

# A CASE STUDY OF DUAL-LANGUAGE (ENGLISH/SPANISH) WRITING INSTRUCTION AND THE EFFECT IT HAS ON BILINGUAL STUDENT WRITING PERFORMANCE

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## Abstract

In dual-language programs, students often receive instruction in two languages for the same academic subjects, including writing skills. This double exposure may be helpful to bilingual students by reiterating and clarifying any possible doubts, or it may be detrimental to bilingual students by causing confusion due to different instructional strategies, lack of transfer between languages, and emphasis on different writing elements by the teachers of each program.

This case-study aims to analyze the structure and design of a dual-language elementary school in central Mexico to determine whether the current writing curriculum at this school is effective for the population of bilinguals through analysis of student writing samples, interviews with students and teachers, and classroom observations in both English and Spanish writing classes. We hope to contribute to understanding dual-language curriculum design and to suggest a writing program that ensures that bilinguals successfully acquire writing skills and strategies in both languages.

## บทคัดย่อ

ในหลักสูตรการเรียนการสอนสองภาษา นักเรียนมักจะได้รับคำสอนเป็นสองภาษาสำหรับการเรียนรายวิชาเดียวกัน รวมไปถึงทักษะการเขียน การได้รับสองภาษานี้อาจจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่อนักเรียนสองภาษาเพราะมีการกล่าวซ้ำและทำให้ข้อสงสัยการกล่าวซ้ำที่อาจเกิดขึ้นมีความชัดเจนหรืออาจจะเป็นภัยต่อนักเรียนสองภาษาเนื่องจากทำให้เกิดความสับสนจากกลยุทธ์การสอนหลาย ๆ

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แบบ ขาดการเชื่อมโยงระหว่างภาษาและขาดการเน้นองค์ประกอบของการเขียนโดยครูผู้สอนในแต่ละโปรแกรม วัตถุประสงค์ของกรณีศึกษานี้คือวิเคราะห์โครงสร้างและการออกแบบของโรงเรียนระดับประถมศึกษาที่ใช้โปรแกรมสองภาษาในภาคกลางของเม็กซิโกเพื่อตรวจสอบว่าหลักสูตรการเขียนในปัจจุบันมีประสิทธิภาพสำหรับนักเรียนสองภาษาหรือไม่ โดยการวิเคราะห์ตัวอย่างการเขียนของนักเรียน การสัมภาษณ์นักเรียนและครูผู้สอนและการสังเกตการสอนในชั้นเรียน ทั้งชั้นเรียนการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษและภาษาสเปน งานวิจัยนี้คาดว่าจะนำไปสู่ความเข้าใจในการออกแบบหลักสูตรสองภาษาและเสนอแนะหลักสูตรการเขียนที่จะทำให้มั่นใจได้ว่านักเรียนหลักสูตรสองภาษาจะประสบความสำเร็จในการเรียนรู้ทั้งด้านทักษะและกลยุทธ์การเขียนทั้งสองภาษา

This question evolved from informal observations of student writing projects in a private Spanish/English bilingual school in central Mexico where students receive instruction in both their native and non-native language. As a case-study, the investigation of this program includes an extensive analysis of the student body, the instructors of both programs, as well as the curriculum and evaluation tools in place. Initially, it appeared that the students' writing abilities within the two languages were unequal in terms of structure, coherence, and mechanics. In many cases their abilities appeared stronger in their non-native language. From this observation, one may question how the curriculum design of the dual-language academic program is organized, and why the students appear stronger in their non-native language. A thorough investigation of this program will allow for a more general view of dual-language programs internationally, and the success of this style of curriculum design.

In dual-language programs, students often receive instruction in both languages for the same academic subjects, such as writing skills. It is unclear, however,

whether this double exposure is helpful to bilingual students by reiterating and clarifying any possible doubts; or, whether it is detrimental to bilingual students by causing confusion due to different instructional strategies, lack of transfer between languages, and emphasis on different writing elements by the teachers of each program.

The specific objective of this study is to analyze the current writing curriculum at this school to propose, if necessary, accommodations or implications for similar dual-language schools. The hope of this analysis is to suggest a dual-language writing program design that ensures that the students successfully acquire writing skills and strategies in both languages.

## DUAL-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Will a student in a bilingual education setting acquire equal literacy skills in both languages? Dual-language programs<sup>1</sup> aim to provide students from diverse language backgrounds equal opportunities for language development in two different languages. The basic premise of these pro-

grams is that students from two language backgrounds study content areas through both languages in integrated classes.

The main goal of dual-language education is additive bilingualism, academic achievement through two languages, and cultural pluralism (Freeman, 1998, p. 5). Another goal of dual-language bilingual programs is to cultivate biculturalism and biliteracy. At the same time, dual-language programs promote enhanced awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity. In these programs, the students are taught literacy and content through two languages. The design of dual-language programs around the world varies. The number of students from each language background, the number of courses offered in each language, and the allocation of each language within the curriculum are just some of the variations present in dual-language education curriculum design (NDLC, 2010).

The Dual-language Education model (DLE) was created based on four conceptual and theoretical principles. Lindholm-Leary (2001) explained that the implementation of these four basic principles was required to meet the academic and language needs of all students. The four principles included by Lindholm-Leary (2001) were 1) effective schools, 2) social context of language education, 3) language development, and 4) relationship between language and thought.

The social context of language education differs greatly between institutions. The prestige of each language, the population of speakers of each language, the use of each language in society, among other variables, will affect the context of each language. The social context of language

education is specific to each institution and requires analysis of each program. Howard & Rogers (2003) explained four main types of dual-language education programs. The *developmental bilingual program* is designed to maintain a minority language. Typically, in these programs, the students are native speakers of the “partner language”, or less dominant language of society. In a developmental bilingual program, the goal of the educators is to encourage the maintenance and use of the non-dominant language to prevent its loss. In a *two-way immersion* program the students represent equal populations of the two languages of instruction. In these programs, there is a balance of two languages in both the student population and course materials utilized. A large population of students from each language group makes up the student body in a two-way immersion program. In a *foreign language immersion program* most of the students will be native-speakers of one language group. In English language speaking countries these schools will have a dominant number of English speakers whose goal in attending this style of school is to acquire a foreign language. Finally, a *heritage language program* mainly has students of the dominant language of the society; however, the students in these programs often come from families where another language is the native-language. The concept behind this design is often to encourage the preservation of a language that might otherwise die if the children do not become comfortable speakers of this language. Considering these differences, the social context of language education will greatly change the structure and design of the curriculum

within a dual-language program.

Language development in a dual-language program takes into careful consideration the language of the input of the instructors and the use of the languages by the students. Lindholm-Leary (2001) mentions that “considerable research has been conducted on language input in both first and second language acquisition to determine whether or not input influences language development” (p.50). Her discussion proceeds to mention that most research on child bilingualism encourages that the bilingual keep the two languages as distinct as possible in order to promote high levels of bilingualism. The languages are often separated in the bilingual’s experience in reference to different individuals (mother speaks one language, father speaks another), environments (school one language, home another language), or time (one language in the morning, another language in the afternoon). This organization of languages is often encouraged for child bilinguals as it helps the children “to distinguish the two languages and provide consistent rules for which language is to be used in a particular setting with particular individuals” (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, p.51).

Considering this idea, it is evident that another objective of dual-language instruction is to encourage the students to adequately separate the rules of their spoken languages in order to successfully acquire skills in each language. To emphasize this acquisition of rules and skills, Lindholm-Leary (2001) suggests that the “two languages are kept distinct and never mixed during instruction in the early years of language acquisition” (p.51). Cummins

(2000), however, explained that while it is important to avoid any unplanned, random mixing of languages – as it is important to demonstrate appropriate use of each language in oral and written contexts – that some mixing of languages should be allowed in these programs. Cummins mentions that, “by not creating a context for bilingual language exploration in our classrooms, we miss out on one of the most powerful tools that children in such programs have to develop their literacy and awareness of languages” (2000, p.21).

The Separate Underlying Proficiency hypothesis claims that bilinguals develop the skills in each language independently and store them separately in the brain. This would mean that any efforts to develop proficiency in one language would not facilitate the development of the same skills in another language, and actually could impede the development of these skills due to a limited amount of space in the brain. The Separate Underlying Proficiency contrasts the Common Underlying Proficiency – which claims that a common storage space exists in the brain where skills and knowledge in one language is not independent of the skills acquired in a second language. Instead, the knowledge acquired in one language will thereby facilitate learning in any additional languages (Cummins, 2000; Lindholm-Leary, 2006).

The controversy of these differing views of language transfer is significant in the analysis of a dual-language program, as often the courses are allocated to one language versus another. If we agree with the Common Underlying Proficiency hypothesis that the skills acquired in either language can be accessed by the alterna-

tive language, then the division of course material among language courses should have no impact on the student learning. However, if we agree with the Separate Underlying Proficiency hypothesis that the skills acquired in one language do not facilitate the use of these skills in the other language, and could potentially impede knowledge development, then the use of one language versus another in a dual-language program could potentially be detrimental to student learning and academic growth. For this study, both theories have been considered.

As previously mentioned, the design of each dual-language program will depend substantially on the institution itself. The population of students, the availability of materials and instructors in each language, the state or federal curriculum requirements, among other variables, can influence the organization of the academic structure in place at each school. The school in this case study is located in central Mexico. The design of this institution's curriculum is based on the Mexican Secretary of Public Education, the International Baccalaureate organization, and the philosophical choices put in place by the institution itself.

Two major areas of importance in the design of a dual-language curriculum have been emphasized: 1) integrated language arts instruction, and the 2) separation of languages for instruction (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; NDLC, 2010). The recommendation of an integrated language arts program explains the need to provide language arts (literacy) classes in both the native and target language for all students. Accordingly, the curriculum should be designed so that

it is integrated with all academic curricula. This claim has caused some controversy as opponents believe that the first language of literacy in bilingual students should be their dominant (native) language. However, if the skills are acquired in only one language, is it possible that they will be able to transfer these abilities adequately to any other languages?

The second element recommended for the design of an effective dual-language program is the separation of languages for instruction. As opposed to language mixing<sup>2</sup> (code switching), which Turnbull (2009) and Gluth (2002) suggest are an important skill in bilingual communities, Lindholm-Leary (2001) suggests that separating the languages of instruction in dual-language courses is more appropriate for the acquisition of skills. She explains that although one cannot say that mixing is harmful, "it appears that sustained periods of monolingual instruction in each language help to promote adequate language development" (p.68).

The recommendation that language arts skills are taught in both languages of instruction in a dual-language program leads to a variety of doubts. Some of the major questions concerning this suggestion include "should children be taught literacy in their native-language first, and then have the second-language added later?" or "can children be taught literacy simultaneously in two languages or will they be confused?" among other concerns (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, p.70). Genesee (1995) describes two types of immersion programs. *Total immersion programs* encourage literacy training in the dominant language (native-language) after training in the non-dominant

(second-language) has begun. A *partial immersion program* contrastingly will include literacy training in both languages simultaneously. In his research, Genesee (1995) claimed that during the primary grades when no English (native-language) literacy instruction was provided, the students were usually behind their peers who had learned literacy in an all-English (native-language) program (p.127). Considering these results, Genesee (1995) suggests that learning literacy in both languages simultaneously in the primary years of schooling will prevent students from falling behind academically in either of the two languages.

Finally, in the organization of language arts courses, it is important that the teachers possess a high level of language proficiency to provide “cognitively stimulating instruction” (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, p.65). Realistically, a teacher cannot expect a high level proficiency in their students if they do not act as a model in this aspect. If the teacher does not understand both languages of instruction, according to Lindholm-Leary (2001), then the teacher “cannot respond appropriately in the second language to a child’s utterances in their native language. In this case, comprehensible input, as well as linguistic equity in the classroom may be severely impaired” (p.65).

Content and literacy instruction are “always assumed interdependent” across languages (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, p.56). By suggesting that this interdependency exists across languages, it would appear that reading instruction in one language would result in the same abilities in the second language. As long as the bilingual has ac-

quired any differing sound/symbol relationships in the additional language, the student would develop cognitive/academic proficiency across languages. This opinion demonstrates that positive transfer exists when referring to literacy skills. If that is the case, then why must language arts be presented in both languages?

## OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

The recommendations for an effective dual-language program raise some important questions concerning the most appropriate design of dual-language education models. Can one presume students in monolingual courses within a dual-language program will transfer their skills to other languages? Will simultaneous exposure to literacy, or any academic courses, in two languages complicate or facilitate the acquisition of skills? Will the manner in which child bilinguals distinguish between two languages influence the potential transfer of skills? Is simultaneous exposure or a clear separation of two languages necessary for adequate language development? Should students and teachers be allowed to language mix within a dual-language environment? Should all instructors be required to maintain proficiency in both languages?

By analyzing the current structure of the bilingual writing program, as well as the theoretical background of its design, this project’s goal is to analyze the writing program of one dual-language school to ensure that the students successfully acquire writing skills and strategies in the two languages of instruction in order to con-

tribute to the literature available concerning dual-language programs.

As English is increasingly becoming the most widely spoken language of the world, dual-language programs using English as a partner language are becoming quite popular internationally. As dual-language education allows for a substantial degree of freedom in curriculum design, the aim of this study is to provide a critical analysis of literacy instruction in a dual-language program to provide educational implications for other dual-language programs internationally.

The project was completed as a case-study of one bilingual elementary school. Although the investigation focuses on this school only, the conclusions determined through this project will add to the current literature about dual-language programs and curriculum design in bilingual schools. The school selected for this study is part of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IB). The IB organization aims to “develop inquiring, knowledgeable, caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect” ([www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org), Mission Statement). The program includes a bilingual educational structure with an inquiry based curriculum. IB schools have the challenge of combining state or, in some cases, federal curricula into the IB framework.

At this school, half of the students’ courses are in English and half are in Spanish. The Spanish language courses are taught in a designated Spanish classroom with one instructor, while the English courses are taught in a separate classroom by a different, English-speaking instructor.

Although the institution offers classes from preschool through high school, this case study will specifically focus on the elementary school. This school was selected due to the unique organization of the various academic properties present.

This school offers two separately designed academic programs with distinct curriculums: the English program and the Spanish program, which work together in the IB framework. Based on the set curriculum created by the school administration, certain courses are taught in English (science, social studies, English language, reading and writing). Other courses are taught in Spanish (history, civics, mathematics, Spanish, reading and writing) using the curriculum put in place by the Secretary of Public Education of Puebla, Mexico.

While academic content courses are taught by both English and Spanish speaking teachers, other courses (art, music, computer skills, and library skills) are taught by specialists in their field. As part of the IB curriculum, these courses are taught bilingually by the same instructor, meaning that depending on the unit of study, particular assignment, or the specific week of the investigation, the instructors will determine which language to use with the students. The fact that certain courses taught monolingually while other courses are taught bilingually<sup>3</sup> is an interesting element in this case study. It appears that there is the possibility for courses to be taught bilingually by the same instructor, yet literacy is taught by two separate instructors.

This design raises a question as to whether two instructors teaching the same material could create difficulties for the

students. The current design involves students' exposure to similar skills through instruction in two different languages, by two different instructors – likely utilizing two different educational philosophies. The emphasis on specific elements will change from teacher to teacher. If the students have not completely understood a technique or comprehended the execution of a skill in one setting, it is possible that the second exposure to this information will further complicate their understanding as opposed to clarifying it. The students in this current design are exposed to the same skills and strategies, as well as some of the same grammatical, rhetoric and other structures, from two different instructors which could therefore imply two different teaching philosophies, methods, approaches, and techniques. One is compelled to question whether two separate writing courses are necessary in this school, or could the programs be combined to create a course taught by one bilingual instructor as in the other artistic classes taught at this IB school. However, the aim of this school is to provide students with a well-balanced education covering several important topics in two separate languages, allowing them to acquire both academic and language skills as prescribed by the IB organization.

The artistic classes: art, music, computer, and library are taught in a bilingual setting while academic classes: science, social studies, math, history are taught monolingually in either English or Spanish. However, it is interesting to note that while separate classes for some traditional academic courses are taught by the English and Spanish instructors, literacy is covered

in both programs. Was this decision made in order to strengthen and fortify these skills? Was this decision made because academic writing differs substantially in the two languages? Was it due to being unsure of which language class would best instill the required strategies and skills? Or due to a lack of communication between the two programs, was this decision due to inconsistency in the two academic programs – did they simply not realize that the same information was being taught to their students twice?

It is possible that this opportunity to learn the skills in separate environments in two languages allows the students to understand the concepts more completely. However, it is also conceivable that the students are confused by this complicated combination of languages and styles while studying the same skills.

A pilot study, along with informal discussions and interviews with teachers and administrators at the school suggest that the students in this school are unequal in their writing abilities in their two languages. Conversations with the school principal, teachers of both English and Spanish classes, and university professors of the school's alumni seem to suggest that the students are stronger writers in **English**, the non-native language of the majority of the students, when evaluated using this institution's grading expectations. The teachers expressed that the students are capable of using proper writing conventions, clear thought development, and creativity in writing while using their second language (English), yet, they do not perform using the same elements of writing in their native-language (Spanish) writing

class.

The performance of students in their two writing classes suggests a lack of transfer of skills between the two programs. We claim that the students have not been transferring the writing strategies acquired in their English class to their Spanish class due to their compartmentalization of skills acquired in the English class, which are only utilized during English assignments and activities. Apparently, students do not realize that the skills are also useful for other courses, or they are unable to transfer those abilities from one language to another. Additionally, it appears that students are hindered by this particular curriculum design, as demonstrated through the lack of application of these writing skills adequately across languages.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The focus of this study rests on one main research question and a supplemental question based on the results of question one.

1. What effect does dual-language writing instruction have on student writing performance?

Based on the answer to question one, what are the suggested changes for the current curriculum design of the dual-language writing program?

The aim of research question one is to determine if, in fact, the writing programs in place at this school encourage the acquisition of writing skills for the students, and to see if the program as it is currently organized is helping or hurting the students' conceptual understanding of writing strat-

egies and skills in either or both of their languages of instruction. During this part of the analysis, various elements will be considered, such as the students' writing performance, the percentage of oral target language use during writing instruction, student and teacher preference for language of instruction and production, as well as the instructional methods maintained by the instructors during the writing course. The aim of the supplemental research question is to determine what changes would be most appropriate to provide these students with the strategies necessary to become successful writers in both languages, based on the investigation results and previous bilingual education theory. By determining these adjustments, we hope to provide the bilingual education research community with suggestions for improving writing programs, and ultimately students' academic performance.

## METHODOLOGY

Following discussions with the school principal and program coordinators along with the researcher and project director, we gave the students a prompt to "*Write an essay describing your best friend*". We hoped that the students would feel freedom to write without limitation as it was a topic to which they could personally relate.

The students also completed a survey that questioned their preference of language for writing and for input in their writing classes. The survey asked straightforward questions with yes or no responses about languages of preference for writing,

speaking, instruction, and other open-ended questions related to their experience in both English and Spanish classes.

The results of an initial pilot study were analyzed to see whether the small number of students would imply that the students were stronger writers in one language versus the other, or whether they were equally demonstrating their writing abilities in English and Spanish. In this initial study, the students' writing samples were given a numeric value based on the *Virginia Spanish Partial-Immersion Rubrics for Writing in English and Spanish for Grades 1-5*<sup>4</sup> which analyzed the student performance based on composition, sentence formation, usage, and mechanics. The results of this narrow sample showed that 50% of the students demonstrated superior writing abilities in English over Spanish, 40% of the students performed better in Spanish, and 10% performed equally in both languages. These results showed that the students show more capability, although slight, in their non-native language.

Upon further analysis, the initial study also suggested that the students performed specifically higher in the *mechanics* of English writing which included the use of indentations, punctuation, capital letters, and proper spelling. However, the use of voice in their composition skills, which included descriptive vocabulary, figurative language, and sense of audience, became more strongly defined in their Spanish writing. From these results, it seems that the students have more completely acquired mechanical skills in their English writing - perhaps due to the explicit instruction provided in the English curriculum, yet they are more creative, and use a more advanced

style in Spanish writing - possibly due to the larger vocabulary and complex verb structures more available to them in their native-language.

This initial study was limited by a number of different elements. To begin with, the subjectivity in selecting the participants may have provided a selection that was less uniform than anticipated. The teachers of each class were asked to apply the pilot project to the stronger writers in their class. By asking for the strongest writer in each grade, the researchers aimed to demonstrate a clearer representation of the particular grade level and distinguish differences vertically across the curriculum. If all of the students were seen as strong writers in the eyes of their teachers, then the comparison would be more equal across grade levels - as opposed to the inclusion of a very low second grader compared to a very high fourth grader.

This selection process was unrealistic, however, and was not a true cross section of students in the dual-language program. In this instance, each teacher may have had a different idea of what a "strong writer" was, and therefore the selection of participants was not uniform. At the same time, asking the teachers to select the best writers in their class skewed the results of the pilot study as it was not a realistic sample of each grade level's performance as only the higher performing students were included. To prevent this error in the larger case study, a random table of numbers was used to select the students according to their school assigned class list number.

This study focused on two elements of bilingual student writing to determine whether the curriculum of this institution

is adequate for encouraging the successful acquisition of writing skills in both academic languages in the dual-language program. The research focused on both the process and the product of student writing in an effort to determine whether the students in this particular dual-language program are acquiring the writing skills necessary to successfully meet writing standards and expectations determined by the different programs. The goal behind this design is to compare the two writing programs and student performance within the programs to determine whether a reorganization of curriculum or program standards is necessary for better accessing students' successful writing production in both languages. The results and analysis of the dual-language program design will help to serve others in the field of bilingual education as it will provide a different perspective towards dual-language programs and a possible organization of different academic subjects.

The design of this study consists of three parts and includes the participation of students and teachers in all three research elements. The students completed writing samples in both English and Spanish to demonstrate their writing abilities. The students also completed a language preference survey to show their feelings towards language and style of instruction, as well as language of production, to determine whether or not this preference influences their writing production. In addition, teacher surveys concerning their style and language of writing instruction along with some teacher observations were used to analyze the process leading to student writing production.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

This project includes 30 students, 10 each from grades six, four, and two of the elementary school. The students have been selected from the elementary level due to the homogeneous structure of academic courses present at this level. Unlike in the upper school where students are placed based on proficiency exams, elementary students all participate in the same courses. The elementary school principal gave consent for student participation in this study on behalf of her teachers and students – all students and teachers included in this project completed surveys and samples anonymously.

There are six groups at each grade level at this school. There are three English teachers in each level and three Spanish teachers in each level. The groups are created heterogeneously at the beginning of each school year to include an equal number of male and female students in each class, as well as students of all academic levels. The class lists are created based on the recommendations of teachers from previous grade levels with suggestions from parents considered as well. The class lists are arranged alphabetically and each student is assigned a list number based on his or her placement alphabetically.

To include representatives from each of the three English and Spanish teachers from each level, three complete groups (approximately 25 students in each group) of the second, fourth and sixth grade (groups A, C, and E) were asked to complete the survey and writing samples. The first few questions of the student surveys asked details about the students' family

makeup (languages spoken at home, parents' native languages) and the students' experience as language learners. These questions were designed for later use in separating a uniform selection of students for inclusion in the project. The remainder of the questions focused on the students' feelings, experiences, and preferences as a dual-language student.

Following the administration of the writing samples and surveys, ten students from each level were selected as participants in the analysis. The students chosen for this study were selected using a random list of numbers and the pre-assigned class list numbers of each grade level. The samples were arranged in alphabetical order A, C, then E. Within each group the samples were arranged by student list number (written by each student on the top of the page for organization purposes). Using a random table of numbers, including numbers 1 to 75, the samples were chosen. If the student marked that he or she had attended the school since kindergarten, did not receive any additional language or writing support outside of the classroom, and was a native Spanish speakers from Mexican parents, then his or her sample was included in the selection. If the answers to the initial questions did not coincide with the above mentioned description, the next number on the random table of numbers was reviewed. It was important that all students met these criteria as it provided a more uniform sample of students. The students have all attended this school since kindergarten, which suggests that the language skills of all students should be relatively equal. The students have been exposed to English and Spanish

language instruction for many years. With English taught 90% of the day in kindergarten and 50% of the day in elementary, and Spanish the language of the home, the students are considered proficient in both languages.

The youngest students included in this project were chosen from grade two due to the principal's recommendation. Her opinion was that first grade students had not acquired sufficient reading and writing skills in either language to be evaluated in those areas. The fourth and sixth grade students were chosen to demonstrate student performance at the beginning (2), middle (4) and end (6) of their elementary experience. These students were chosen to demonstrate a larger, more visible growth pattern from each level to the next, as two years of study are included before each evaluation point.

## WRITING SAMPLES

The students in groups A, C, and E from grades two, four, and six were asked to provide a sample of writing from both their English and Spanish writing classes. Students provided a relatively natural sample of writing since the scenario was included by their teacher as part of their typical class routine. The students were asked to answer the following writing prompt by their Spanish or English teacher during their own class time: "*In your best writing, explain what you like best about your English class! If you need more space, you may use the other side of this paper*". And, for the Spanish class, the same prompt was used "*Redacta de la mejor manera lo*

*que más te gusta sobre la clase de español. Si necesitas más espacio, utiliza la parte de atrás de esta hoja”.*

The writing samples have been evaluated using the grading standards provided by the English and Spanish departments. The reason for selecting the internal rubrics, as opposed to a rubric such as the *VA Spanish Partial-Immersion Rubrics for Writing in English and Spanish for Grades 1-5* or a new rubric created for this project, was to determine whether the students are meeting the standards presented by their academic institution and their teachers, given the specific criteria. The writing was awarded a numeric value based on the grading standards of their department. The students English and Spanish writing were then compared to establish whether the students have met the criteria set for them in English or in Spanish.

The student writing samples were all evaluated by Spanish and English teachers from their grade level. The teachers are educators in the school trained to use the evaluation tools created by the institution. Each of the teachers graded the assignments according to their grade level expectations assigning a numeric score of 1-10 or a letter grade (See description in Results) as prescribed by their department.

The student writing samples provided information concerning the first research question for this proposed thesis: *What effect does dual-language writing instruction have on the acquisition of writing skills?* Using the comparison of Spanish and English writing samples, this project aims to show whether or not the students perform adequately in their separate writing classes.

## **STUDENT WRITING PREFERENCE SURVEYS**

Following the writing samples, the students completed a survey to determine their preference in writing production and instruction. The survey was completed in Spanish as it is the students' native (home) language.

During the pilot study, the student surveys were written in both English and Spanish, alternating which language was written first on every other question. This survey was presented to fifteen students (five from each grade) in English and fifteen students in Spanish. Upon review of the pilot, it was clear that the language of the survey did not influence the students' responses as the answers were overall quite similar regardless of the language of the survey, which suggests, therefore, that providing the survey in Spanish would not influence the students' answers. As Spanish is the students' native-language, the surveys were given in Spanish for this project. The design of the survey changed slightly after the initial study. The survey was changed to include only multiple choice questions such as “En que idioma piensas que escribes mejor? (In which language do you think that you write better?) instead of open-ended questions. Multiple choice responses are quicker to administer as the students are expected to choose one answer from several predefined choices, and therefore can maintain the students' attention and interest for the full survey. The responses are also more straightforward to code as the answers are limited to only specific responses. This design allows for a smaller margin of error and clearer per-

centages of student preference. The questions on the writing preference survey serve to provide supplemental information concerning the students' writing production.

### **TEACHER LANGUAGE AND STYLE OF INSTRUCTION SURVEY**

This case study differs from the initial study as the steps involved in the research method were increased to include more information provided from the teachers themselves. The teachers from grades two, four, and six whose students were included in this project completed a survey of questions about their language of instruction, individual philosophy, and style of instruction. Each teacher operates her classroom based on personal experiences and feelings about which topics and subjects are most important and require more time and attention. A teacher's interest in certain topics will also influence the manner in which she instructs those subjects in her classroom.

One purpose for these surveys is to determine whether the target language of their class is indeed the language of instruction, and if not, for what reason. In addition, the surveys act to answer the question of whether parts of the class are taught using that alternative (non-target) language, and whether the teacher chooses to switch languages based on a particular reason. During this survey, teachers have also provided information about the techniques used during writing instruction to determine whether the techniques influence student preference or proficiency, and to see whether the techniques are similar or dif-

ferent in the English and Spanish departments. The results of this project may reflect that emotion and enthusiasm for one topic versus another may influence a student's performance in a particular subject regardless of the language chosen for instruction. The teachers included in this project were told that the information would be used in a project about dual-language writing performance; they were not given any other information about the project to allow for the most natural responses and behaviors.

### **CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS**

In addition to the teacher surveys, some of the teachers were included in a series of classroom observations. Observation notes were completed for each period of observation and compiled into an observation journal. During the periods of observation, student behavior, student participation and comments, the teachers' language choice, classroom arrangement, academic materials, and activities, among other elements, were included in the observation records.

One representative teacher from grades two, four, and six in Spanish and English were chosen as observation subjects. Six teachers were observed (three from the English department and three from the Spanish department) to characterize the behavior of teachers and students in a typical classroom. Each teacher was observed during writing class in four sessions of thirty minutes. The observations have been used to supplement information provided by the teachers in their surveys in order to

provide a completely accurate portrayal of the process leading to student writing production.

The individual instructional approaches used by the observed teachers of English and Spanish courses were considered to determine whether the instructional techniques are responsible for any discrepancies as opposed to the language used in the class. These observations were used to determine whether the use of different activities for the acquisition of writing skills are responsible for potential inequalities in writing abilities as opposed to the language of each class.

The elements of this project's design were used together to provide the best picture of the students' writing process and production in both Spanish and English classes. Considering language of production and input as the most important independent variable, the student writing samples were used to determine whether a discrepancy exists between student writing abilities in Spanish and English. Further analysis and the inclusion of the student preference surveys have helped to answer the question of why.

To answer questions concerning the other independent variables such as language of teaching instruction, style of teaching, and writing activities, the teacher surveys were used as an additional resource. To determine the reasoning behind student performance inconsistencies (if any), the teacher observations and survey responses were considered. For example, if the use of mostly Spanish during the English class is noted, yet the students prefer the English course, it may suggest that the teaching style and techniques (activi-

ties, games, writing prompts) or another independent variable are responsible for student preference as opposed to simply the language of instruction.

The writing samples were analyzed using the school grading expectations for the English and Spanish departments. The teachers, trained in the grading scale for their department, evaluated the students to determine whether or not they have met the department standards. The samples were awarded a numeric score based on the school grading system. Upon completion of the individual evaluation, the students' results were compared within the two departments, as well as vertically across the grade levels. The goal of this analysis is to determine in which program the students are more uniformly meeting the standards and if there is a certain point in their primary experience when this success changes.

## **TRIANGULATION OF RESEARCH METHODS**

The design of this research methodology creates a triangulation effect for analysis of the information gathered. The research consists of three major elements: student writing samples, classroom observations, and surveys completed by students and teachers. The three elements will be used to supplement each other to determine whether the students are stronger at achieving the writing standards in one language or not, and if so, whether this inconsistency is due to student or teacher preferences, or techniques used in one class or the other.

The three methods are intended to be multi-directionally influential on one another. The student samples have been used as evidence of possible equalities or discrepancies among writing production in the students' two academic languages. The student and teacher survey responses have been used to determine whether a preference of some kind is responsible for the achievements recorded from the student writing samples. The classroom observations have been used as a supplement to student writing samples and survey responses as further evidence confirming or denying similarities or differences observed in writing samples, as well as the opinions expressed in survey responses.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In consideration of the question "What effect does dual-language writing instruction have on student writing performance?" we expected one of three possible answers. Upon completing the investigation and analysis, we anticipated that students would be a) more successful in accomplishing the standards of the Spanish program, b) more successful in accomplishing the standards of the English program, or c) equally successful in accomplishing standards provided in the Spanish and English programs. Using the student writing samples in the two languages of instruction, the goal of the research was to compare student performance in writing, according to the grading rubrics of the institution, to determine which of the above mentioned outcomes was achieved by the participants included in this research project.

The results of these samples have been compared within each grade level (second, fourth and sixth) to see whether the students are stronger in one language versus the other at one specific point in their education, vertically between grade levels to determine if there is a point in development when the students' performance changes, and between the two programs overall to determine whether the students are generally more advanced in one language or the other.

Since the participants included in the research represent a uniform population of students who have not attended special classes in either language and have been at this particular school since Kindergarten 1, the results of the writing sample represent the general production of students in the institution.

The curriculum of this school appears unequal in two distinct areas: the design of the course materials, and the grading systems within the two programs. As a dual-language program, it seems peculiar that the two departments should operate so differently. These distinctions in program design could explain any discrepancies in student performance. As their courses function in dissimilar ways, it may not be so logical for the students to transfer material acquired in one course to the other. The course materials in the two departments of this school are designed in different manners. The Spanish program operates under a curriculum set by the Secretary of Public Education. The textbooks, assignments, grading system, and report card structure are all assigned by the government of the state. The families and students of the school are aware that these

grades are reported to the state as the students' official grade level achievements. The students are evaluated by the government during a weeklong standardized test each school year to determine whether or not they have achieved the state standards in their curriculum.

The English department materials, on the other hand, are designed internally by the staff and coordinators of the primary school. The materials in this program are designed based on the population of children at this particular school. The assignments, resources, and grading scale were all created with the unique dual-language program structure and students in mind. The materials in this program allow for more flexibility as they can be changed or adapted based on the student body. This fact may be seen as both a positive and negative aspect of the program's arrangement as the materials are geared towards the students at hand. However, it is possible that the materials are not demanding enough to encourage greater accomplishments overall.

Another issue encountered during this research is the fact that the two programs use different grading scales. It is confusing for the observer, for the teaching personnel, and most importantly, for the students, that the dual-language program maintains two separate grading systems. These two grading systems not only utilize different symbols for grading, but they are representations of two distinct educational philosophies – qualitative grading and quantitative grading.

In the Spanish department, the students are graded objectively using a 1 to 10 grading system prescribed by the Secretary of

Public Education in the State of Puebla. All assignments are awarded a numeric value based on the number of correct items present. In terms of writing, the teachers determine the objectives for each activity (spelling, grammar, content, fluency, etc.) and subtract points for mistakes or missing elements. However, a written, predetermined rubric of the expectations for writing assignments in each grade does not exist. This could cause confusion for students when writing as they do not know what is expected of them as a second, fourth, or sixth grade writer. In this school, a 10 represents an assignment in which no mistakes were found. The grades progressively go lower based on the presence of more errors according to the assignment's proposed objectives with a 5 representing a project with many mistakes – essentially a failing grade.

The English department uses a different grading system completely. In this department, the students are graded qualitatively. An internally designed rubric that explains grade level expectations for all subjects in their English class including writing is given at the beginning of the school year to all students. The rubric includes a text explaining what is expected of the students in their grade level.

The students are then awarded a letter grade that is based upon the quality of their work that is unrelated to a numeric value. The rubric allows for some subjectivity on behalf of the teacher as terms such as "some", "many", or "most of the time" are used to describe the presence of student errors. The rubric, therefore, could also present issues for student performance as the student work is graded based on a gen-

eral understanding of quality as opposed to a specific type or number of errors.

In the English department in the lower grades of the primary school (1, 2, 3, 4), the students can obtain an ST (strong), a PR (proficient), an IP (In Progress), or an AC (Area of Concern). The final two years of primary school (5 and 6) the students are graded on a five point scale including OS (Outstanding), as the highest possible grade, followed by ST (Strong), PR (Proficient), IP (In Progress), and AC (Area of Concern).

While both grading systems are suggested based on educational theory and research, it is a concern that the two programs operate in drastically different manners – one in the traditional quantitative system, and the other in a more objective qualitative system. The varied structure of the departments at this school could result in discrepancies in student performance as their design does not foster an environment for skill transfer between programs as they are portrayed as completely unrelated to one another.

The variables affecting the outcome of these writing samples are numerous. The unequal performance could be based on many elements. One possible reason that the students could be performing better in the English department is due to the instructional methods in the English classrooms, interest in the language itself, or based on the written objectives of the department. It is possible that the students are experiencing a teaching strategy that differs from their Spanish classrooms that more adequately achieves the program objectives.

Interestingly, according to the student

preference surveys, the preference of the students towards language of input is not consistent with their personal interest in language production; however, this result is coherent with the students' performance. The majority of the students (50%) prefer that their teachers speak English. Thirty percent (30%) of the students prefer that their teachers speak both English and Spanish, with the least amount of students (20%) preferring the use of Spanish as the language of input.

## CONCLUSIONS

According to the results of this investigation, we suggest a more appropriate writing program is needed to adequately attend to this population's needs. Before beginning this investigation, we predicted, depending on which of three possible outcomes that the evidence would point toward, that certain changes to the writing program could be necessary. If the students demonstrated success in the writing assignments according to the standards designed by both the English and Spanish departments at this institution, it would suggest that no change would be necessary for the writing program. This result would demonstrate that the students are meeting the established criteria for each writing course and no change to the current design is necessary.

A second possible outcome was that the students would best acquire the skills and strategies for successful writing by hearing the information only once from only one instructor. This accommodation would mean eliminating writing from ei-

ther the English or Spanish curriculum so as to avoid confusion from the double exposure. In this writing course, it would be the responsibility of the instructor to explicitly teach writing skills that the students understand can be transferred between languages.

A final possibility, as a potential outcome following this research project, was a new writing course designed to be taught using equal percentages of each language – as in other artistic courses at this primary school. In this type of course, a bilingual writing instructor will provide the students with the necessary practice and tools to effectively perform in either of the two languages. Equal opportunity for practice in English and in Spanish will be provided to the students as they are encouraged to utilize the same skills while performing in either language.

## **RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS**

The information provided by the four features of this research design was compiled to answer the question “What are the suggested changes for the current curriculum design of the dual-language writing program?”

With regard to student writing performance across grade levels in both English and Spanish, the children’s abilities in Spanish from second grade to sixth grade gradually decrease in quality according to the grades assigned to their work by the Spanish department. The students were most successful in Spanish writing in second grade, slightly less successful in fourth grade, and substantially less successful in

sixth grade.

The opposite of this progression was present in the grades given to the students by teachers in the English department to their English writing samples. The students were least successful in the second grade, slightly more successful in fourth grade, and showed great improvements by the time they reached sixth grade.

These results show that as the students continue in their experience in this dual-language program, they increase their writing abilities in their non-native language, yet they do not increase their writing abilities in their native language. The students become more successful in writing abilities in English as they become less proficient in their writing abilities in Spanish. As expressed above, this gradual increase of writing abilities in the non-native language could be a result of various factors. The activities and resources for writing instruction in the English classroom are more specific to the writing skills and strategies than those in the Spanish classroom. The teaching experience and hours devoted to writing instruction in the English department could also suggest a different importance placed on writing skills than in the Spanish department. And, the inclusion of writing on the student grading rubric and report cards shows that the students must have a stronger motivation towards writing production in the English classroom as they are expected to perform to a specific standard.

While the reasons as to why students are more successful overall in the English department seem clearer after careful analysis, it is still unclear why the children do not transfer these abilities to their writing

assignments in the Spanish writing classes. As explained previously, the separation of languages in this school is very distinct and very apparent to the students. As observed in classroom observations and teacher surveys, in the English classrooms the students have the potential of being penalized for using Spanish, and are constantly reminded that “In this room we use English”. In the Spanish classrooms, although a consequence for using English was not noted, the absence of English materials or the use of English by teachers demonstrates to the children that English is not a valuable tool for courses in that department. As the students are constantly reminded that the two languages must be used for distinct purposes, it is not surprising that they are less likely to transfer those abilities from one classroom to the other.

Considering the three potential outcomes deliberated upon in the beginning of this paper, two recommendations for possible changes have been included for this research project. As the use of code-switching has been generally viewed<sup>5</sup> in this school as unhelpful and negative, it does not seem appropriate that a new writing course taught bilingually be used to impart writing skills and strategies for both languages by the same instructor. Although other artistic courses are taught in this way, scheduling and organization for a new course could be quite complicated for a school such as this case-study that is already complicated by the combination of many programs into one. Also, the addition of a new course would integrate a third instructor into the students’ acquisition of writing skills (the writing teacher, the English teacher, and the Spanish teacher)

which could potentially confuse the students even more.

Instead, it appears that the parallelization of writing instruction is a necessary and a feasible accommodation for the writing programs at this particular school. Due to differing instructional approaches (qualitative grading versus quantitative grading), conflicting grading systems (rubrics versus teacher experience), and an uneven distribution of academic materials (textbooks for writing versus no textbooks for writing), the accomplishment of similar goals between the two departments has been virtually impossible under the current structure.

In order to best accomplish goals in writing for the students at this school, we believe that a parallelization in both curriculum planning and evaluation techniques is necessary for a successful dual-language program. For the programs to be viewed as equally necessary and important to the students, they need to be presented in a similar way. The differences at this school in the organization of their programs are too vast for the students to recognize that the skills presented in each class are the same.

In a dual-language program, it is not always a guarantee that the students will study languages with the similar writing expectations. Not all languages in dual-language programs will use the same alphabet, or the same paragraph/sentence structure, or the same style of rhetoric. While in some programs these differences may not allow for perfect parallelization among topics, it is still possible that dual-language programs utilize the same classroom organization and evaluation tech-

niques.

In this institution, we recommend two changes to encourage the acquisition of writing abilities in both Spanish and English. First, teachers of all courses should explicitly discuss the ability to transfer strategies and skills acquired in their writing classes. If the teachers acknowledge this ability with their students, then the idea that information acquired in English class is only useful for English class, and vice versa, can be reduced.

The second change involves integrating both the structure of the Spanish department's current curriculum, as well as that used in the English classes. The institution needs to reevaluate the developmental stages that students in this environment will achieve in each grade level. In the English department, the rubric already in place should be evaluated to determine if the expectations for the students are realistically written to encourage the students to challenge themselves. At the same time, a rubric for the expectations for student writing in the Spanish department should be created. It is difficult to expect the students to achieve standards that they are unaware of, as is it unempirical to expect the children to motivate themselves to achieve unwritten standards without the external motivation of a written grade.

The topics of study within the Spanish and English departments, such as the sixth grade English teacher's use of the four stages of writing, can be aligned more clearly between the two programs. As with International Baccalaureate curriculum, the literacy curriculum can be discussed and presented in a similar format in both the English and Spanish classrooms. The stu-

dents will be able to see that there are elements of writing that are shared between their two languages; however, by presenting the information in both classrooms the differences between cultural writing expectations can also be addressed adequately.

Parallelization of the two programs' writing curriculum could encourage the successful acquisition of writing abilities in both languages as the students will have similar exposure to writing strategies in both departments. The form of assessment should be more uniform to avoid confusion among the students.

Although there are many variables affecting the acquisition of writing skills for children in this dual-language program, such as language of input, student preferences, teaching styles and activities, and years of experience as an educator, some variables discovered during the analysis of this program stand out as more influential. Until the programs can settle on a major philosophy of teaching (quantitative versus qualitative), adequate evaluation tools, and accurate grade level expectations for both departments, the differences in program's organization are too great to determine whether the other variables have an effect on student performance.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Dual-language programs are also referred to as two-way immersion, bilingual immersion, two-way bilingual programs, and developmental bilingual programs.

<sup>2</sup>the use of both languages in an instructional setting

<sup>3</sup>Using an equal percentage of English and Spanish for instruction and student work.

<sup>4</sup>Appendix A

<sup>4</sup>The Virginia Spanish Partial-Immersion Rubric was chosen as it was available in both English and Spanish for the grade levels included in the project. The rubric was reviewed by the program coordinators and principal at the elementary school and approved as an evaluation tool that included similar material to the curriculum of the school.

<sup>5</sup>According to the teacher responses and student opinions shown on preference surveys.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### VA Spanish Partial-Immersion Rubrics for Writing in English and Spanish for Grades 1-5

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Arlington County Spanish Partial Immersion Program

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Writing Objectives

##### Grade 1

Skill Componentts	Component Descriptors	Comments
<b>Composing</b> 1 2 3 4 5 (circle one) low high	___ Develops a story/topic with supporting details ___ Writes about a topic with a central idea ___ <b>Writes related sentences about a specific topic</b> ___ Writes some related sentences and some unrelated sentences ___ Writes single sentence or unrelated sentences ___ Uses letter strings, labels and/or words only ___ Draws related to the topic	
<b>Style</b>	<b>NA</b>	
<b>Sentence Formation</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	___ Uses all types of sentences effectively ___ Uses different types of sentences ___ <b>Writes simple sentences expressing complete thoughts</b> ___ Writes simple sentences ___ Attempts to write sentences ___ Labels or writes words only ___ Uses letter strings and/or environmental print only ___ No evidence	
<b>Usage</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	<b>Makes correct singular/plural noun formations</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable <b>Usage Uses correct gender formations</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable <b>Demonstrates awareness that articles and nouns should agree</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable <b>Demonstrates knowledge of sound-symbol correspondence</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable	
<b>Mechanics</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	<b>Uses capital letters at beginning of sentences</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable <b>Uses capital letters with proper nouns</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable <b>Uses correct final punctuation</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable	

Total (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

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Bilingual Student Writing Performance*

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ **Arlington County Spanish Partial Immersion Program** Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Class: \_\_\_\_\_ **Writing Objectives**

**Grade 2**

<b>Skill Componentts</b>	<b>Component Descriptors</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Composing</b> 1 2 3 4 5 (circle one) low high	___ Fully develops a story/topic with supporting or descriptive details ___ Develops an organized story/topic that follows a logical sequence ___ Partially develops a story/topic ___ Writes some related sentences only, without a clear central idea ___ Writes unrelated sentences only	
<b>Style</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	___ Enhances writing through use of details, descriptive language, and sense of voice ___ Enhances writing through use of details and some descriptive language ___ <b>Enhances writing by experimenting with details</b> ___ Uses non-specific vocabulary and little or no descriptive language ___ Writes basic objective information with no elements of style evident	
<b>Sentence Formation</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	___ Varies sentence type, length, and structure; uses transitions appropriately ___ Varies length and structure; uses some transitions ___ <b>Experiments with different sentence structures</b> ___ Writes simple sentences expressing complete thoughts ___ Attempts to write sentences ___ Labels or writes words only ___ Uses letter strings and/or environmental print only	
<b>Usage</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	<b>Demonstrates awareness of time, gender, and number agreement</b> (Check only those areas that need work. Write "NA" if no evidence elicited during task.) ___ Present time ___ Past time ___ Future time ___ Gender agreement ___ Number agreement ___ Subject-verb agreement	
<b>Mechanics</b>	<b>Uses correct spelling</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable <b>Uses correct final punctuation</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable <b>Uses correct capitalization</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable <b>Uses correct formatting (e.g., indentation)</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable	

Total (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Developed by Arlington Public Schools, Arlington, VA, 1997

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Arlington County Spanish Partial Immersion Program Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Writing Objectives

Grade 3

Skill Componentts	Component Descriptors	Comments
<b>Composing</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	___ Fully develops a story/topic with appropriate use of paragraphs and supporting details ___ <b>Fully develops a story/topic with supporting details</b> ___ Develops an organized story/topic that follows a logical sequence ___ Partially develops a story/topic ___ Writes some related sentences only, without a clear central idea	
<b>Style</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	___ Demonstrates a good sense of audience, voice, and descriptive detail ___ Demonstrates a sense of audience, in addition to use of voice and descriptive detail ___ Enhances writing through use of voice, in addition to use of descriptive detail ___ <b>Enhances writing through use of details and descriptive language</b> ___ Enhances writing by experimenting with details ___ Uses non-specific vocabulary and little or no descriptive language ___ Writes basic objective information with no elements of style evident	
<b>Sentence Formation</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	___ Varies sentence type, length, and structure; uses transitions appropriately ___ Varies type, length and structure; uses some transitions ___ <b>Uses different sentence structures appropriately</b> ___ Experiments with different sentence structures ___ Writes simple sentences expressing complete thoughts	
<b>Usage</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	<b>Uses correct verb forms (present, past, future)</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom <b>Uses correct forms of agreement (gender, number, subject-verb)</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom <b>Uses correct placement (adjectives, pronouns)</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable <b>Uses correct prepositions</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable	
<b>Mechanics</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	<b>Usually uses correct spelling and punctuation, capitalization, and formatting</b> (Check only those areas that need work.) ___ Spelling ___ Punctuation ___ Capitalization ___ Formatting	

Total (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Developed by Arlington Public Schools, Arlington, VA, 1997

*A Case Study Of Dual-Language (English/Spanish) Writing Instruction And The Effect It Has On  
Bilingual Student Writing Performance*

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ **Arlington County Spanish Partial Immersion Program** Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Class: \_\_\_\_\_ **Writing Objectives**

**Grade 4**

<b>Skill Componentts</b>	<b>Component Descriptors</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Composing</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	____ Presents an original, focused, coherent topic with supporting paragraphs, and that gives an opinion or convincingly persuades ____ Presents a well-organized topic that displays both depth and detail ____ <b>Develops a story/topic with appropriate use of paragraphs, supporting details, and a clear introduction and conclusion</b> ____ Presents a story/topic with a central idea and some supporting examples or details ____ Presents a partially-developed story/topic that may include some unrelated information ____ Writes some related sentences only, but without a clear central idea	
<b>Style</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	____ Uses vivid vocabulary, precise wording, and figurative language to enhance a point of view ____ Demonstrates a good sense of audience, voice, and descriptive detail ____ Demonstrates a sense of audience, in addition to use of voice and descriptive detail ____ <b>Enhances writing through use of voice, in addition to use of descriptive detail</b> ____ Enhances writing through use of details and descriptive language ____ Enhances writing by experimenting with details ____ Uses non-specific vocabulary and little or no descriptive language	
<b>Sentence Formation</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	____ Varies sentence type, length, and structure; uses transitions appropriately ____ <b>Varies type, length and structure; uses some transitions</b> ____ Uses different sentence structures appropriately ____ Experiments with different sentence structures ____ Writes simple sentences expressing complete thoughts	
<b>Usage</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	<b>Uses correct verb forms (present, past, future)</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom <b>Uses correct forms of agreement (gender, number, subject-verb)</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom <b>Uses correct placement (adjectives, pronouns)</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable <b>Uses correct prepositions</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable	
<b>Mechanics</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	Consistently uses correct spelling and punctuation, capitalization, and formatting (Check only those areas that need work.) ____ Spelling ____ Punctuation ____ Capitalization ____ Formatting	

Total (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Developed by Arlington Public Schools, Arlington, VA, 1997

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ **Arlington County Spanish Partial Immersion Program** Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Class: \_\_\_\_\_ **Writing Objectives**

**Grade 5**

<b>Skill Componentts</b>	<b>Component Descriptors</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Composing</b> 1 2 3 4 5 (circle one) low high	___ Presents an original, focused, coherent topic with supporting paragraphs, and that gives an opinion or convincingly persuades ___ <b>Presents a well-organized topic that displays both depth and detail</b> ___ Develops a story/topic with appropriate use of paragraphs, supporting details, and a clear introduction and conclusion ___ Presents a coherent thesis with some supporting examples or details ___ Presents a partially-developed thesis that may include some unrelated information ___ Writes some related sentences only, but without a clear central idea	
<b>Style</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	___ Uses vivid vocabulary, precise wording, and figurative language to enhance a point of view ___ Demonstrates a good sense of audience, voice, and descriptive detail ___ <b>Demonstrates a sense of audience, in addition to use of voice and descriptive detail</b> ___ Enhances writing through use of voice, in addition to use of descriptive detail ___ Enhances writing through use of details and descriptive language ___ Enhances writing by experimenting with details ___ Uses non-specific vocabulary and little or no descriptive language	
<b>Sentence Formation</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	___ Sentence formations demonstrate a higher level of sophistication ___ <b>Varies sentence type, length, and structure; uses transitions appropriately</b> ___ Varies type, length and structure; uses some transitions ___ Uses different sentence structures appropriately ___ Experiments with different sentence structures ___ Writes simple sentences expressing complete thoughts	
<b>Usage</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	<b>Uses correct verb forms (present, past, future, subjunctive)</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom <b>Uses correct forms of agreement (gender, number, subject-verb)</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom <b>Uses correct placement (adjectives, pronouns)</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom <b>Uses correct prepositions</b> Circle one: Consistently Usually Sometimes Seldom No Evidence Not Applicable	
<b>Mechanics</b> 1 2 3 4 5 low high	<b>Consistently uses correct spelling and punctuation, capitalization, and formatting</b> (Check only those areas that need work.) ___ Spelling ___ Punctuation ___ Capitalization ___ Formatting	

Total (optional): Developed by Arlington Public Schools, Arlington, VA, 1997

*A Case Study Of Dual-Language (English/Spanish) Writing Instruction And The Effect It Has On  
Bilingual Student Writing Performance*

## Appendix B

Nombre del estudiante:

**Programa de Inmersión Parcial de Español**

Fecha:

Tarea:

**del Condado de Arlington  
Rúbrica para la Destreza Escrita**

*Primer Grado*

Clase:

Destrezas	Descripción	Comentarios
Composición 1 2 3 4 5 (escoger uno) bajo alto	<p>___ Desarrolla una narración con detalles.</p> <p>___ Escribe una narración simple sobre un tema específico.</p> <p>___ <b>Escribe oraciones relacionadas sobre un tema específico.</b></p> <p>___ Escribe algunas oraciones relacionadas y otras no relacionadas.</p> <p>___ Escribe oraciones no relacionadas al tema.</p> <p>___ Rotula o escribe palabras solamente.</p> <p>___ Hace dibujos relacionados al tema.</p>	
Estilo Expresión Estructural 1 2 3 4 5 bajo alto	<p>N/A (No aplica a este nivel)</p> <p>___ Usa todo tipo de oraciones efectivamente.</p> <p>___ Usa diferente tipos de oraciones.</p> <p>___ <b>Escribe oraciones simples que expresan ideas completas.</b></p> <p>___ Escribe oraciones simples.</p> <p>___ Intenta escribir oraciones.</p> <p>___ Rotula o escribe palabras solamente.</p> <p>___ Intenta escribir letras y/o copia palabras que ve a su alrededor.</p> <p>___ No hay evidencia.</p>	
Uso 1 2 3 4 5 bajo alto	<p><b>Uso correcto del sustantivo en singular y plural.</b> <i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces No hay evidencia No aplica a este nivel</p> <p><b>Uso correcto del género gramatical.</b> <i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces No hay evidente No aplica a este nivel</p> <p><b>Reconoce la relación directa del artículo y el sustantivo.</b> <i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces No hay evidente No aplica a este nivel</p>	
Técnica Gramatical Aplicada 1 2 3 4 5 bajo alto	<p><b>Demuestra conocimiento de la relación entre símbolo y sonido.</b> <i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces No hay evidencia No aplica a este nivel</p> <p><b>Usa mayúscula al empezar oraciones.</b> <i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces No hay evidencia No aplica a este nivel</p> <p><b>Escribe los nombres propios con mayúscula.</b> <i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces No hay evidencia No aplica a este nivel</p> <p><b>Usa puntuación al comienzo y/o final de las oraciones correctamente.</b> <i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces No hay evidencia No aplica a este nivel</p>	

**RESULTADO TOTAL (opcional)** \_\_\_\_\_ Creado por Arlington Public Schools, Arlington, VA, 1997

Nombre del estudiante:  
Tarea:

**Programa de Inmersión Parcial de Español  
del Condado de Arlington  
Rúbrica para la Destreza Escrita**

Fecha:

*Segundo Grado*

Clase:

Destrezas	Descripción	Comentarios
Composición 1 2 3 4 5 (escoger uno) bajo alto	<p>___ Desarrolla el tema narrativo o cuento con detalles o descripciones.</p> <p>___ <b>Desarrolla el tema narrativo o cuento siguiendo una secuencia lógica.</b></p> <p>___ Desarrolla el tema narrativo o cuento parcialmente.</p> <p>___ Escribe solamente algunas oraciones relacionadas al tema pero sin idea central.</p> <p>___ Escribe solamente oraciones no relacionadas al tema.</p>	
Estilo 1 2 3 4 5	<p>___ Usa detalles y lenguaje descriptivo con expresión.</p> <p>___ Realza la escritura a través del uso de detalles y lenguaje descriptivo.</p> <p>___ <b>Realza la escritura experimentando con detalles.</b></p> <p>___ Usa vocabulario no específico usando poco o ningún lenguaje descriptivo.</p> <p>___ Escribe información sin evidencia de elementos de estilo.</p>	
Expresión Estructural 1 2 3 4 5 bajo alto	<p>___ Usa oraciones variadas en complejidad y estructura; usa palabra transitivas con efectividad.</p> <p>___ Usa oraciones variadas en complejidad; usa algunas ideas transitivas.</p> <p>___ <b>Experimenta con diferentes estructuras gramaticales.</b></p> <p>___ Escribe oraciones simples que expresan ideas completas.</p> <p>___ Intenta escribir oraciones.</p> <p>___ Rotula o escribe palabras solamente.</p> <p>___ Intenta escribir letras y/o copia palabras que ve a su alrededor.</p>	
Uso 1 2 3 4 5 bajo alto	<p><b>Demuestra conocimiento de la congruencia entre tiempo, género y número.</b> (Marcar todas las que apliquen. Escribir "N/A" si no hay evidencia.)</p> <p>___ Tiempo presente ___ Pasado ___ Futuro cercano (ir+verbo)</p> <p>___ género ___ número ___ sujeto/verbo</p>	
Técnica Gramatical Aplicada 1 2 3 4 5 bajo alto	<p>___ <b>Uso correcto de la ortografía.</b></p> <p><i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente <b>Usualmente</b> Algunas veces Raras veces No hay evidencia No aplica a este nivel</p> <p>Uso correcto de la puntuación al comienzo y/o final de las oraciones.</p> <p><i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente <b>Usualmente</b> Algunas veces Raras veces No hay evidencia No aplica a este nivel</p> <p><b>Uso correcto de las mayúsculas.</b></p> <p><i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente <b>Usualmente</b> Algunas veces Raras veces No hay evidencia No aplica a este nivel</p> <p><b>Uso correcto del formato de un párrafo (e.g., márgenes, sangrado)</b></p> <p><i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente <b>Usualmente</b> Algunas veces Raras veces No hay evidencia No aplica a este nivel</p>	

**RESULTADO TOTAL (opcional)** \_\_\_\_\_ Creado por Arlington Public Schools, Arlington, VA, 1997

*A Case Study Of Dual-Language (English/Spanish) Writing Instruction And The Effect It Has On  
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Nombre del estudiante:  
Tarea:

**Programa de Inmersión Parcial de Español  
del Condado de Arlington  
Rúbrica para la Destreza Escrita**

Fecha:

*Tercer Grado*

Clase:

Destrezas	Descripción	Comentarios
Composición 1 2 3 4 5 (escoge uno) bajo alto	<p>___ Desarrolla completamente el tema o cuento en párrafos bien organizados, detallados y descriptivos.</p> <p>___ <b>Desarrolla completamente el tema o cuento con detalles y descripciones.</b></p> <p>___ Desarrolla el tema o cuento de modo organizado, siguiendo una secuencia lógica.</p> <p>___ Desarrolla parcialmente el tema o cuento.</p> <p>___ Escribe solamente oraciones relacionadas al tema, pero sin una idea central clara.</p>	
Estilo 1 2 3 4 5 bajo alto	<p>___ Demuestra un buen sentido de la audiencia; usa diferentes expresiones y detalles descriptivos.</p> <p>___ Demuestra sentido de la audiencia además de usar expresiones apropiadas y detalles descriptivos.</p> <p>___ Realza la escritura usando expresiones apropiadas además de usar detalles descriptivos.</p> <p>___ <b>Realza la escritura a través del uso de detalles y lenguaje descriptivo.</b></p> <p>___ Realza la escritura experimentando con detalles.</p> <p>___ Usa vocabulario no específico usando copo o ningún lenguaje descriptivo.</p> <p>___ Escribe información sin evidencia de elementos de estilo.</p>	
Expresión Estructural 1 2 3 4 5 bajo alto	<p>___ Usa oraciones variadas en complejidad y estructura; usa palabras transitivas con efectividad.</p> <p>___ Usa oraciones variadas en complejidad; usa algunas ideas transitivas.</p> <p>___ <b>Usa apropiadamente diferentes estructuras gramaticales.</b></p> <p>___ Experimenta con diferentes estructuras gramaticales.</p> <p>___ Escribe oraciones simples que expresan ideas completas.</p>	
Uso 1 2 3 4 5 bajo alto	<p><b>Usa correctamente las formas de los verbos (presente, pasado, futuro)</b>  <i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces</p> <p><b>Usa correctamente las formas de congruencia (género, número, sujeto-verbo)</b>  <i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces</p> <p><b>Usa correctamente la posición de los adjetivos y pronombres</b>  <i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces No hay evidencia No aplica</p>	
Técnica Gramatical Aplicada bajo alto	<p><b>Por lo general usa correctamente la ortografía, la puntuación, las mayúsculas y el formato.</b> (Marcar con un _ las áreas que necesita mejorar, deje en blanco si no hay evidencia.)</p> <p>___ ortografía ___ puntuación ___ mayúsculas ___ formato</p>	

**RESULTADO TOTAL (opcional)** \_\_\_\_\_ Creado por Arlington Public Schools, Arlington, VA, 1997

Nombre del estudiante:  
Tarea:

**Programa de Inmersión Parcial de Español  
del Condado de Arlington  
Rúbrica para la Destreza Escrita**

Fecha:

*Cuarto Grado*

Clase:

Destrezas	Descripción	Comentarios
Composición 1 2 3 4 5 (escoge uno) bajo alto	<p>___ Desarrolla un tema con un enfoque original, con párrafos coherentes que desarrollan una opinión o que persuade convincentemente.</p> <p>___ Desarrolla con profundidad y con detalles un tema bien organizado.</p> <p>___ <b>Desarrolla completamente el tema con párrafos bien organizados, detalles y con introducción y conclusión claras.</b></p> <p>___ Desarrolla un tema con una idea central y con algunos detalles.</p> <p>___ Desarrolla parcialmente el tema que puede incluir alguna información incoherente.</p> <p>___ Escribe oraciones relacionadas al tema solamente, sin una idea central clara.</p>	
Estilo 1 2 3 4 5 bajo alto	<p>___ Usa vocabulario colorido, palabras precisas y lenguaje figurado para exponer su punto de vista.</p> <p>___ Demuestra un buen sentido de la audiencia; usa diferentes expresiones y detalles descriptivos.</p> <p>___ Demuestra sentido de la audiencia además de usar expresiones apropiadas y detalles descriptivos.</p> <p>___ <b>Realza la escritura usando expresiones apropiadas además de usar detalles descriptivos.</b></p> <p>___ Realza la escritura experimentando con detalles.</p> <p>___ Usa vocabulario no específico usando poco o ningún lenguaje descriptivo.</p> <p>___ Escribe información sin evidencia de elementos de estilo.</p>	
Expresión Estructural 1 2 3 4 5 bajo alto	<p>___ Usa oraciones variadas en complejidad y estructura; usa palabras transitivas con efectividad.</p> <p>___ <b>Usa oraciones variadas en complejidad; usa algunas palabras transitivas.</b></p> <p>___ Usa apropiadamente diferentes estructuras gramaticales.</p> <p>___ Experimenta con diferentes estructuras gramaticales.</p> <p>___ Escribe oraciones simples que expresan ideas completas.</p>	
Uso 1 2 3 4 5 bajo alto	<p><b>Usa correctamente las formas de los verbos (presente, pasado, futuro)</b>  <i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces</p> <p><b>Usa correctamente las formas de congruencia (género, número, sujeto-verbo)</b>  <i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces</p> <p>Usa correctamente la posición de los adjetivos  <i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces</p> <p>No hay evidencia No aplica</p> <p><b>Usa correctamente los pronombres personales, directos e indirectos</b>  <i>Escoger uno:</i> Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces</p> <p>No hay evidencia No aplica</p>	
Técnica Gramatical Aplicada 1 2 3 4 5 bajo alto	<p><b>Por lo general usa correctamente la ortografía, la puntuación, las mayúsculas y el formato.</b> (Marcar con un _ las áreas que necesita mejorar, deje en blanco si no hay evidencia.)</p> <p>___ ortografía ___ puntuación ___ mayúsculas ___ formato</p>	

**RESULTADO TOTAL (opcional)** \_\_\_\_\_ Creado por Arlington Public Schools, Arlington, VA, 1997

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Nombre del estudiante: **Programa de Inmersión Parcial de Español del Condado de Arlington**  
 Tarea: **Rúbrica para la Destreza Escrita**

Fecha:

*Quinto Grado*

Clase:

Destrezas	Descripción	Comentarios
Composición 1 2 3 4 5 bajo alto	____ Desarrolla un tema con un enfoque original, con párrafos coherentes que desarrollan una opinión o que persuade convincentemente. ____ <b>Desarrolla con profundidad y con detalles un tema bien organizado.</b> ____ Desarrolla completamente el tema con párrafos bien organizados, detalles y con introducción y conclusión claras. ____ Desarrolla un tema con una idea central y con algunos detalles. ____ Desarrolla parcialmente el tema que puede incluir alguna información incoherente. ____ Escribe oraciones relacionadas al tema solamente, sin una idea central clara.	
Estilo	____ Usa vocabulario colorido, palabras precisas y lenguaje figurado para exponer su punto de vista. ____ <b>Demuestra un buen sentido de la audiencia; usa diferentes expresiones y detalles descriptivos.</b> ____ Demuestra sentido de la audiencia además de usar expresiones apropiadas y detalles descriptivos. ____ Realza la escritura usando expresiones apropiadas además de usar detalles descriptivos. ____ Realza la escritura experimentando con detalles. ____ Usa vocabulario no específico usando poco o ningún lenguaje descriptivo. ____ Escribe información sin evidencia de elementos de estilo.	
Expresión	____ Usa formas gramaticales que denotan un nivel un tanto sofisticado.	
Estructural	____ <b>Usa oraciones variadas en complejidad y estructura; usa palabras transitivas con efectividad.</b> ____ Usa oraciones variadas en complejidad; usa algunas palabras transitivas. ____ Usa apropiadamente diferentes estructuras gramaticales. ____ Experimenta con diferentes estructuras gramaticales. ____ Escribe oraciones simples que expresan ideas completas.	
Uso	<b>Usa correctamente las formas de los verbos (presente, pasado, futuro y subjuntivo)</b> <i>Escoger uno: Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces</i> <b>Usa correctamente las formas de congruencia (género, número, sujeto-verbo)</b> <i>Escoger uno: Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces</i> <b>Usa correctamente la posición de los adjetivos</b> <i>Escoger uno: Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces</i> No hay evidencia No aplica <b>Usa correctamente los pronombres personales, directos e indirectos</b> <i>Escoger uno: Consistentemente Usualmente Algunas veces Raras veces</i> No hay evidencia No aplica <b>Usa correctamente la ortografía, la puntuación, las mayúsculas y el formato consistentemente.</b> (Marcar con un _ las áreas que necesita mejorar, deje en blanco si no hay evidencia.) ____ ortografía ____ puntuación ____ mayúsculas ____ formato	
Técnica Gramatical Aplicada		

**RESULTADO TOTAL (opcional)** \_\_\_\_\_ Creado por Arlington Public Schools, Arlington, VA, 1997