and the CECs themselves. Further, the ongoing dialogue between schools and divisions within the NYDOE revealed how the latter’s staff took into account the views of representatives from the community, such as parents, and then put them together with the NYDOE leadership in policy-making arenas. The meetings with various administrators from the NYDOE were deemed by the parents and CEC members to be “extremely effective” and an important way to maintain the communication outside their established networks.

While there was consensus that this networking within the NYDOE was useful for some, the structure did not permit the possibility of schools’ organizing themselves in a different manner and creating cross-school networks or links based on common dual language program strategies. The agenda for discussion in the meetings of different CEC or multilingual committees reflected the schools’ need to connect with other dual language programs in their district and to share enrollment procedures, professional development strategies and resource design and innovation among others. In particular, one of the schools in the district with a recently opened dual language program has been working closely with another school to receive support and guidance in its development of the dual language program. The school principal mentioned, “This collaboration was done outside my network and based on the fact that I knew about this school’s program and had a good relationship with its principal.” The benefits of school-to-school communication about both the challenges and commonalities of their language programs was embedded in the different outreach initiatives in the schools, but had yet to become a common practice within the city.

**Languages on a Level Playing Field**

This study found that the identity of dual language programs lies in their cultural component. An important factor for the operation of dual language programs was their status within the schools. In the case study schools we observed two different status levels: either the programs had great appreciation; or they were perceived as a strange appendage of the school, with their intrinsic value not necessarily acknowledged and the teachers and students involved not considered full members of the school community. As a consequence, the entire school did not have access to the activities designed for the dual language program. The situation was common across schools and created a paradox because although the schools are committed to multilingual and multicultural education, the reality was that not all languages and, by extension, cultures, were equally valued. Teachers interviewed emphasized that equality was an important factor for the students. For example, a Spanish teacher highlighted how students’ pride in their own language grew:

> It is their language [Spanish], they speak it, but they become proud of it and that’s very important…they acknowledge that their language is more than ‘go to bed,’” “[brush] your teeth”…if you talk to the students, they will tell you that they are really happy and proud to be in a school called dual language middle school, because they feel we are giving them something that they were losing.

It is important to note that schools were using innovative strategies to
support and respect non-English speaking students’ native language. For instance, a program coordinator mentioned that in the rollercoaster model they were starting the day, in kindergarten, with Spanish because:

Spanish will become extinct if we do not give it enough support and respect. This is an English environment, so of course a child that comes from another country is going to learn English right away, they have it in the backyard, but where is the Spanish? Where’s the support?... So, you know the brain in the morning is much more awake for a child, so start with the Spanish and right after lunch English…

Another interesting observation regarding cultural equalization was the importance of the principal in making equally significant both languages and the program itself. A program coordinator said that the acknowledgment of the language, as well as of the program, could be seen in all the translations around the school (every sign was posted in both languages).

The leveling of this playing field was important not only for the success of the program but for student outcomes as well. Every principal in the study acknowledged the benefits of dual language programs for student achievement. Their opinion is reflected in the students’ scores. One of the schools in the study showed “unprecedented gains in language arts and by March all but one kindergarten child was on or above grade level in both in both English and Spanish language arts” (Interview, May, 2010). Further, the only school to have implemented a dual language model for the entire school is also the only school to have obtained an A in its School Report card. "One hundred percent of the students made AYP (adequate yearly progress) in Math, Science and Language Arts." The highest performing schools were those in which there was appreciation for the program. In these schools, dual language programs were integrated to the rest of the school and shared activities and resources, expanding the content and achievement of the programs beyond the scope of their classrooms.

As Table 2 shows, for the schools where dual language programs operated independently, the school reports card show that the students are not making adequately yearly progress, thus receiving a C. The principals expressed their wish that these programs could expand their reach to the whole school and they acknowledged what we call the ripple effect when well integrated, dual language programs benefit not only the students that participate in them but also the rest of the teachers and peers in the whole school.

Cooperative Learning Environment

The interviewees agreed on this point: it was necessary to integrate the program into the rest of the school rather than keep it separate. For instance, one principal said that the semana Latina, an event celebrated during the academic year, brought together all the students and teachers in the school around the idea of multiculturalism:

The kids prepared videos about being a bilingual person, but they interviewed all children in the school, not only the kids in the dual language program…We all discovered the richness and the diversity we have in our school; for example, I didn’t know we have kids that speak Polish!

The interviewees also agreed that the principal had a major role in the process of integration, which, according to an assistant principal “is a need….Principals can make them [students and teachers] feel like part of the school, not as outsiders…[It] is in the principals’ hands to be supportive and integrate them more.”

Desegregation was reinforced by the collaborative work inside the classroom, the activities demanding group work, and the promotion of their mutual support despite differences among the students. A Spanish teacher said: “It is amazing how students enjoy helping those who don’t understand. For instance, I have a girl who helps me with three newly arrived students. She was born here and she comes and helps me…and some months ago she told me “I want to be an ESL teacher”…what is more, the students argue to see who is going to help me.

Conclusion

The community networks sustain dual language programs through words and actions. School principals, teachers, and administrators are strongly committed to their dual language programs. They lobby, secure resources, and do outreach in their communities as part of their efforts to demonstrate their support of these teaching and learning strategies. Organized community networking efforts beyond the schools are embodied in the work that parents and communities are doing through the Community Education Councils and the multiple parental association councils. These networks demonstrate how active lobbying can promote the creation of new programs or modification of existing ones, as well as foster a sustained dialogue with the New York City Department of Education to revise enrollment policies for dual language programs within the district. One conclusion is that the community has increasing power to make educational decisions itself and to influence the way that the NYCDOE implements its bilingual education policies. Community involvement and support is an important asset to include in
discussions regarding the structure and implementation of dual language programs. Attention must be paid to the particular characteristics of parental initiatives to guarantee that all parents are provided the same opportunities and the programs do not become elitist enclaves mainly spearheaded by the well-educated, wealthier segments of the population for which dual language programs are “foreign language education,” thus addressing the “Cautionary Note” in the article by Guadalupe Valdés mentioned earlier on dual language education.

It is important to acknowledge that an equal number of hours of instruction does not guarantee that each language is evenly valued. The major objective of dual language programs, after all, is to emphasize both languages equally, which is possible even without using a highly structured instructional model or having a 50-50 distribution. None of the seven case study schools had highly structured programs as are described in the literature. Rather, the spectrum of these schools showcases a wide range of programs where different instructional models, materials, and schedules are combined, all with reported positive effects. This paper makes a case for a nuanced understanding of dual language programs, focusing especially on the approaches that prove to be most effective when implemented with the support of school and community networks, in contrast to the dominant tendency in the research literature that questions the value of dual language programs without a 50-50 structure. The case study schools revealed that despite variations in their programs, they have managed to run them effectively, fostering academic literacy in both languages.

Further research on dual language programs that depart from the traditional model is needed. For instance, it is useful to learn about elements besides the classroom composition and instructional models that differentiate dual language from transitional bilingual programs, specifically, the status of the language inside the school and crucial role of the school leadership. Learning more about all the program features can be valuable for schools at a time when demographic shifts exert such a strong influence on their programs, and for the NYCDOE in terms of the way it regulates, designs, and implements bilingual education.

Schools are also facing great challenges with regard to the shortage of qualified teachers and quality materials. The difficulty of recruiting bilingual certified teachers for dual language programs was strongly emphasized through the interviews and, consequently, it is important to consider the way that appropriate incentives can be used to recruit and motivate students to become certified as bilingual teachers. Incentives are not limited to monetary remuneration; they also consist of the way that the work of these teachers is valued in schools. In addition, in line with the view of García and Miller (2008), it is fundamental to recognize that teachers’ qualifications should extend beyond knowledge of the language itself; teachers must also have cultural knowledge of their students. It is unlikely that dual language programs can fulfill their mission without this cultural component; interviewees highlighted the importance of integrating dual language programs into the rest of the school to share activities and demonstrate the equal value of all languages and cultures.

In terms of instructional materials, schools continue to innovate through lesson plans, readings, and other resources that they themselves designed. Further research is needed to evaluate, improve, and enable the reproduction of instructional materials that can be shared among the schools. An exchange would be productive not only because all schools would have greater access to quality material specially designed for their students, but also because the exchange would support the creation of authentic and appropriate teaching and learning materials for dual language programs.

In conclusion, it is difficult to assess the sustainability of dual language programs without a comprehensive framework for understanding them in light of the multiple ways that they are designed and implemented. In connection with this issue, the discussion of replicability is a challenging one, because it is difficult to predict the demographic environments in which dual language programs will be implemented. While it is not possible to provide a blueprint or a structured guide to define and implement dual language programs in a city like New York, the investigation found that the empowerment networks of community actors that take part in education decision making—which include parents, community education councils, and the schools’ leadership—have led a process of academic innovation as they have reshaped and improved the schools’ design to serve their students.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Number of Students in DL Programs</th>
<th>Percentage of Latino students in School (2009/10)</th>
<th>Percentage of White Students in School (2009/10)</th>
<th>Grades Offered in Dual Language</th>
<th>Program as Described on School’s Website</th>
<th>Program Model as Described by School Administrators*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>The program is not mentioned explicitly on its website.</td>
<td>Dual Language self-contained model. Rolleroaster model (half day in Spanish, half day in English).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>K-3</td>
<td>The program is called “Dual Language Gifted and Talented Program.”</td>
<td>Dual Language side-by-side and self-contained. Rolleroaster model. Gifed and Talented is being phased out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>The program is called “Dual-Immersion Language Program.”</td>
<td>Spanish Dual Immersion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>K-2</td>
<td>The program is not mentioned explicitly on its website.</td>
<td>Dual Language side-by-side. Eclectic model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>99.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>The school itself is presented as a Dual Language Middle School.</td>
<td>Dual Language Eclectic model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>K-2</td>
<td>The program is not mentioned explicitly on its website.</td>
<td>Dual Language self-contained. Rolleroaster model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>The program is called “Dual Language.”</td>
<td>Dual Language self-contained side-by-side. **Spanish/English and French/English.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These descriptions refer to the actual implementation of the model as described by school administrators and observed by researchers in daily classroom practice. **All programs in these schools are in Spanish and English. School G has an additional French and English program. Source: New York City Department of Education School Accountability Reports. Information compiled by the author.
Figure 1. Community Districts in Manhattan

## Table 2. School Report Cards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Integration with the rest of the school(^1)</th>
<th>Score(^1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>Entire school</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>k-5</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>k-2</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 4</td>
<td>k-3</td>
<td>Operates somewhat independently – separation of celebrations</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 5</td>
<td>k-5</td>
<td>Operates independently</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 6</td>
<td>k-2</td>
<td>Operates independently</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 7</td>
<td>k-5</td>
<td>Operates independently</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: New York City Progress, Academic Year 2009-2010.
Endnotes

1 I wish to thank Carmina Makar and Laura María Vega Chaparro, graduate students at Teachers College, for their work as research assistants on this project, especially with the interviews and visiting the schools.

2 In this paper I use the sensible terminology—English learners—presented in Forbidden Language (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010) instead of the derogatory phrase used in education policy, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students. The latter ignores the language resources and cultural competencies of students who are learning the English language alongside the language of their home and the culture of their family and community.

3 Source: http://schools.nyc.gov/FindASchool/reportsearch.htm?name=P.S.%20163&repname=progressreport

4 To protect the anonymity of the schools, this paper does not include information specifically identifying any of the schools.

5 NYC community districts should not be confused with community school districts. The former were established by local law in 1975 and delineate the jurisdiction of a community board, which is a local representative body. Of all the official administrative districts in the city, community districts usually correspond most closely to neighborhood boundaries. For more information on community districts see: http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/lucds/cdstart.shtml and http://www.unhp.org/crg/indy-cg.html

6 There are 32 Community Education Councils (CECs) in New York City. Each CEC represents a community school district that includes public elementary, intermediate, and junior high schools. All Community and Citywide Education Council members are selected for a two-year term by the Parent Associations or Parent Teacher Associations (PA/PTAs) of the schools in their district.

7 The Office of English Language Learners hosted a parent conference on June 2, 2010 on “Accelerating Achievement Partnering to Prepare Your Child for Success” at Javits Center along with the Office of Public and Community Affairs, the Office for Family Engagement and Advocacy, and Learning Leaders.

8 For additional research on tracking and ESL sheltered instruction see Cortina (2009b).

9 Other common models of dual language education are developmental bilingual programs, in which all the students are native speakers of the partner language, and foreign language immersion programs, in which all of the students are native speakers of English.

References


NYLARNet

The New York Latino Research and Resources Network (NYLARNet) was created to bring together the combined expertise of U.S. Latino Studies scholars and other professionals from five research institutions within New York State to conduct non-partisan, policy relevant research in four target areas: Health, Education, Immigration and Political Participation. This network is constituted by recognized scholars and other professionals who are engaged in critical thinking, dialogue, and the dissemination of information on U.S. Latino issues. NYLARNet addresses a broad spectrum of concerns related to the four target areas mentioned above, and provides information services to legislators, public agencies, community organizations, and the media on U.S. Latino affairs. NYLARNet also pays special attention to the realities and needs of the largely neglected Latino populations throughout New York State and outside of New York City.

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