

EDUCACIÓN DE INMERSIÓN UNIDIRECCIONAL
ONE-WAY IMMERSION EDUCATION

By

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A Thesis Presented to

The Faculty of Humboldt State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

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July 2020

Abstract

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Teachers in Spanish immersion schools, schools that teach a majority of English only speakers or in a one-way immersion model, face unique challenges in meeting their students' language and learning needs. The goal of this study is to identify the curriculum and resources teachers in one-way immersion schools use in their classroom to meet these student needs. The basic design of the study includes individual interviews with questions focused on the curriculum and assessment teachers use, the pedagogical practices they implement and the advice they have for other immersion teachers in the field. A qualitative analysis of the data indicates that there is not one “just right” curriculum and that teachers develop and modify a variety of curricula and instructional strategies to support the needs of their students. The results also suggest that there are limited state adopted curricula for Spanish immersion classrooms and publishers do not offer Spanish Language developmental intervention resources for these students. Teachers, therefore, spend an abundant amount of time adapting and enhancing the curriculum that is available to them. Additionally, results point to limited time or opportunities for teachers to network with colleagues for planning and curriculum development, especially outside of their individual school sites.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express gratitude to my mom, Monica Susan Rivera-Trione. She supported me through the challenging moments and provided encouragement when things would become overwhelming. For my partner, Matt, I thank you for your support and love throughout this roller coaster ride. The patience and kindness you've shown will not be forgotten. Thank you to my professor, Mary Dingle. She has made herself available and guided me through this process. To my family, friends, and colleagues, thank you all for your enduring support throughout this time in my life. I look forward to reconnecting with you all.

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Introduction

Immersion education, defined as teaching students in their primary language and, at the same time, a second target language has grown in popularity since the 1970s. This instructional model originated in Dade County, Florida, and has grown to over 400 schools, according to the Center for Applied Linguistics (2011). The languages being taught are varied from Spanish to Vietnamese. In our world today, where 55 countries are bilingual, families in the United States have seen the growing need to immerse their children in another language and culture to help prepare them for their future. Being bilingual opens doors, opportunities, and competitiveness in the job market. Spanish immersion schools are noticing that there is a higher demand for their services among non-Spanish speaking families.

Background

The interest in this subject began when I entered primary school. I was raised in Guatemala and the school I attended was bilingual. At school the target language was English and my primary language was Spanish. When we moved to the United States, I was placed in the English Language Development program, until I showed competency in English. For the last ten years of my teaching career, I have been working as a Spanish teacher at a Spanish immersion school. Students who attend my school are primarily native English speakers with a small population of fluent Spanish speakers. This qualifies our school as a one-way immersion model where we have a majority of non-speaking

students of the targeted language. When I first began teaching at this school, the curriculum provided seemed very advanced for my students who were learning Spanish. The textbooks that we used were a direct translation of the English grade level curriculum. However, students who attend a one-way immersion program are often one to two years below their current grade level in the target language. Therefore, to support my students' varying needs, I searched, translated, created, and developed the lessons needed. I was surprised that there was not a better curriculum available for one-way model immersion programs.

Statement of the Problem

I believe that Spanish immersion schools that have a majority of English only speakers as students need a more nuanced curriculum to meet the needs of this unique niche of students. English language arts curricula have extensive resources to support English Language Development (ELD) students- students who are learning English as a second language-but there is not the same support provided for students learning another second language. Therefore, some immersion schools have opted out of buying state-adopted curriculum because it does not address the needs of their students. This places the burden on the schools and current teaching staff to develop, create, and align state standards with a developmentally appropriate curriculum for their students.

Purpose of the Study

For my study, I investigated immersion programs to see how curriculum is used in one-way immersion schools whose target language is Spanish with the majority of students' primary language being English. I was also interested in the supplemental materials, adjustments, and best practices the schools engage conjointly, with or without the curriculum, to meet the needs of their students. I conducted interviews with immersion teachers and asked them (1) what types of curriculum and assessments they are using in their classrooms, (2) what pedagogical practices teachers are using to develop a highly efficient immersion classroom (best practices) and (3) any advice they had for current and future teachers. Finally, given the timing of the interviews during the COVID-19 global pandemic, I also asked about the impacts of online learning on their ability to provide a valuable learning experience.

Definition of Key Terms

The key terms listed below were compiled and defined by the following three websites, California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE), Colorín Colorado, and The Glossary of Educated Reform.

50/50 model- an immersion program model in which English and the partner language are each used for 50% of instruction at all grade levels.

90/10 model- an immersion program model in which students are instructed 90% of the time in the partner language and 10% in English in the first year or two, with the amount of English instruction gradually increasing each year until

English and the partner language are each used for 50% of instruction (generally by third grade).

Affective Filter is a metaphor that describes a learner's attitudes that affect the relative success of second language acquisition. Negative feelings, such as lack of motivation, lack of self-confidence and learning anxiety, act as filters that hinder and obstruct language learning. This term is associated with linguist Stephen Krashen's Monitor Model of second language learning.

Bilingual education- an educational program in which two languages are used to provide content matter instruction. Bilingual education programs vary in their length of time, and in the amount each language is used.

Bilingual Education, Transitional- an educational program in which two languages are used to provide content matter instruction. Over time, the use of the native language is decreased and the use of English is increased until only English is used.

Bilingualism is the ability to use two languages. However, defining bilingualism can be problematic since there may be variation in proficiency across the four language dimensions-listening, speaking, reading and writing-and differences in proficiency between the two languages. People may become bilingual either by acquiring two languages at the same time in childhood or by learning a second language sometime after acquiring their first language.

Biliteracy is the ability to effectively communicate or understand written thoughts and ideas through the grammatical systems, vocabularies, and written symbols of two different languages.

Differentiated Instruction- an approach to teaching that includes planning out and executing various approaches to content, process, and product. Differentiated instruction is used to meet the needs of student differences in readiness, interests, and learning needs.

Dominant language is the language with which a bilingual or multilingual speaker has the greatest proficiency and/or uses more often. See primary language.

Dual language learner is a child who is learning a second language while continuing to develop his/her home language.

Dual language program/Dual immersion- also known as two-way immersion or two-way bilingual education. These programs are designed to serve both language minority and language majority students concurrently. Two language groups are put together and instruction is delivered through both languages. For example, in the U.S., native English-speakers might learn Spanish as a foreign language while continuing to develop their English literacy skills and Spanish-speaking English Learners learn English while developing literacy in Spanish. The goals of these program are for both groups to become biliterate, succeed academically, and develop cross-cultural understanding.

English Language Development (ELD) means instruction designed specifically for English language learners to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English.

English Language Learner (ELL) are students who are in the process of learning English. While many ELLs are immigrants, the majority are born in the U.S.

Formative Assessments refers to a wide variety of methods that teachers use to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a lesson, unit, or course. Formative assessments help teachers identify concepts that students are struggling to understand, skills they are having difficulty acquiring, or learning standards they have not yet achieved so that adjustments can be made to lessons, instructional techniques, and academic support.

Immersion (referring to a program type)- a program in which at least 50% of instruction is in the partner language and, in both English and the partner language, the focus of instruction is on both language and subject content.

Immersion (referring to a technique or a method) - method in which teachers speak in the partner language exclusively during instructional time. May be used in immersion programs or in traditional foreign language classes at any grade level.

L2- a speaker's second language. See target language.

One-way immersion- an immersion model proficiency and academic study is taught in a target language for students that are non-speakers of target language in grades K-8. Target language is used for all academic instruction (with the exception of language arts in English). This immersion model maintains a ratio of target language use to English as high as 80/20 throughout elementary grades.

Primary/Native language- the first language a person acquires in life, or identifies with as a member of an ethnic group. This term invariably means (a) the language learned from the family, (b) the first language learned, (c) the native language of an area or country, (d) the stronger (or dominant) language at any time of life, (e) the language used most by a person, (f) the language toward which the person has the more positive attitude and affection (Baker, 2000). This is also referred to "home language" or "mother tongue."

Scaffolding- temporary guidance or assistance provided to a student by a teacher, another adult, or a more capable peer, enabling the student to perform a task he or she otherwise would not be able to do alone, with the goal of fostering the student's capacity to perform the task on his or her own later on.

Standards-based Assessments- refers to systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating understanding or mastery of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education.

Summative Assessments are used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period—

typically at the end of a project, unit, course, semester, program, or school year. Generally speaking, summative assessments are defined by three major criteria: The tests, assignments, or projects that are used to determine whether students have learned what they were expected to learn.

Target Language- the language being studied; the second language (L2).

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language-learning approach based on the relationship between language and its physical representation or execution. TPR emphasizes the use of physical activity for increasing meaningful learning opportunities and language retention. A TPR lesson involves a detailed series of consecutive actions accompanied by a series of commands or instructions given by the teacher. Students respond by listening and performing the appropriate actions.

Transitional Bilingual Education- an educational program in which two languages are used to provide content matter instruction. Over time, the use of the native language is decreased and the use of English is increased until only English is used.

Two-way immersion (TWI)- a dual language program in which both native English speakers and native speakers of the partner language are enrolled, with neither group making up more than two-thirds of the student population.

Organization of the Study

I began the thesis with chapter one, the introduction. It contains my connection to the study, problem statement, and research statement as it relates to immersion education. Chapter one also defined key terms that I will be using throughout my study. Chapter two consists of my literature review. Here I explore existing research as it pertains to the different immersion models and which is best for second language acquisition. My literature review also examines how to implement best practices to support the various stages students move through to acquire the target language. Chapter three discusses the methods I used to carry out my research, describes the interview protocol, and provides the rationale for using these research methods. Chapter four examines and analyzes the results of my interviews and explores the recurring and distinct themes that emerged. In chapter five, the final chapter, I discuss the outcomes of my interviews, how they relate back to the literature review, and my conclusions and recommendations for future practice.

Literature Review

The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL, 2011), a nonprofit organization that focuses on language and culture in the United States, reported that immersion programs have increased by as much as 400% in the past 40 years (Fernandez, 2016, p.16). As of 2011, there were about 448 foreign language immersion programs, 239 of those programs use Spanish for instruction (Dennis, 2016). As language immersion programs continue to grow across the country, much attention has been given to student performance and academic growth. According to CARLA, the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, English proficient immersion students are capable of achieving as well as, and in some cases better than, non-immersion peers on standardized measures of reading and math (Fortune, 2012). The primary drive for immersion education targets three main goals, (1) academic achievement, (2) bilingualism and biliteracy, and (3) cultural competence (Fortune & Tedick, 2015).

This literature review investigates how to best teach in an immersion program to primarily English speakers in elementary school, grades kindergarten through fifth. This literature review will begin with defining bilingual education and providing a background of the variety of immersion programs available in the elementary school setting; starting with total (one-way) immersion, transitioning to the dual-language 90:10 model, and finishing with the dual-language 50:50 model. The review will discuss the five stages of language acquisition and how these stages connect to best practices, and guidelines in the second language as related to a student's development in oral/comprehension and

reading/writing acquisition in an elementary school setting. Lastly, this review will close with a description of the research findings on exemplary second language instruction and the special curriculum infrastructure.

Models of Immersion Education in an Elementary School Setting

Language immersion is an approach to foreign language instruction in which the usual curricular activities are conducted in a foreign language. This means that the new language is the medium of instruction as well as the object of instruction. Immersion students acquire the necessary language skills to understand and communicate about the subject matter set out in the school's program of instruction. They follow the same curricula, and in some instances, use the same materials (translated into the target language) as those used in the non-immersion schools of their district (Bostwick, 2004).

According to the California Association for Bilingual Education, also known as CAFE, a total (one-way) immersion model targets students that are non-speakers of the target language in grades K-8 (CAFE, 2014). The instructional setting uses the target language for all academic instruction, with the exception of language arts that are taught in the students' native/home language for a portion of their school day. The ratio of the target language used in the native/home language is as high as 80% target language to 20% native/home language throughout elementary grades. Ratios will vary throughout the elementary grades (California Association for Bilingual Education, 2014). In total (one-way) immersion programs, native/home literacy is gradually introduced by second

grade and the amount of English instruction is incrementally increased each year (Dennis, 2016).

CABE (2014) defines another immersion model as dual-language with a 90:10 ratio, also called two-way bilingual immersion. This instructional setting promotes bilingualism and biliteracy in English and the target language, while also promoting a positive cross-cultural attitude and behavior. The ration begins with 50-90% of instruction in the target language with an increasing percentage of English language instruction until academic work and literacy are 50:50. The dual-language immersion model targets students who (1) speak a common native language other than English at home and (2) English only speakers in grade K-12. The instructional setting is 50% English dominant and 50% target language speakers. This instructional setting is most effective when started in kindergarten and students and families maintain enrollment for five to six years (California Association for Bilingual Education, 2014). Two-way immersion programs are described as additive language programs that enable students to acquire a second language while maintaining their first language (Dennis, 2016).

CABE (2014) defines another dual-language immersion model with a 50:50 ratio. Just like the 90:10 model, it also promotes bilingualism and biliteracy (English plus target language) and positive cross-cultural attitudes and behavior. This model maintains 50% of instruction in the target language and 50% in English throughout elementary grades, and integrates native English speakers and speakers of the target language – providing instruction in both languages to all students together (California Association for Bilingual Education, 2014).

The major distinction between one-way and two-way immersion is that the student population consists of equal representation of the two instruction languages. The population consists of native English-speakers who are learning Spanish and native-Spanish speakers who are learning English (Dennis, 2016, p. 42).

Five Stages of Second Language Acquisition

When students are learning a second language, they move through five predictable stages throughout their language acquisition: preproduction or silent/receptive, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). According to Krashen and Terrell (1983) students in the preproduction or the “the silent period” can be in the stage from several hours to six months. In this stage students display minimal comprehension, they do not verbalize, and typically use gestures such as nodding, drawing, and pointing. The next stage is the early production stage. This stage can last for six months to a year. Students experience limited comprehension, produce one- or two-word responses, participate using key words and familiar phrases, and use present-tense verbs. The next stage is the speech emergence. This stage lasts for one to three years. During this stage students exhibit adequate comprehension, can produce simple sentences, make grammar and pronunciation errors, and frequently misunderstand jokes. Intermediate fluency is the next stage. Students can be in this stage for three to five years. Students show fully competent comprehension and make few grammatical errors. The final stage is advanced fluency, when students have a

near-native level of speech. The duration of this stage can be five to seven years. All students acquiring another language will pass through these stages. How long a student will stay in each stage depends on the individual (Hill & Flynn, 2006). Robertson and Ford (2008) provide clear examples of instructional strategies for each stage and have also included an intermediate stage for fluency (Robertson & Ford, 2008). These instructional strategies and correlating language stages can be found in Appendix A.

Best Practices for Oral and Comprehension Language Acquisition

According to Hamel and Francis (2006), content-based instruction is most effective when the second language being learned is taught with meaning, is infused into the language learning, and one where students are offered multiple opportunities to use their second language. Another beneficial technique is comparing and contrasting the learner's primary language with the second language being attained through the structure, vocabulary, grammar, and spelling of both languages (Hamel & Francis, 2006). "When the students are learning new vocabulary, memory of the vocabulary is accomplished for some students depending on the level or relative depth at which the language is being processed in a learner's cognitive system" (Barcroft, 2004, p. 306). Barcroft (2004) explains that teachers teaching new vocabulary need to have elaborate activities which require the students to engage in deeper processing and result in better memory. "Some examples are: talking about word meanings, relating new words to personal experiences, focusing on usage contexts, comparing and contrasting new words, and writing new words in sentences" (Barcroft, 2004, p. 306).

A key factor to a student's ability to acquire a new language relates directly to the student's teachers and instructors (Hamel & Francis, 2006). Hamel and Francis (2006) state that when students are learning a second language, the teachers must practice fidelity to the language and speak Spanish exclusively to model and encourage students to do the same.

The more time that students are exposed to the L2 (second language) within the school, the better for the student's oral language and comprehension (Fortune & Tedick, 2015). According to CABE (2017-2019) language acquisition is most effective when started in kindergarten and when the students and families commit to the immersion program for five to six years. According to Fortune and Tedick (2015), early immersion students (starting in grades K-1) perform better, in particular measures of speaking ability, than either delayed (starting in grades 4-5) or late (starting in grades 7-8) immersion. Teachers can encourage comprehension by adjusting their speech and speed to the needs of their second language learners, providing more repetition and making new concepts easier to understand (Hamel & Francis, 2006).

Balling and Lyster (2011) encourage songs, chants, role plays, and theatrical plays as successful strategies for teachers teaching a second language. Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur (2011) urge immersion schools to expose students to Spanish outside of the school campus for additional language support, in ways such as organizing tours of local museums with Spanish-speaking guides, having prominent Spanish-speaking community members visit classes, family tree projects tracing the roots of the students' cultures, using literature about other cultures with follow-up discussions, having students discuss

their own experiences and backgrounds, taking exchange trips, and comparing traditions and customs. Even if students do not have access to Spanish communities in their area or cannot afford field trips, students do have access to Spanish-language apps, online videos, and television programming that support and enrich the curriculum outside the classroom (Hamel & Francis, 2006).

Best Practices for Reading and Writing Acquisition

As described by Krashen and Terrell's (1983) stages, learning a second language requires building a solid foundation and progressing through the required stages to become biliterate. Cummins (1979) discusses that there is a deep correlation with the students' first language to the targeted second language; if the child is proficient in their first language then their literacy abilities and skills will be beneficial to them when learning a second language. Biliteracy develops when a child receives continued instruction in the first language, so they can draw on those foundational skills for their second language literacy acquisition (August, Calderon, & Carlo, 2000). Fortune and Tedrick (2015) report that students who have a substantial infrastructure of oral language proficiency predicts a strong sense of reading comprehension. High-levels of word knowledge promotes high levels in reading comprehension, and furthering syntactic development encourages teachers to pay close attention to vocabulary development (Fortune & Tedrick, 2015). Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur (2011) call for a new paradigm that encompasses a translingual approach: "This approach sees difference in

language not as a barrier to overcome or as a problem to manage, but as a resource for producing meaning in writing, speaking, reading, and listening” (p. 303).

When it comes to reading, the translingual approach highlights the need for patience, respect for observed differences within and across languages, and an attitude of meaningful exploration (Horner et al., 2011). Horner et al. (2011) rely on a translingual approach that uses alternative methods for conventional language instruction in writing. The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) declared a resolution in relation to native language use, “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” (Horner et al., 2011, p. 304). That resolution acknowledges the rights of the students to use different versions of English when writing in a second language, stating that there is not just one standard way of writing and recognizing the need for all variations of English and the benefits acquired by second language learners (Horner et al., 2011).

Because languages and language practices not only differ but fluctuate and interact, pursuit of mastery of any single identified set of such practices is inappropriate insofar as it leads language learners to a false sense of the stability of such practices and the finite character of language learning. Instead, we recognize that we are all language learners, and that learning language is necessarily continuous precisely because language is subject to variation and change. Further, we recognize that language learners are also language users and creators. Thus, mastery must be redefined to include the ability of users to revise the language that they must also continuously be learning—to work with and on,

not just within, what seems its conventions and confines (Horner et al., 2011, p. 307).

Barcroft (2004) stresses the significance that knowing the meaning of a word or context in their native/home language makes it simpler for second language students when they are writing new words in a sentence. When students write a new word in a sentence they are developing cross language transfer skills because the learner is making the connections with their primary language (Barcroft, 2004). Serrano and Howard (2007) express that when you teach writing you need to let the students be free to write about topics of their choice, emphasizing narratives or true stories about themselves encourages them to write.

Best Practices for Second Language Instruction and Special Curricular Infrastructure

When it comes to teaching a second language to students in an elementary school setting (K-5th), teachers are faced with added challenges that English only teachers do not encounter (Detwiler, 2016). Rodriguez (2018) surveyed immersion teachers and found that some of the greatest challenges they had to overcome was a lack of resources and adequate curriculum. One teacher reported that:

What has definitely been my biggest challenge is finding the right resources that are going to make content comprehensible for students. Even if I have a variety of student levels that are authentic sometimes I feel limited as a teacher and what I

can do to get across to my students, because I do not have the same resources that my English counterpart [has] (Rodriguez, 2018, p.77).

Another teacher expressed that “one of the biggest challenges for me is finding a curriculum. Because we need to follow the Common Core Standards, it is not really helpful for a second language learner or a Spanish learner” (Rodriguez, 2018, p. 77). Due to these challenges, teachers have to incorporate special curriculum infrastructure to meet the educational needs of their students (Detwiler, 2016). The teachers have to become the main actors and developers when it comes to curriculum, as the teachers know their students’ strengths and struggles (Hamel & Francis, 2006).

Second language instruction is a task requiring its own methods and special curriculum design (Hamel & Francis, 2006). Many immersion models use two teachers. In this case, the bilingual teacher teaches in the language other than English and the second teacher focuses on instruction in English. Whatever the model, Hamel and Francis (2006) urge that there needs to be an organized and systematic second language curriculum in place in order for younger learners to develop academic proficiency in both languages.

Due to the lack of acceptable curriculum, Sakash and Rodriguez-Brown (1995) formulated a list of best instructional practices for immersion teachers to aid them in classroom instruction (p. 3):

- Bilingual and mainstream teachers jointly organize and sequence the bilingual

curriculum so that it aligns with the state-adopted curriculum (may be targeted for a specific content area such as math, science, or social studies).

- Bilingual and mainstream teachers jointly review texts and learning materials and coordinate the purchase of the same for both programs.
- Bilingual and mainstream teachers observe one another's classrooms for the purpose of understanding one another's teaching methods and to observe individual students in each instructional setting.
- Bilingual and mainstream teachers hold joint parent conferences to facilitate coordination and communication with parents.
- Bilingual and mainstream teachers hold regular meetings to discuss individual student progress.
- Bilingual and mainstream teachers of the same grade plan units of instruction together based on an integrated thematic approach to learning.
- Bilingual and mainstream peer tutoring projects pair limited English proficiency (LEP) students with non-LEP students of the same age across classrooms.
- Cultural information is shared at regular meetings between mainstream and regular classroom teachers for the purpose of clarifying students' behavior and sensitizing teachers to cultural differences.

- Multicultural concepts are infused into the mainstream curriculum by teams of bilingual and mainstream teachers who work together.

Short (1991) generated a list of some guiding principles and best practices that mainstream teachers can implement to improve instruction for students learning a second language (p. 7):

- Enunciate clearly. Add gestures, point directly to objects, or draw pictures when appropriate.
- Write clearly, legibly, and in print.
- Develop and maintain routines. Use clear and consistent signals for classroom instructions.
- Repeat information and review frequently. If a student does not understand, try rephrasing or paraphrasing in shorter sentences and simpler syntax. Check often for understanding, but do not ask “Do you understand?” Instead, have students demonstrate their learning in order to show comprehension.
- Try to avoid idioms and slang words.
- Present new information in the context of known information.
- Announce the lesson’s objectives and activities, and list instructions step-by-step.
- Present information in a variety of ways.

- Provide frequent summations of the salient points of a lesson, and always emphasize key vocabulary words.
- Recognize student success overtly and frequently.

Lastly, some useful teaching strategies were created that would be beneficial for students learning a second language (Reed & Railsback, 2003, p. 22-29).

- Total Physical Response (TPR)- students use physical movement to respond to teachers' directions using the target language.
- Cooperative Learning- students are placed in small groups, each group has students of varying levels of ability, the students use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject.
- Language Experience Approach- students dictate their story or text to a peer or teacher, the teacher or peer writes down the story using the students' exact words, then the teacher or the students reads the stories back and the other students follow along.
- Dialogue Journals- students write in a journal and the teacher writes back to the students regularly, answering questions, asking questions, making comments, or introducing new topics. The students work is not evaluated but models corrected language. This approach helps with spelling, fluency, reading, and writing.
- Academic Language Scaffolding- academic language is modeled to the students but is scaffolded by using visuals, gestures, demonstrations, and using hands-on activities that involve the academic language.

- Native Language Support- students should be provided with academic support in their native or primary language.
- Accessing Prior Knowledge- the students are asked what they already know about a topic or lesson that is going to be taught. This helps the students be engaged and lets the teachers know what background knowledge their students already know.
- Culture Studies- it's important to include the students' home culture in the classroom. The students can do a project where they do research and share information about their own cultural history.
- Other Strategies for Including Culture- other ways of incorporating culture in the classroom are by food, holidays, story-telling, show & tell, and misunderstandings. Misunderstandings could include body language, words, stereotypes and social customs.
- Realia Strategies- students are exposed to real, concrete objects in the classroom so they can create connections with vocabulary, encourage conversations, and build background knowledge.

As immersion education continues to grow in popularity, immersion schools have a responsibility to their students to ensure they are being taught and have access to the curriculum necessary to succeed. The research also indicates that there is a lack of state-adopted curriculum to address the variety of language levels in the bilingual classroom. Immersion schools have had to adapt to the inadequate curriculum available to them by incorporating best practices, modifying curriculum, and creating their own materials, in

order to meet the needs of their students. The literature highlighted various strategies of best practices that can be used when teaching another language to assist immersion teachers in their classroom instruction.

The literature showed that different immersion models do not directly affect the rate at which students acquire the target language. This finding speaks to the value of one-way immersion programs that offer second language acquisition to primarily English speakers. The emphasizing factor in every immersion model is practicing fidelity to the target language and providing students with a variety of ways to use that targeted language. The research stressed that the earlier you begin learning another language the better chance you have to become fluent in that language. Every program also stressed the need for parents making a 5 to a 6-year commitment to the immersion program.

As students learn a language, they move through five different stages to acquire that targeted language. There are means of scaffolding the language in each stage to encourage and support better language acquisition. How long it takes students to transition through each stage depends on them and their individuality.

The gaps encountered in the literature included a lack of information on one-way immersion programs. Most of the literature focused on dual-language immersion programs and their struggles and successes. There was very little information about one-way immersion programs and how they meet the needs of their students. There was also scant literature on state-adopted curriculum available to immersion schools, or what curriculum bilingual schools are using. This is particularly important to me since I teach

in a one-way immersion program and my students are primarily English speakers being immersed in Spanish.

Methods

From the literature review completed, it was astonishing to find that there was limited information about one-way immersion models. The literature mainly concentrated on two-way or dual-immersion models. As a one-way immersion teacher, the lack of curriculum to help support English only students acquire a target, second language is discouraging. Thus, the goal of this project was to ask other one-way immersion teachers about the curriculum they use in their classrooms, how they modify, supplement, and or develop their own curriculum to address the diversified needs of their student population, and what they have found to be the best teaching practices for students learning Spanish.

Participants

The participants consisted of seven current elementary Spanish immersion teachers and one former immersion teacher who is now the principal of a Spanish immersion elementary school. Seven participants were immersion teachers who had taught primarily English-only students at some point during their teaching career. In addition, seven of the eight educators have taught in one of the local region's immersion schools. The eight participants were a convenience sample. They included work colleagues (n=2), immersion teachers in our community (n=4), and other immersion educators who work outside of our community (n=2). The individuals involved were made up of seven people who identified as females and one person who identified as male. Experience ranged from 2-26 years of teaching with a mean of 17 years. Most of

the participants' teaching experience had taken place in immersion classroom settings.

The ages ranged from 25 to 50 years old.

Development of Interview Questions

I developed a series of interview questions to explore how one-way immersion teachers use and develop curriculum and what they consider best practice for teaching in immersion classrooms. As I began to develop the questions, I reviewed what I had learned in the literature as well as my own experiences and understanding of curriculum and instruction as an immersion teacher. I decided to use open-ended interview questions because they allowed respondents to include additional information about their feelings, attitudes and understanding of the subject. My interview instrument consisted of 10 interview questions (Appendix B). The interview questions began with a general inquiry about the participants' teaching experience in immersion. The remaining nine questions encompassed three overlying themes including questions focused on curriculum, best practices, and assessment practices.

Procedures

I began with first submitting my application to the Institutional Review Board. granted me permission to conduct my interviews. The project was submitted to the Institutional Review Board at Humboldt State University on April 1, 2020 and was approved as of April 7, 2020.

Initially, I had planned to have face-to-face meetings, but because of campus closures due to COVID-19 and shelter in place I had to contact each individual via email, phone, or text. Then, via email, I provided my consent form, interview questions, and organized a time for us to interview. After an interview time was agreed upon, participants were emailed a zoom link, which was the online platform where I conducted my interviews.

At the beginning of the interview, I let the interviewees know that I was recording and transcribing the zoom session. I reviewed the consent form and reminded the participants they could stop the interview at any point. I then asked for verbal consent to participate in this interview. Once the interviews began there were no time limits on completion but the expected time was up to an hour. The actual interview times ranged from 23 minutes to 52 minutes. All responses were collected in a manner that allowed the results to remain anonymous. I used Otter voice meeting notes to transcribe and backup the zoom recordings.

After I completed all my interviews, I uploaded the Zoom audio to the Trint automated transcription application. The Trint application transcribed the audio to text form, but I had to go through each transcription and check for inaccuracies.

Thematic Analysis

Qualitative analysis of the data was completed to (1) identify the curriculum and assessments teachers used in their classrooms and (2) explore the instructional practices the teachers felt were effective to use in one-way immersion models and (3) analyze the

advice they offered to other teachers. I took a deductive approach to initially analyze the data. I first reviewed the interview transcripts and created a table to summarize each interviewee's response to the questions in order to develop a general explanation of the data through an open-coding process. I then highlighted phrases/words that were similar to one another, assigned secondary codes and organized categories that correlated with the overarching research questions. I created an additional table and assigned a numerical value to the codes to understand the frequency that educators discussed the themes in order to elaborate on my understanding of the emerging concepts. I then returned to the interview data and verified my analysis by finding quotes that exemplified the emerging themes, categories and concepts.

Results

Introduction of Data Analysis

I will present and discuss in detail the four overarching themes that emerged from the data I gathered from my interviews; (1) curriculum, (2) assessments, (3) pedagogical practices, and (4) advice.

Curriculum

One of the main inquiries of my study was focused on the curriculum used by one-way immersion schools with Spanish as the target second language. After coding the interviewee responses, I found that teachers indicated that they use a combination of state-adopted curriculum, other types of published curriculum and teacher-developed curriculum resources (Appendix C).

State-adopted curriculum

Out of the eight participants interviewed, four primarily used a state-adopted curriculum as required by their school sites. According to the California Department of Education (2019), “State-adopted” instructional materials are those instructional resources which the State Board of Education has formally “adopted” for use in the classroom. The teachers reported many benefits of using an adopted curriculum. They all felt that the curriculum provided the students with a solid foundation of the needed strategies to become efficient readers, in particular, they noted the comprehensive

approach of developing students' phonemic awareness, phonics skills, and decoding strategies. One respondent said, "I actually really do like Maravillas. It does a really good job of teaching reading to kids, even if it's not their native language." However, the four teachers also reported that the material was very difficult for the English-speaking students to understand in their second, target language and the teachers struggled with the implementation of the curriculum with fidelity due to the fact that the program requires so many standards to be addressed throughout the year that they had to focus on the concepts that best supported their students' language and learning needs. For example, one teacher explained, "Maravillas is such a comprehensive program that we can't fit it all in. So, we just kind of zeroed in on the most important parts which is like phonics and phonemic awareness."

Other themes also emerged from the teachers that used the state-adopted curriculum, both positive and negative. Two of the teachers appreciated that the curriculum included a guide of the scope and sequence that would be covered throughout the year. "Having a curriculum to reference is awesome because it is so much work to create all the time, create from scratch." Two other teachers commented on the complementary resources provided which gave them ideas about extending lessons and additional in-class supports. "Honestly, I don't really use much of the supplements aside from what the curriculum already has. It has great worksheets for the kids to identify." However, two teachers also complained about the lack of engaging visuals, songs, movement, and manipulatives. "The curriculum that comes from the factory or from the company is, you know, it's sort of canned and you have to add your spice. Many times it's

really, really hard for the kids at my immersion school so you have to bring it down and make more movement and more songs and invent curriculum to go with it so they get the point.”

Some of the teachers also reported that the teacher manuals are really comprehensive so they have to spend a great deal of time planning out what the essential parts are to use. “It is hard to get started because the manual is really extensive and you have to figure out what you have time to do. You have to figure out what are the most important parts.” Additionally, some teachers shared that they use the curriculum as a guide, but mostly develop their own lessons because students in their classrooms had varying Spanish levels and the curriculum did not support the students' vast needs. “Personally, I prefer creating our own curriculum, just because students are always different. You know, they come in with different levels of Spanish, even if they're native Spanish speakers.” Lastly, some teachers who use the Spanish language state-adopted curriculum didn't find it beneficial for their students' whose home language is English because it was too difficult. “Every other resource that I found is for native Spanish speakers or a direct translation of the English curriculum. Or it's grade level. And my kids are not reading at grade level. They're consistently two grade levels lower, at least.”

Published curriculum

The other four teachers interviewed were not provided with or required to use state-adopted curriculum and were given other curricular options including previous state-adopted curriculum, other types of published curriculum, and intervention Spanish reading programs.

Two of the teachers who used the previous state-adopted curriculum were thankful to have the curriculum to use as a guide for the academic areas that they needed to address in their grade level. Unfortunately, the downfall they experienced with the curriculum was that it did not connect with California's common core standards and that it was not engaging or grade appropriate for their current class. "I dug out this old curriculum from storage. I look at it like this and think fifth graders are not going to be interested in this. It's dated. It's childish. It's not cool enough for them."

Another teacher searched through the curriculum that was left for her use and was ecstatic to find a curriculum that would be ideal for her grade level and student needs but was then frustrated to find they were not able to purchase new consumables. "I got really excited about this. We went digging through cupboards to find whatever we could and we found this curriculum called Amigos. It's awesome! But it's not in print anymore. I mean, the cool thing about this is this is made for our kids...I can't find it, it's out of print. I've searched for it online and it doesn't exist anymore."

Some teachers felt they needed additional Spanish reading interventions to use with their chosen published curriculum. They felt their students needed extra support with alphabet and phonological awareness, fluency, and comprehension. "I've been using the Estrellita alphabet chart And I noticed just introducing the chart and the movements, the kids were using the vocabulary during playtime. And I hadn't explicitly taught it. I just showed them the movements and you know, what went with it."

Teacher-developed

All teachers agreed that even if they used a state-adopted or other types of published curriculum they also needed to develop, modify, supplement, translate, or adjust their curriculum in order to meet the various academic levels of their students. One teacher explained, “nothing met my needs and I don't know if I'm just picky. I never have used a curriculum that I haven't adapted in some way or added to. So, I don't know that it's only a phenomenon of the language immersion component. I think it's just that publishers don't really know what teachers need and they go over our heads. It's a political thing. And then the Board of Education approves particular products and we're like, well, that works. I can use like half of it and then I have these holes. So, I found even things that were simple, like the size of the text that kids were reading, needed to be modified.”

Seven teachers discussed that the curriculum that they use is either dated or too challenging, so they decide where the students need support and augment the curriculum with teacher developed materials to accommodate the different Spanish levels of their students. “Well, for many years, it was just kind of a grabbing, grab a little of this and grab a little of that and kind of come up with my own curriculum by blending a bunch of different things together and trying to make things work.” Some teachers translated a published English curriculum that addressed certain learning concepts and adjusted it so it would be accessible to their students. “I translated all of the grammar, Punk Grammar, from the English version. I also taught through poetry. So, these were adaptations of the English language arts teacher. And I made them in Spanish.”

Four teachers explained that the academic level for the writing portion in the curriculum was too advanced for their students, so they would use Spanish curriculum as a guide for writing topics or they use the grammar concepts from the book to develop their own writing lessons. “We don't use a lot of the writing because a lot of the writing prompts expect our students to be able to read and understand, comprehend what it's being asked of them to do. Even some native (Spanish) speakers and near native speakers can't access that. So, it's not compatible with them. But I do use it as a guide for coming up with writing topics and some ways to support writing.”

Several teachers discussed that curriculum lacked explicit teaching of relatable vocabulary. In order to enhance the students' vocabulary lesson, some teachers have implemented songs, movements, and visuals that they have found on the internet or created. “Some songs are from a person called José-Luis Orozco. The songs are like old traditional (Spanish) songs, but he made them come back alive. But I also use YouTube to find songs. But I also write songs if I need to write a song.”

A few early elementary teachers really focused on the sight words provided by the curriculum and made them accessible through songs and in writing centers. “Well I myself usually start with a song. The song I pick is based on a lot of things, like are there sight words in the songs and which ones and are there movements in the songs and which ones. And so, it's not just singing a song. It's way deeper than that.”

Three teachers used particular websites in class to support their reading program and/or Spanish development using music, movements and Spanish language applications. For example, one teacher shared:

The Scholastic News. Let's find out in Spanish. That is a good one because it has the video I can show like a little video that has a quick little introduction about whatever the magazine is about. And then we discuss the video and then we read more in depth about what we're learning about. So, for songs and stuff, there's Rockalingua. I also use Calico. That one's cool because it has some like reading passages, so it introduces the vocabulary and then it reads it for you and they could interact with it vocally even though they're not really doing anything. And then it will tell them the answer. But it also has songs for them that they love doing. And I was able to add some of those songs onto GoNoodle for brain breaks, too. So, they enjoy it.

Teachers also reported collaborating with other teachers to develop curriculum. Six teachers extensively use Teachers pay Teachers which, according to the website, is known as the “world's most popular online marketplace for original educational resources.” One teacher reported that at her school they established grade level teams to develop their own scope and sequence and used English Language Learner strategies which included incorporating social studies and science to encourage Spanish language development. She felt strongly that, “Publishers are just trying to sell and they do not fit the needs of our students.”.

Assessments

Another crucial component of curriculum is assessments. Teachers and students are held accountable for teaching and learning the grade level common core standards.

The assessments the teachers used in their classroom would be classified as formative, summative, and standards-based. Formative and summative assessments were usually administered in both Spanish and English. The standardized assessment in California, the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, is given to third, fourth and fifth graders and is administered in English.

Two teachers discussed formative assessments they used to evaluate their students' performance during a writing project, while they are doing classwork, or check for understanding. "I had to develop the worksheets that I use. Using these, it's a way for me to informally assess what they know, but also gives them a chance for them to draw on their prior knowledge and attach word to meaning."

Three teachers reported that the summative assessments supplied by the curriculum are too advanced for the students so they have had to modify and develop their own that will provide them with useful information and gauge the student's true performance. "We've never really had anything that's been streamlined or that's at my elementary. I mean, each teacher, basically they were just assessing Spanish their own way."

Other teachers lacking sufficient assessments have implemented an education software for guiding instruction, online guided reading, research-based reading intervention, and benchmark reading assessments to gather accurate reading levels.

With Raz-kids (an online guided reading program), I can create assignments for them and then they can go in and select their own books. But it's nice because it is more of an independent activity. So, there's all these online books that they can

read. Raz-kids also has a component where the book is read to them, where the words are highlighted as the reader is reading. So, it's a native speaker reading the book. I like that they get other input. There are also quizzes on the books that I can keep track of and it shows me how well they do on their comprehension. So, it's another way to be able to track.

One teacher utilized a second language screening tool that the Spanish teachers in the district developed. They said, "it's like performing a Student Study Team language assessment for every student three times a year." A principal discussed how, at her school, "each teacher is assessing their students in their own way and how they best see fit to show strengths and areas for growth."

Lastly, two teachers used the standards-based report card assessments provided in English by their district that they in turn had to translate. "We don't have specific assessments for immersion. We're using the (English) county report card assessments. So, our assessments are pretty much the same as what the English teachers are using. It doesn't always work when we're talking about the different amounts of letters and sounds when it comes to Spanish requirements."

Pedagogical Practices

Another facet that my study focused on was best practices immersion teachers use in their classrooms to engage students and encourage them to intrinsically learn another language while learning grade level curriculum. Immersion teachers face significant hurdles in the sheer range of learner differences. Teachers have had to incorporate best

practices and differentiated instruction to scaffold Spanish language acquisition. From the many pedagogical practices, the interviewees shared, three themes emerged: (1) teaching students expectations and procedures, (2) motivating students to intrinsically want to learn the target language, and (3) encouraging students to take a risk and speak in the target language.

Teachers rely heavily on expectations, rules, and procedures to provide supportive routines that help the students navigate the curriculum in the target language. Four teachers explained that having visuals for the students to refer to and modeling desired behavior helped with achievement. Many teachers felt that repetition and consistency were important academic reinforcers. A couple of teachers believed that frontloading the students with concepts and routines in English helped with the language barrier and concept retention.

Four teachers have found much success with their students when they implement predictable frameworks. They conveyed that using reading and writing workshops offer a simple and predictable environment so the teachers can focus on observing students' progress and adapting to their needs.

The best thing I do is incorporating writer's workshop. That's a really fun part of the day for them. And I feel like it's a really fun part of my day just because I give them free reign to do whatever they want. But I also assigned my days so that I can target students in particular. So, the ones that are really struggling, the ones I notice are not doing as much, I zero in on them and pull them to my little back table. The students are more open and sharing and want to participate with me

rather than feeling isolated and kind of targeted for not knowing something. For my classroom, that's the best practice, where my struggling students can not only learn from me but they can learn from their peers. I feel like that's the kind of environment that I created for them and they created for themselves.

The Spanish immersion teachers wanted students to be excited about coming to school, interested in acquiring new language skills, and eager to explore new topics in another language. However, an immersion program can be very demanding for students. “I think the kids and their relationship with you is going to be the thing that probably drives them and motivates them. I think that all of the things that make school a place where kids want to go become even more important, because I feel like the immersion education model has the potential to alienate children because they get a level of frustration.”

Five teachers expressed that students are motivated to learn new vocabulary or academic concepts when it's introduced through games, movements, and songs. A couple of teachers declared that actively engaging the students supports instruction. Other teachers felt that integrating content language and connecting your audience encourages reading and writing in the target language. Likewise, a small number of interviewees use manipulative and hands-on experience to spark curiosity. One teacher vows that using the Total Physical Response (TRP) method is a remarkable way to teach language and vocabulary concepts.

Spanish immersion teachers strive to lower the students' affective filter to encourage and not inhibit language learning. Getting students to take risks and speaking

in the target language is a challenge. Three teachers believe that providing sentence starters of scripts helps students be more successful with content and academic language. It helps the students learn key vocabulary and scaffold what they could achieve independently. Some teachers felt that making in-class connections with real authentic language would create a sense of purpose for the students.

Having authentic reasons to read, write, and use language is really important. I've never seen a jug in my house in my whole life. So how is that supposed to be meaningful to some kid? I know it's a jug because I learned it in phonics in first grade. Oh, Jug, uuu, Jug, yeah. How is that helpful to a native speaker? Getting rid of all the implicit bias. And looking at if our kids reflected, is the use of language authentic and meaningful? Do they need it to be able to do an activity or to share their learning? Integrating what you can and making it for authentic purposes.

Other teachers talked about how they designate time in their school day for students to work in small groups and partner share in order to promote language use in the classroom. One teacher voiced that practicing patience was essential in an immersion setting. Not only for the teachers but for the students and allowing themselves to be frustrated and overcome that frustration.

Advice

I concluded my research with questions that focused on advice, recommendations, or suggestions on how to be an efficient and successful immersion teacher in these ever-

changing times. The responses revolved around three common areas, collaboration, professional development, and personal care.

Many teachers declared that collaboration is an essential piece of being a successful immersion teacher. Six teachers felt it was crucial for teachers to network, build relationships, collaborate with other colleagues at their school sites and seek other school districts with the similar immersion model and student make-up. “Talk with your colleagues... Constantly looking out for new resources to keep it fresh is super important.” Three teachers firmly believed that observing other teachers in their shared field is a key part of development and provides illuminating recommendations to implement in their classrooms. “Go observe! Reach out to different schools! Just make those connections. Networking has been a really big think. But yeah, definitely going to observe different schools, different teachers, getting different ideas are important.”

Similarly, teachers noted that professional development is a vital component of becoming a knowledgeable educator. Five teachers thought that seeking conferences that are geared toward immersion education or collaborating with other immersion schools would be powerful. “Keeping your finger on the pulse and being involved. Looking for bilingual conferences to keep your own teaching fresh, upping your game, because if you're upping your game, you're meeting the students' needs better.” One teacher expressed her disappointment in her district that provides excellent professional development but it’s directed for English classrooms, that she then has to adapt to suit her immersion classroom. “It would be nice to have a yearly professional development by other immersion teachers or with other immersion teachers. Because pretty much all the

time our professional development is always geared towards the English teachers. The immersion teachers sit off to the side and do their own thing, but it doesn't feel like you're getting much out of it.”

Just as importantly, self-care is a fundamental aspect of being a valuable educator. Two teachers conveyed the importance of making boundaries for yourself and implementing healthy time management habits to prevent overworking. “Maybe a suggestion is that it's endless work. So, at some point you got to call it a day and just be like, I'm done...because it's just endless because the materials (in Spanish) aren't there.” One principal felt that her district advocated for compensation for the teachers for the additional time they spent in preparing Spanish materials. Another teacher felt that surrounding yourself with effective teachers leads to motivation and inspiration. Finally, a teacher encapsulated her thoughts on immersion education by pointing out that, “one of the things for me..., when you've got those students and they're coming to you and actually speaking to you in Spanish, it's got to be one of the most rewarding and amazing things! Even if you just get that one kid that can just rattle off something in Spanish. Being an immersion teacher, it is hard. I mean, your work is double sometimes triple that of the other elementary teachers. And it is really hard and exhausting, but is so extremely rewarding.”

Covid-19

Immersion teachers have to prevail over many obstacles on a daily basis. The teaching community was dealt a brand new one this year with the Covid-19 pandemic.

With Coronavirus being so prevalent in teachers' lives when conducting my interviews, I completed my interview questions asking them what challenges they had experienced moving to an online platform. Two teachers discussed that they were finding that there was a lack of online Spanish materials to share with the families and students so they could still immerse themselves in the language while at home. "I've actually found it very difficult during this time to move to an online platform, and I've been noticing that when it comes to traditional English classes, I feel like there's a plethora of resources out there for our students, communities, and others in this country to access educational curriculum. But I feel like it's not the same when it comes to second languages."

A few teachers talked about how connecting and motivating the students to speak in Spanish was even harder now. Others teachers discussed the discrepancies within the families with being able to complete the needed assignments or access to the online platforms. One teacher struggled with holding students and families accountable. "Having the same access for all students. I mean, the reality is they're all going to be behind. The reality is not everyone is doing their packet work and it's not the same as being in an actual classroom with visuals and different examples." A teacher discussed that, "Well, firstly, the challenge was that we (the school) didn't really know what we were expected to do. So now we finally know what we're expected to do. And now I don't really still know how to do this...and how to teach kindergarteners online in Spanish. That's my challenge." Finally, a teacher has seen, "Remarkable parent involvement and understanding. Usually it's like just dropping my kid off to have a good seven hours. But

now they actually understand more of the complexities of instruction and what it takes to get a kid to learn. So, I think that that will stick after this pandemic is over.”

Through this process, I learned a lot about curriculum, assessments, pedagogical practices, recommendations, and distance learning in one-way immersion classrooms. Many teachers had a lot of the same experiences, challenges, and successes. A major theme was that teaching in a one-way immersion classroom definitely requires time, research, collaboration, and networking in order to respond to the needs of the students.

Discussion

My interviewees provided a plethora of information about teaching in a Spanish immersion classroom. In this chapter I will summarize the results of my interviews and how it related to the findings of my literature review. Lastly, I will provide conclusions of the study and present recommendations for the immersion education field and for Spanish immersion teachers.

Summary

I am deeply invested in the challenges and rewards that come with being a Spanish immersion teacher. My own challenges and successes led to this research inquiry. This study had three main focus areas. First, I asked about the curriculum that Spanish one-way immersion teachers used in their classroom with a majority of students whose primary language was English. Second, I investigated the pedagogical practices these teachers implemented to address the diverse language and learning needs of their students. Third, I asked for advice or counsel from Spanish immersion teachers for other Spanish immersion teachers. After analyzing the results of my overall study, I realized that my own teaching experiences, previous research about other immersion models, and data collected in my study shared many similar themes.

For years I believed that my small school was unique with the shortage of Spanish language resources available for the teachers and the students. My defining moment came after I concluded my last interview and I realized that I had interviewed eight educators

working in a variety of different school organizations and that we all had a very similar story. It became apparent when I began summarizing my data that I am not alone and that all eight individuals interviewed experience the similar inefficiencies with the curriculum, assessments, and resources available in Spanish for their immersion classrooms. Aspects of the same narrative surfaced while conducting my literature review. For example, in one study, teachers were surveyed and voiced similar concerns when it came to lack of resources and challenges of curriculum (Rodriguez, 2018). Additional studies indicated that the Spanish curriculum was developed for native Spanish speakers, not native English speakers learning Spanish (Rodriguez, 2018). Curriculum used in other immersion models was also found to be too advanced for immersion students and overwhelming for the teachers (Rodriguez, 2018).

Previous research also indicated that teachers who teach in other immersion models had to develop and discover a wide range of pedagogical practices to use in their classrooms so immersion students could access the curriculum (Short, 1991). This was also a major theme that emerged in my study. Teachers felt in order to develop the students' Spanish language oral and comprehension it was important to teach with meaning, relevant vocabulary, and offer numerous opportunities for students to practice their second language through games and activities (Hamel & Francis, 2006). For example, teachers in my study reported using songs, chants, and role play, which are validated methods which can result in better memory retention of the Spanish language (Balling & Lyster, 2011).

From my own experience, similar to the teachers interviewed, I have learned that when students can connect the academic content to their everyday life experiences, the vocabulary or concepts are easier to internalize. I have also observed a formidable improvement with student buy-in when teachers remained speaking in the target language, which motivated students to do the same. This is aligned to the literature review (Fortune & Tedick, 2015) and to a teacher in my study who believed that fidelity to the language is necessary for the underlying goal of Spanish language acquisition.

Previous research and teachers interviewed in my study also stated that in order to increase the students' reading and writing skills in Spanish, the students must develop a strong foundation in their primary language (August, Calderon, & Carlo, 2000). This is again similar to my own experience. Teachers at my school work closely with our English co-teacher to develop lessons that she will front load to the students in English and we will follow up the lesson in Spanish.

Another area where the literature and my data aligned was the importance of instilling instructional practices such as routines, procedures, movement, and repetition to create a stable learning environment where students can focus on learning the language (Short, 1991). Additionally, both the teachers from my study and previous research noted that practicing patience is an essential aspect for anyone teaching or learning in a Spanish immersion school (Horner et al., 2011). Being gentle with yourself and your students, and modeling productive ways to handle frustration will help students when they are faced with challenges. Lastly, collaboration with colleagues at your school and putting into

practice classroom observations was an area which was unanimously agreed upon (Hamel & Francis, 2006).

While much of what I learned from my study aligned with the literature, two emerging themes provided new information for me to consider. First, from the interviews that I conducted, I learned that the teachers felt strongly that professional development and networking outside the school site is vital for Spanish immersion success. Second, assessment of students in one-way immersion programs surfaced as a new emerging issue.

The teachers and I experienced similar challenges of living in Humboldt County where we are so isolated and struggle accessing quality professional development that is specifically aimed for immersion education. We are offered opportunities for professional development designed for non-immersion classrooms that we then have to adapt and modify to fit our needs. “You don't have the same professional development support because a lot of times it doesn't exist. Also we are so isolated up here. But it makes a big difference when you have the opportunity to go see and learn what other people are doing. Even if they're not the same (immersion) model as you are to get ideas, you can tweak it for how you make it work for your classroom.”

The teachers also emphasized the need of networking with co-workers, immersion districts, and at bilingual conferences. At times, I feel very alone dealing with these issues, but it was reassuring to learn through my interviews that through networking you are able to rely and relate to others in the similar situation but you have to make the effort to reach out. One teacher discussed that, “sometimes I feel like I live on my own island

banging my head against the wall. I figured out that a lot of us are feeling the same way. We have to de-islandize ourselves and travel around for resources and support.”

In regards to assessment issues, teachers reported a wide range of practices and expectations including formative, summative and standard-based assessments. As an immersion teacher, it would be ideal to have universal Spanish assessments for English speaking students learning Spanish so we could genuinely identify the students achievements and areas for support. If every immersion teacher or school district is assessing their students their own way, the students' proficiency in the target language is up to the discretion of who is performing the assessments and the results do not easily transfer from one school or teacher to the next. Also, if we are using English assessments and translating them to the target language we are missing fundamental standards due to the differences in the languages. Assessments are valuable to see the students' academic growth and to see what interventions need to be implemented to provide support. As well, assessments help emphasize the achievements and weak points of an immersion school program.

Conclusions

When I think about what I have learned through the research and data analysis, three key elements presented themselves: curriculum availability, the extensive amount of labor required to develop or modify appropriate materials, and interventions for Spanish language learner in immersion classrooms.

I began my research hopeful that I would find the curriculum answers needed to support the needs of our students and teachers. I was initially frustrated by the results of my study that there was not a curriculum available for our immersion model, but felt liberated that our school was not alone and that other teachers were facing the same struggles. With the number of immersion schools lacking the same resources, curriculum developers and immersion schools need to work together in developing the needed materials.

That being said, much of the state-adopted curriculum for students who are learning English as their second language embeds English language development or offers supplementary materials to support these students (California State Department of Education, 2019). Teachers using the state-adopted Spanish curriculum note that supplemental language development support is missing from their curriculum. State-adopted Spanish language curricula doesn't offer Spanish language development interventions as they do for English Learner counterparts. This would be a valuable component for the publishers to offer.

A prominent issue from the teachers interviewed, the research, and that I share is the exorbitant amount of work hours that teaching in a Spanish immersion school requires. If your district does not supply you with curriculum then teachers develop their own. Even when you have a curriculum to use, many times it has to be adapted to the ever-changing academic levels of your students. At times the only lesson plans or resources that are available are in English and they need translation in order to use them in the immersion classroom. Much of the researching, translating, modifying, and

adapting of resources are added to typical teacher responsibilities. One principal acknowledged these teaching disparities and said, “I think number one thing is really giving (immersion) teachers that time for planning and collaboration. I try to make sure that they get extra paid planning days and not just within their own grade level, but we carve out at least one day each month where both immersion schools come together for (immersion) planning and sharing resources. Just really helping to advocate for them (the teachers). And listening to what they need and making sure that they get what they need.”

For future studies, more information about how teachers use the five stages of language acquisition in their lesson planning, delivery and assessment would be an informative addition to what I have learned in this study. Additionally, asking teachers more about co-teaching, responsibilities concerning teaching in one or two languages and using other para-professionals in the class would add to our knowledge about effective instructional practices.

Final Thoughts

As I speculate what my future endeavors in immersion education will consist of, I consider the question that my principal asked me, “What would an ideal immersion classroom look like, and how do we ensure participation, connections, and instill the love of learning for the language?”

The love of learning is developed when the students feel connected to their teacher, the curriculum and their classroom environment. To encourage participation, a teacher implements engaging instructional strategies through visuals, games, songs,

movements, and modeling. To develop a curriculum that meets students' language and learning needs, a teacher assesses students' abilities and builds the school year plan from this starting point, so as to not overwhelm the students and shut them down. It is crucial to make sure that they have strong foundational skills to build from, not only in Spanish but in their primary language. Therefore, having a curriculum that offers supplemental interventions that embeds those fundamental language skills would be ideal for the students in immersion classrooms.

To meet these goals, it would be beneficial for curriculum developers to address the educational needs of one-way Spanish immersion students and adapt accordingly as they do for English language learners to meet common core standards. The publishers have not acknowledged the demands that Spanish immersion schools require in order to support varied academic levels in their classrooms. It would be gratifying to be recognized by others outside of our school and networking peers.

Another aspect of an ideal immersion classroom would be to embed daily collaboration time with colleagues where we can assess, plan and reflect on how our students are performing. Additionally, conferencing monthly with the other immersion schools in our region to share resources, ideas, and instructional materials would be very helpful. Lastly, providing professional development that is focused on Spanish immersion to help teachers build the much-needed resources they are lacking is also an essential aspect of an ideal immersion school. To sum it up, as one teacher interviewed shared, the only way to reach the needs of all students in an immersion program is to, "Have a proper

program that was set up to benefit two groups of language speakers with an outcome that was thought out and deliberate and planned based on research and best practice”.

Through this study, I have learned to appreciate what teachers know and what they do in their classrooms. Before I began this process, I felt I was just barely able to keep my head above water because of the amount of work required to keep students engaged and progressing through the academics in one-way immersion classrooms. Through this process I have learned that the instructional strategies, methods, and curriculum I use have a base in research and have been validated through discussions with other Spanish immersion teachers. Immersion education will always have its challenges but it was gratifying to know that other teachers are facing similar issues and want to collaborate in the future. We all have our sights on the same goal which is ingraining the love of another culture and language in our students.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Language Stage	Strategies
Pre-production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize listening comprehension by using read-alouds and music. • Use visuals and have students point to pictures or act out vocabulary. • Speak slowly and use shorter words, but use correct English phrasing. • Model "survival" language by saying and showing the meaning. For example, say, "Open your book," and then open a book while the student observes. • Gesture, point and show as much as possible. • More advanced classmates who speak the same language can support new learning through interpretation. • Avoid excessive error correction. Reinforce learning by modeling correct language usage when students make mistakes.
Early Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the strategies listed above, but add opportunities for students to produce simple language. • Ask students to point to pictures and say the new word. • Ask yes/no and either/or questions. • Have students work in pairs or small groups to discuss a problem. • Have literate students write short sentences or words in graphic organizers. • Model a phrase and have the student repeat it and add modifications. Teacher says, "This book is very interesting." The student repeats it and says, "This book is very boring." Continue with as many modifications as possible. • Avoid excessive error correction. Reinforce learning by modeling correct usage.
Speech Emergent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce more academic language and skills by using the same techniques listed above, but beginning to use more academic vocabulary. • Introduce new academic vocabulary and model how to use it in a sentence.

Language Stage	Strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide visuals and make connections with student's background knowledge as much as possible. • Ask questions that require a short answer and are fairly literal. • Introduce charts and graphs by using easily understood information such as a class survey of food preferences. • Have students retell stories or experiences and have another student write them down. The ELL student can bring these narratives home to read and reinforce learning. • In writing activities, provide the student with a fill-in-the blank version of the assignment with the necessary vocabulary listed on the page. • Provide minimal error correction. Focus only on correction that directly interferes with meaning. Reinforce learning by modeling the correct usage.
Beginning Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students work in pairs and groups to discuss content. • During instruction, have students do a "Think, Pair, Share" to give the student an opportunity to process the new language and concept. • Ask questions that require a full response with explanation. If you do not understand the student's explanation, ask for clarification by paraphrasing and asking the student if you heard them correctly. • Ask questions that require inference and justification of the answer. • Ask students if they agree or disagree with a statement and why. • Model more advanced academic language structures such as, "I think," "In my opinion," and "When you compare." Have students repeat the phrases in context. • Re-phrase incorrect statements in correct English, or ask the student if they know another way to say it. • Introduce nuances of language such as when to use more formal English and how to interact in conversations. • Have students make short presentations, providing them with the phrases and language used in presentations ("Today I will be talking about") and giving them opportunities to practice the presentation with partners before getting in front of the class. • Continue to provide visual support and vocabulary development. • Correct errors that interfere with meaning, and pre-identify errors that will be corrected in student writing, such as verb-tense agreement. Only correct the errors agreed upon.

Language Stage	Strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may want to assist in improving pronunciation by asking a student to repeat key vocabulary and discussing how different languages have different sounds.
Intermediate Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key academic vocabulary and phrases and model them. Ask students to produce the language in class activities. Use graphic organizers and thinking maps and check to make sure the student is filling them in with details. Challenge the students to add more. Help the student make connections with new vocabulary by instructing him or her in the etymology of words or word families such as, "important, importance, importantly." Create assessments that give students an opportunity to present in English after they have an opportunity to practice in pairs or small groups. Introduce more academic skills, such as brainstorming, prioritizing, categorization, summarizing and compare and contrast. Ask students to identify vocabulary by symbols that show whether the student "knows it really well, kind of knows it, or doesn't know it at all." Help students focus on strategies to get the meaning of new words. Have a "guessing time" during silent reading where they circle words they don't know and write down their guess of the meaning. Check the results as a class. Introduce idioms and give examples of how to use them appropriately. For example, "Let's wind up our work." What's another way you could use the phrase "wind up?" Starting at this level, students need more correction/feedback, even on errors that do not directly affect meaning. They should be developing a more advanced command of syntax, pragmatics, pronunciation, and other elements that do not necessarily affect meaning but do contribute to oral fluency. It may also be helpful to discuss language goals with the student so you can assist in providing modeling and correction in specified areas.
Advanced Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students at this level are close to native language fluency and can interact well in a variety of situations. Continue to develop language skills as gaps arise by using the strategies listed above. Although the student may seem completely fluent, he or she still

Language Stage	Strategies
	<p>benefits from visual support, building on background knowledge, pre-teaching vocabulary and making connections between content areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer challenge activities to expand the student's vocabulary knowledge such as identifying antonyms, synonyms and the use of a thesaurus and dictionary.• Demonstrate effective note-taking and provide a template.• Offer error correction on academic work and on oral language. Because students at this stage have achieved near-native fluency, they benefit from support in fine-tuning their oral and written language skills.

Appendix B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS- BEST PRACTICES FOR IMMERSION TEACHERS

1. Please tell me about your teaching experience in immersion classes.
 - a. Prompts: How many years have you been teaching in the immersion setting? Where have you taught? Who were your students? What about the structure of your immersion program -how much time/what subjects taught in Spanish vs English? Do you co-teach?
2. What types of language arts curricula have you used in your immersion classroom?
 - a. Prompt: what are you using now? Have you found particular modifications that make the curriculum more effective? Which curriculum do you like best? Why? What have you found that doesn't work for you?
3. Can you briefly tell me about the curriculum you currently use?
 - a. Is it a standard commercial curriculum? Is it something you inherited or developed yourself?
 - b. What are its key features or attributes? How does it approach second language learning? If you developed it yourself, how do you decide what to include in this curriculum?
 - c. How well does this curriculum fit the needs of all your students?
 - i. Prompts: Have you found it more or less effective for, especially, your primarily English-speaking students? If most of your students are native English speakers do you change the curriculum? If so, how? Can you give me some examples? What about your Spanish speaking students?
4. If your curriculum is not working for your students' needs what are some ways you have adjusted it so all students can access it?
 - a. Prompts: Are there other ways you typically use to differentiate the work when needed? What have you tried that just doesn't work or does not work that well? How long have you used this curriculum- have you made any major changes as time progressed?
5. What supplemental materials do you use to scaffold your lessons, for example Teachers Pay Teachers, particular websites, etc.
6. What do you consider best practices when working with immersion students. What instructional strategies do you use most often, why?

7. What assessments are you using to track your students' progress?
8. What advice do you have for other immersion teachers (like me) who teach immersion classes with a majority of English speakers.
9. What additional supports/information would you find helpful for immersion teachers?
10. What has been most challenging moving to an online environment?

Appendix C

Spanish Resource guide

State-adopted curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maravillas (K-5) McGraw Hill • Canciones y Cuentos; Cancionero (K-2) National Geographic/Cengage
Published curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tesoros (K-6) McGraw Hill (standards Based) • Lectura (K-5) Houghton Mifflin (standards based) • Amigos (out of circulation)
Reading Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leer Naturalmente (1-4) https://www.readnaturally.com/product/read-naturally-masters-edition#custom187 • Estrellitas (K-2) https://estrellita.com/ • Heggerty (PK-2) https://www.heggerty.org/
Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raz-Kids (subscription) • Scholastic News (subscription) • edHelper.com (subscription) • Rockalingua (subscription/free) • Calico (subscription/free) • Teachers pay Teachers (paid/free) • GoNoodle (free)
Predictable Frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writer's Workshop • Novel study/Reader's workshop

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily 5 & 3
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