



Policies and Practices That Help Close the Achievement Gap for English Language Learners



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Major Points

- Attendance in high quality preschool improves outcomes for Hispanic children
- Dual language practices enhance these outcomes in BOTH English and Spanish
- Specific policies and practices can ensure better outcomes



Research on ELL

- Young children have to work hard to develop a second language
- Young English language learners can easily lose their first language
- Having a strong base in the home language facilitates learning English
- Some evidence indicates that bilingual children have higher IQs and do better in school
- Techniques commonly used with older children are unlikely to be effective with three- and four-year-olds



Gormley's Tulsa Pre-K Study

As a result of Pre-k attendance:

- Hispanic students improved in early literacy and mathematics
- Children of Mexican immigrants or from Spanish only homes made the most gains
- Being in a classroom with a Spanish-speaking teacher enhanced gains
- Gains were greater in English language tests, but children gained in both languages



Conclusions

“Preschool education has considerable potential to improve educational outcomes for Hispanic children.”
(Gormley, 2007)

www.crocus.georgetown.edu/reports/CROCUSworkingpaper11.pdf



Research on Abbott Preschool Classrooms in 2006

- 50 percent of the teachers who have Spanish-speaking children speak Spanish themselves
- The majority of classrooms have at least one adult who speaks Spanish
- In 2002, mostly used Spanish to give directions or reprimands
- In 2006, improvement on classroom observation measure from poor to good in “promoting the maintenance and development of children’s native language”



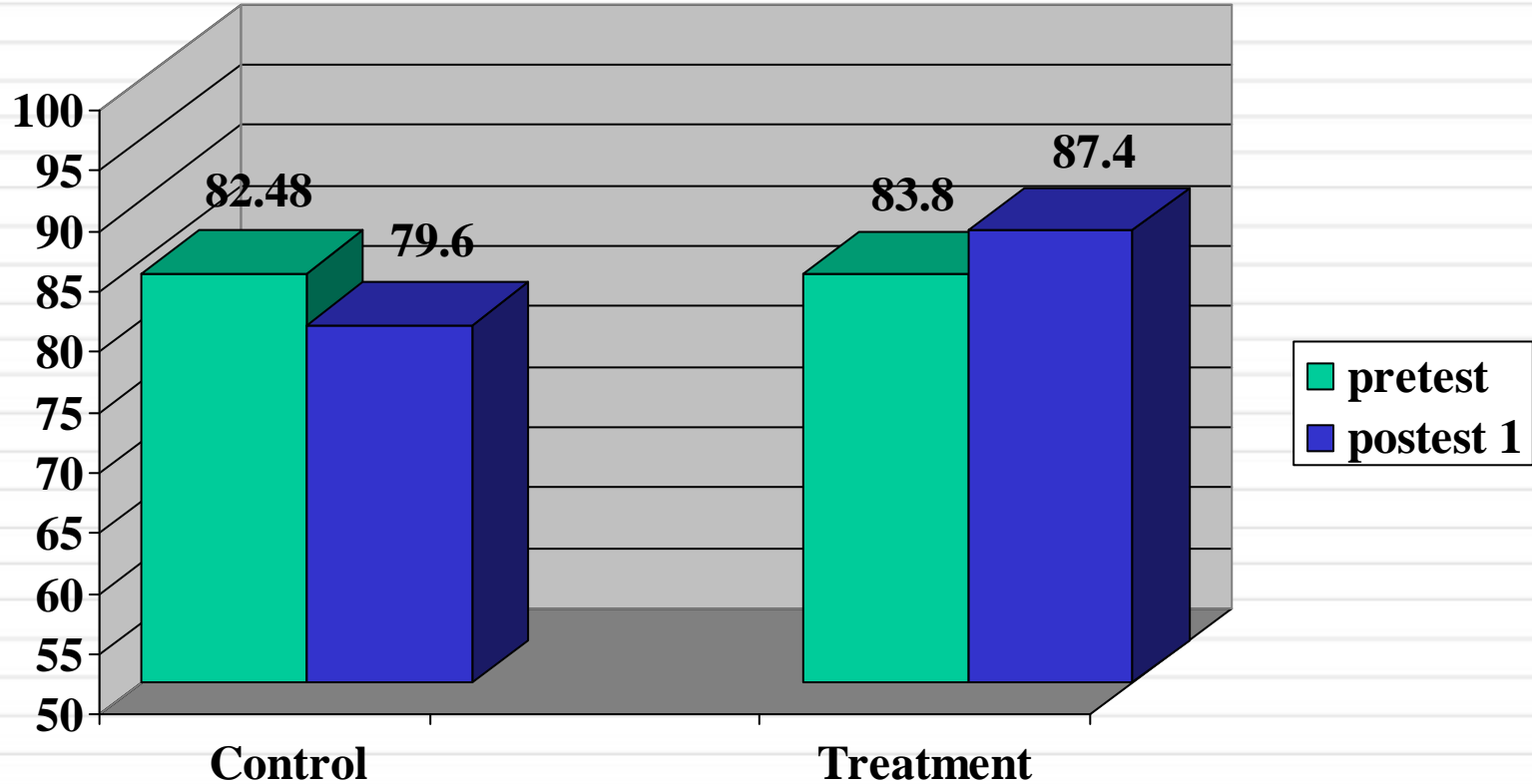
Study of Two-Way Immersion vs. English Only

(Barnett, Yarosz, Thomas, Jung, & Blanco, 2007)

- State-funded pre-k program in very low income, urban district
- High/Scope Curriculum
- Class size 15, teacher with BA and ECE, full school day, other supports
- TWI rotate between EI and SI every week



Two Way Immersion Vs English Immersion Programs: TVIP Scores





Conclusions

In a high quality preschool program:

- Both TWI and EI boosted the learning in early literacy and early math of children in English
- TWI also improved the Spanish language development of both native Spanish and native English speakers without losses in English
- Children in EI classrooms decreased proficiency in Spanish



Policies That Facilitate Bilingual Acquisition

States, school districts and other agencies should develop bilingual education plans that:

- Ensure that at least one member of teaching team speaks dominant L1
- Recruit, retain, create bilingual teachers (ASU, Union City, N.J., Passaic, N.J.)
- Provide professional development in effective strategies and in integrating other languages and cultures
- Implement TWI and dual language programs
- Help parents and the community understand the benefits of bilingualism



Effective Classroom Strategies

- Use of print and books in both English and native languages of children in room
- Themes and materials from the children's cultures
- Teach words within meaningful contexts and fun activities
- Songs/rhymes in both languages that repeat and teach sentence patterns
- Encourage children's use of their home language
- Facilitate interaction between children of both languages
- Offer parents suggestions about ways to encourage native language development at home



We Can Build a Better Future for Children



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