Rural Meets Urban: Advanced Placement Rural High School Students Supporting Urban Dual Language Learners

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Dr. Susan M. Schultz
St. John Fisher College

Exemplary Program Award 2017
In the area of Cross Cultural Services
Literature Review- Foundation for the Project

- Children who are simultaneously learning two languages are at risk for language and literacy deficits in both languages (Wilson, Dickinson, & Rowe, 2013).

- Early language and literacy development is a strong predictor of later academic achievement and lack of progress in content knowledge in later school years is often related to gaps in language development. This is a common problem for English Language Learners (Winsler, Burchinal, Tien, Peisner-Feinberg, Espinosa, Castro, LaForett, Kim, and De Feyter, 2014).
Comprehension is highest when source materials are provided in a child’s native language (Wilson, Dickinson, & Rowe, 2013).

Glick, Bates and Yabiku (2009) found parenting practices and cognitive stimulation at home mediated cognitive and language skill deficits.
Project Overview

- High School Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish students from a rural school district in Upstate New York translated picture books for second grade students at Urban Primary, where Spanish is primarily spoken at home.

- **Participants (Pseudonyms):**
  - Rural High School
  - Urban Primary
Urban Primary

- one of the poorest school districts in Upstate New York,
- the poorest urban district across the state,
- with more people living at less than half the poverty level than any other similarly sized US city, and the most extreme poverty (family of four with income less than $11,925) in the nation.
- Concentrated poverty levels are getting worse, rising from 31 to 32.9% over the last year, with statistics being high for all racial and ethnic groups.
- It is the only US city where over half the children live in poverty, and has the highest rate of extreme poverty at 16.2%.
School in this district chosen because

- Largest Spanish speaking bilingual school, appreciation for building both languages
- Serves children PK- Grade 6
- Test scores are significantly behind the rest of the school district, which are significantly behind the rest of the state.
- One classroom participating = 25 students + classroom book
EngageNY. Grade 6 ELA

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Urban Elementary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) well below proficient</td>
<td>58 %</td>
<td>22 %</td>
<td>8 %</td>
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<td>2) partially proficient</td>
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<td>3) proficient</td>
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<td>4) excels</td>
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1) well below proficient = 75.7%
2) partially proficient. = 19.6%
3) proficient = 4.7%
4) excels = 0 %
Rural High School

- Located in a relatively mono-ethnic rural town (99% Caucasian).
- Average income below the rest of upstate NY
- Small “distant” rural district
  - Two classes of high school students learning Spanish = 20 students total
  - Graduating class = 85
Project Implementation

- Faculty Development Grant
- Institutional Review Board
  - St John Fisher College
  - Urban School District
- Book selection- Collaborative Effort among parties
- Translation of letters
  - Introductory letter
  - Consent forms
  - Parent Engagement and Feedback Forms
- Ordering materials to translate the books
- Book Translation
- Project facilitation/ go between
- Project Summary: Visit and Read Aloud
But Kitten only ended up with a bug on her tongue.
Poor Kitten!

¡Pobre gatita!
So that's where it was!

¡Mi otro mitén!

¡Allí está!
Parent Engagement and Feedback Forms Rate of Return

- Return the form to get another book
- Book One
  - Kitten’s First Full Moon by Kevin Henkes
  - 10/25 parent feedback forms returned, and 2 verbal responses
  - All returned in Spanish
Project Surprises

- Initially one AP Spanish class. Third year Spanish students asked to be involved. Equalized the numbers.
- First grade class ended up being a second grade class.
- The bilingual class were monolingual Spanish. Parents are learning English at the same time as their children.
- Two parents asked if they could go over the form with the parent liaison, as they had difficulty reading and writing in Spanish as well as English.
Students were hesitant at first.

Initially teacher led group effort using a SmartBoard where the book pages were displayed to translate on the document. Students used reference materials. Teachers acted as scribes.

Students quickly became engaged, “itching to do more!” Confidence grew.

Students took over the leadership role, taking turns at the board, working collaboratively.

Using the grammar concept that the students have been reviewing and perfecting in class (preterite and imperfect). When the class ended they all were ecstatic as they realized they had barely used their dictionaries and were impressed by how much they knew.
Rural High Translation of Books - Process

- Continued translating in small groups.
  - Peer editing
  - Critical thinking during review, suggestions in the margins
  - Returned to the original group who reviewed suggestions and decided whether to use recommendations
    - Focus on creating the best product for families. Took these responsibilities very seriously.

“This was a wonderful opportunity for the students to enrich their understanding of Spanish language in a realistic setting.”
Rural High Translation of Books

- Developed communication skills via writing.
- Hard concept for students to embrace not translating word for word from their native language (English) to the desired language (Spanish).
  - Word for word translation often leads to choppy sentences that ultimately have a slightly different meaning and do not follow the syntax of the Spanish language.
  - Helped take all the elements of grammar and vocabulary the students learned in their Spanish studies into account.
- Culturally, translating helps students to realize that the idiomatic expressions we have in English are not the same as other languages. Students learned cultural nuances for expressing ideas in Spanish.
Rural High Project Impact

- Theory and practice of translation through social constructivism.
  - Organized project based learning activities
    - Improved cultural awareness
    - More meaningful level of communication
    - In-context teaching
  - Interpersonal learning a key factor
    - Students translators interact with each other, their Spanish teachers, and the Urban Primary students, parents and teachers while learning to translate, and learning about the bilingual Spanish community.
    - Worked for the benefit of the larger community.
    - Appreciation for a culture different than their own.
Project Impact Urban Primary

- The students from Urban Primary and their parents were provided literacy media and gain exposure to two languages when the books were read.

- Parent engagement through purposeful reading in both Spanish and English provided an opportunity for active learning.

- Got books into the hands of children. For many, this is the first book they own.
Primary Goal

- Children from low socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to own books.

- The ultimate goal for Urban Primary was to encourage parent engagement and exposure to get books into children’s hands.

- Subsequently, a decision was made to send Book Two “The Mitten” home with everyone.
Summary

- Research demonstrates that for every $1 spent on a young child, there statistically is an $8 return on the investment (Adams & Tapia, 2013; High/Scope, 2004; Rolnick and Grunewald, 2003).
References


