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HAS THE PASSAGE OF PROPOSITION 227 HAD AN EFFECT ON THE
REDESIGNATION RATES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN THE
RIALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT?

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education:
Curriculum and Instruction

By
Moises Mauricio Merlos

June 2003

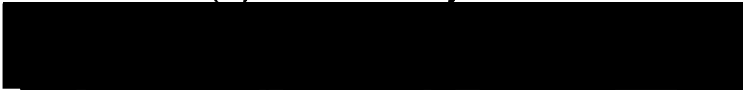
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6-3-03
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ABSTRACT

California voters approved Proposition 227 in 1998. This initiative virtually eliminated Bilingual Education programs (BE) and replaced them with a Standard English Immersion program (SEI). This study focuses on the impact Proposition 227 had on the Rialto Unified School District (RUSD), located in Southern California, after the change in language education programs.

The proponents of Proposition 227 asserted that removing the BE program and replacing it with the SEI program would increase test scores and language acquisition among LEP students. One way to measure language acquisition is to study the redesignation rates of students. A redesignated student is one who has gone from an SEI or BE program to the mainstream curriculum.

The hypothesis predicted a small positive change in the redesignation rates of students in the RUSD. The hypothesis was later re-enforced by the redesignation rate reported to the United States Department of Education. The data shows that the percentage of the LEP population increased gradually after the implementation of Proposition 227. A discussion of the results and recommendations for further study are provided.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my mentors and professors at CSUSB, Dr. Murrillo and Dr. Gehring for their guidance and support in this thesis and the knowledge they bestowed in me through their teachings.

Special thanks to my family for their support and understanding through this project; and to Elizabeth Paulsen for taking the time to read and edit this project.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

Introduction

The contents of Chapter One present an overview of the project. The context of the problem is discussed followed by the purpose, significance of the project, and assumptions. Next, the limitations and delimitations that apply to the project are reviewed. Finally, definitions of terms are presented.

Context of the Problem

The context of the problem was to address the effectiveness of Proposition 227 in the Rialto Unified School District. Proposition 227 was passed in 1998 as a reform bill to strengthen the public school system. As with any initiative, Proposition 227 had its opponents as well as its supporters. The supporters of bilingual education said that the intent of bilingual education had been to educate children first in the native language before immersing them into the English language. A bilingual education program ensured that students had the basics to be able to read and write in their native language, making the transition to English much less difficult since basic skills had already been learned.

The idea behind this philosophy was that individuals who could read and write in their native tongue will transition less stressfully to a second language. The opponents of Proposition 227 argued that eliminating the bilingual education program would handicap the student's academic advancement. On the other hand, supporters of Proposition 227 believed that learning a new language was easier for younger children and easier if a child was immersed in the language. They further argued that Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) programs were the most effective for teaching English to LEP students.

During the summer of 1998, California voters were exposed to a plethora of information regarding the issue of bilingual education. This information came in many forms and from many different individuals, such as college professors, teachers, politicians, and even students. One key player in the demise of Bilingual Education was Silicon Valley millionaire Ron Unz. He was the architect of Proposition 227 and is currently trying to pass the same measure in Arizona. Ron Unz enticed California voters to approve Proposition 227 with the promise of better test scores and higher graduation rates for public school students. These two major promises relied on the ability of teachers to teach students to speak English

fluently and for these English Language Learners to learn to speak English fluently in a shorter time than compared with the Bilingual Education program already in place. In theory, students who became English proficient would perform better on test scores and be more equipped to finish high school.

But how can educators measure whether a student has become English proficient? Though the process may vary from school district to school district, the process ultimately involves testing the prospective students to see if they are English proficient. This process is called "Redesignation." Being redesignated means that a student is proficient in English and can be placed in mainstream classes along with native English speakers. With this redesignation, there is also a change in the classification of the student from Limited English Proficient (LEP) to Fluent English Proficient (FEP).

In this study, I investigated whether Proposition 227 has lived up to its promise of increasing the number of LEP students that are able to move on to the mainstream by looking at the redesignation rates of the RUSD. Each school in the State of California is required to keep track of the number of LEP students and the number of LEP students redesignated to FEP in a particular school year.

If Proposition 227 is working, then the number/percentage of redesignated students will be higher than before the implementation of Proposition 227.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project was to develop a study that would test whether the promise of students learning to speak English fluently in a shorter amount of time was met by Proposition 227. In order to do this, the redesignation rates over the last five years in the Rialto Unified School District were analyzed. One of the promises of Proposition 227 was that LEP students will learn to speak English and enter the mainstream curriculum in a shorter time. One way to measure this promise is to look at the redesignation rates. A "redesignated" student is one who has gone from an English Immersion program into the mainstream curriculum. To be redesignated, students must pass a series of assessments that are dictated and vary from district to district. Students are generally nominated for redesignation by their teachers or counselors and are then referred for further assessment. School districts are required to keep accurate records of their redesignation rates for every school year.

If Proposition 227 is helping students become English proficient faster, then there will be an increase in the number of redesignated students each year. In order to take into account the fluctuations in LEP student enrollment, percentages of redesignated students will be used instead of actual number of students redesignated. On the other hand, if Proposition 227 has not had an effect on how fast LEP students become proficient, then there will be no increase in the redesignation rates. Therefore, the research question is: "Has the Passage of Proposition 227 Had an Effect on the Redesignation Rates of English Language Learners in the Rialto Unified School District?"

Hypothesis

It is predicted that the change from bilingual education to SIE will bring a small, but positive change in the redesignation rates in the Rialto Unified School District. This small change may not be attributed to SEI alone, since there were other educational programs implemented in the District at the same time.

Significance of the Project

This project is significant because it evaluates the effectiveness of a program that bears important consequences for the students involved. Though the Structure English Immersion program is in its beginning years, it is important to study it" the patterns of effectiveness or lack of effectiveness as early in the program as possible. Early investigation of the problem can lead to adjustments in the program to further enhance it.

This evaluative research thesis is also intended to demonstrate differentiated effectiveness of the program from district to district. These findings may be used to influence the English Immersion Program used in the Rialto Unified School District; as well as a protocol for evaluation of the same program in other school districts.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made regarding the project:

1. The Rialto Unified School District (RUSD) has completely eradicated the standard Bilingual Education Program (BEP) and replaced it with a Standard English Immersion Program (SEI).

2. The SEI program used by RUSD is delivered to students as dictated by the program theory.
3. RUSD has informed parents, teachers, students, and counselors of the redesignation procedures.
4. All RUSD teachers provide the same quality/fair education, grading system, and assessment procedures.
5. ALL involved parties (school administrators, parents, and teachers) promptly submit the required paperwork needed to redesignate a student.

Limitations and Delimitations

During the development of the thesis, a number of limitations and delimitations were noted. These are presented in the next section.

Limitations

The following limitations apply to the project:

1. Attributes of effective SEI programs have not been identified.
2. Redesignation numbers obtained from the California Department of Education may have been incorrectly reported.

3. Reclassification procedures may not have been followed correctly and may have resulted in the under-redesignation of students. For example, as student's file may not have been reviewed in a timely manner to be redesignated that year.
4. Other factors not associated with the school SEI program may affect language acquisition, including newly implemented test preparatory programs, after school tutoring, staff development, manipulatives, Saturday academies, parent workshops, study skills classes, AVID and GATE programs, etc. These supplemental programs may aid language acquisition.

Delimitations

The following delimitation applies to the project:

The study addressed only the Rialto Unified School District rather than the entire state of California. Proposition 227 effected the entire State and further study of the effectiveness of the law should be measured at the State level as well.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they apply to this Thesis:

1. CELDT: California English Language Development Test.

The CELDT is used to identify English Learner students, monitor student progress, and provide one criterion for redesignation. The test covers listening/speaking, reading, and writing. All Language Learners must take this test when entering a new school district and once a year thereafter.

2. ELL (English Language Learners): students whose first language is not English and who are in the process of learning English.

3. LEP (Limited English Proficient): the term used by the Federal government, most states and local school districts, to identify those students who have insufficient English to succeed in English-only classrooms.

4. Transitional Bilingual Education: this program allows students to receive their content area instruction in their native language, while learning English as a second language. The student is then "exited" or "mainstreamed" out of the program when ready to benefit from the monolingual English-language curriculum.

Native-language services should serve only as a transition to English. A student may be in this program for three years.

5. Maintenance Bilingual Education: this program is a comprehensive and long-term model of bilingual education. Students receive content area instruction in their native language while learning English as a second language. Unlike Transitional Bilingual Education, there is no time limit as to how long the student can remain in this program. The purpose of the program is to develop fluency in both languages by using both for content instruction. The longer a student remains in the program, the more functionally bilingual that student becomes.
6. Structured English Immersion (SEI): in this program, language minority students receive all of their subject matter instruction in their second language. English is used and taught at a level appropriate to the class of English learners (that is different from the way English is used in the mainstream classroom). Students may use their native language in class, however, teachers maximize instruction in English and use English for 70% to 90% of instructional time.

7. Mainstream: All content instruction is taught 100% in English.
8. Immersion: a general term for teaching approaches for LEP students that do not involve using a student's native language.
9. Title VII: The Bilingual Education Act, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1968, established Federal policy for bilingual education for economically disadvantaged language minority students, funded for innovative programs, and recognized the unique educational disadvantages faced by non-English speaking students. Reauthorized in 1994 as part of the Improving America's Schools Act, Title VII's new provisions restructured applicable grants, increased the state role, gave priority to applicants seeking to develop bilingual proficiency, and opened up Title I to LEP students (Crawford, 1995).

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis portion of the project was divided into five chapters. Chapter one provides an introduction to the context of the problem, purpose of the project, significance of the project, limitations and delimitations and definitions of terms. Chapter Two consists of a review

of relevant literature. Chapter Three documents the steps used in developing the project. Chapter Four presents the results and discussion from the project. Chapter Five presents conclusions and recommendations drawn from the development of the project. The Project concludes with the Project references.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter Two consists of a discussion of the relevant literature. Specifically, the history of bilingualism in the United States, Bilingual Education in California, Bilingual Education program, Structure English Immersion Program, and Bilingual Education v. Structure English Immersion.

History of Bilingualism in the United States

Between 1820 and 1970, more than 45 million immigrants, mostly from European nations, entered the US (Bennett, 1995). Although migration is nothing new considering the United States is a nation built on the migration of individuals from Northern Europe (1995), this extensive migration influenced policy making that shaped the American way of life, including educational policy. In the early 19th century, British policy dominated the public schools, thus urban schools were designed to socialize non-British immigrants into Anglo-Protestant values and the U.S. industrial system (Feagin and Feagin, 1993). The prevalent view was that newly arrived ethnic

groups would give up their unique cultural attributes and accept Anglo-American ways of life. School was expected to play the major role in the force assimilation (1995). Policy making however, was not prepared for the massive immigration of people into the United States.

According to Bennett (1995), "Immigration into the United States occurred in a series of huge waves; the first wave came after the end of the Napoleonic war and peaked just before the Civil War." This first wave brought a great number of Irish, Norwegians, Dutch, and Prussians into the United States (1995). Their reasons for coming differed but included economic and religious factors in their native country.

The second wave came after the Civil War and lasted through the decades of industrialization. It also brought more immigrants from Northern and Western Europe, but beginning in the 1880s, the number of Southern and Eastern European immigrants increased (Bennett, 1995).

The third wave lasted from 1890 until 1914 and massive; it brought in over 15 million immigrants (1995). The newly arrived were primarily from Austria-Hungary, Italy, Russia, Poland, Greece, Romania, and Turkey.

According to Bennett (1995), the significance of this third wave was that it triggered legislation based on

"racial grounds." The US Immigration Commission described Eastern and Southern Europeans as "incapable of assimilation and were even biologically inferior to the Nordic stock out of Western and Northern Europe" (Bennett, 1995, p.93).

The people who had assimilated to the American way of life, like the Northern Europeans, also shared the belief of inferiority and anti-Semitism against these newly arrived immigrants, thus creating racial tensions. These beliefs resulted in distinct geographic patterns of settlement among European immigrants (Bennett, 1995). For example, about two-thirds of the Irish settled in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and the New England area. The Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes made Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin, the Dakotas, and the state of Washington their main settlements (1995). The Finnish also grouped together in Michigan, Minnesota, and Massachusetts. The Dutch, on the other hand, settled mainly in New York, Wisconsin, and Iowa (1995).

This ethnic pluralism characterized United States society and resulted in ethnic communities that were named after European towns. These communities became an extension of the towns in which the immigrants had lived in their homelands. Their churches, newspapers and

schools were patterned after European models. Take for example the Germans; most of them settled in the upper Mississippi and Ohio valleys, especially in the states of Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Missouri (Bennett, 1995). According to Richard Ruiz (Sleeter, 1991, p 225):

Germans were afforded the most extensive programs of bilingual education in the history of the country. The public school district in cities within the so called German Triangle, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Chicago, Indianapolis, and others, also developed formal offices of German instruction to supervise the programs. In some school districts, as much as 70% of the school population took some of their instruction in German as late as 1916. This situation persisted until the beginning of WWI, when anti-German sentiment made German study unpopular.

Because of the concentration of one ethnic group in this region, in 1839, Ohio became the first state to adopt a bilingual education law (Crawford, 1989). This law authorized German-English instruction at the parents' request (1989). German Americans were the largest group in the region that spoke a language other than English, thus prompting the legislature to take their needs into account.

Bilingual education policy continued to flourish through the 19th century. The State of Louisiana passed bilingual education legislation in 1847 for the French

speaking population there (Crawford, 1989). The French, like the Germans, settled into their own region, ending up concentrated in Louisiana. In New Mexico, the native Spanish speakers in the region also required special needs. In 1850, New Mexico followed the steps of Ohio and Louisiana and passed a bilingual education legislation (Crawford, 1989).

Toward the end of the 19th century, more than a dozen states passed similar laws. During this period, according to historian Kloss, more than 600,000 students were receiving instruction partly or exclusively in German, about 4% of all American children in the elementary grades (Crawford, 1989). Even though bilingual education programs differed from state to state, they all had in common the fact that most of the teaching was done in the students' primary language (1989). Wherever immigrants would settle, a bilingual education program would be established. These newly arrived immigrants were expected to assimilate into American culture and become part of the industrial system that was taking over the nation during that time period (Bennett, 1995).

Ideas about Bilingual Education and its acceptance began to change after the United States entered World War I (Sleeter, 1991). Germany's role in the war brought

about anti-German sentiment in the United States, making these German Schools very unpopular (1991). Several states began putting restrictions and even laws against speaking other languages; for example, Germans were no longer allowed to speak German in public settings. As Bennett (1995) wrote, "These multilingual education programs and a national tolerance for cultural diversity were soon submerged by Americanization programs in the schools." By the 1920s, the bilingual programs had been dismantled and thirty-two states had adopted English-only instruction for their schools (Bennett, 1995).

The United States as a whole focused on cultural assimilation of all immigrants.

Cultural Assimilation is sometimes referred to as the American 'melting pot.' 'A process in which persons of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds come to interact, free of constraints, in the life of the larger community. It is a one-way process through which members of an ethnic group give up their original culture and are absorbed into the core culture, which predominates in the host society.' (Bennett, 1995, p. 84)

The threat Germany put forth in Europe became a threat here in the United States. The solution to reduce this threat was to make all immigrants, from around the world, assimilate into American culture.

German immigrants, faced with prejudice, discrimination, and threat of violence, made the choice to assimilate into American culture as a means of survival. . But during this time of war, other immigrant groups were targeted, and some could not assimilate for different factors (Bennett, 1995).

The second and third generations of White ethnic groups who did not appear racially different from the Caucasian core could, if they so chose, give up their language and traditions, change their names, and assimilate. However, this was not possible for African Americans, East Asian Americans, Native Americans, or darker-skinned Mexican Americans. (Bennett, 1995, p. 87).

While some immigrant groups integrated into American culture, more and more immigrants still came to the United States. These newly arrived immigrants also had primary language needs. While some school systems attempted to eliminate all foreign language instruction, others were fighting to keep it (Bennett, 1995). In the case of Meyer vs. Nebraska, the Supreme Court ruled that forbidding to teach foreign language in school was a violation of liberty (Supreme Court of the US, 1923).

By the 1930s, half of the fourteen to seventeen year old students in the United States either did not make it to high school or dropped out before graduating (Crawford,

1989). The median number of school years completed was ten during this time (Rothstein, 1998). There were several factors that contributed to this astonishing statistic, mainly the collapse of the United States economy and the fact that students were not learning English and thus were being held back (1998). The collapse of the economy caused students to be pulled out of the school systems to work in farms across the country.

Furthermore, immigrants were economically and educationally affected harder than natives (Crawford, 1989). Italian immigrants, for example, were given an English IQ test to assess their performance Rothstein, 1998). These students did not know enough English to perform well on the test. They tested at about 85 (the average for native-born students during that time was 102), which lead to a high rate of retention (1998).

The high retention and dropout rates among immigrant students once again brought changes into the United States education system; in the 1930s, according to Rothstein, students were being pulled out of their regular classrooms two to five times a week for 45-minute periods of English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction to enhance oral English proficiency. This ESL program was not enough, though; after assessing the program, it was found that the

students were learning the English language but not any content during the 45 minutes of ESL instruction (1989). This meant students were still dropping out and not learning enough of the language to obtain skilled jobs.

The United States was still a young nation going through a great deal of social changes. When World War II came along, the government once again realized that the trend toward educational monolingualism had left the United States at a disadvantage (Bennett, 1995). It was now the age of communication; radios and telephones were used in American homes and the war revolved around communication in all languages. Although recognizing their linguistic disadvantage, it was not until 1958 that the United States really took action against the policy of linguistic isolation; this was the year the Russians launched Sputnik (1995). The US realized that American students were lacking knowledge in Science, Mathematics, and Foreign Language. The United States Congress passed the National Defense Education Act, whose primary goal was to facilitate instruction of Mathematics, Science, and Foreign Language (Gonzalez, 1979). According to the United States Department of Education, the act can be best summarized as follows:

National Defense Education Act (Public Law 85-864) provided assistance to state and local school systems for strengthening instruction in science, mathematics, modern foreign languages, and other critical subjects; improvement of state statistical services; guidance, counseling, and testing services and training institutes; higher education student loans and fellowships; foreign language study and training provided by colleges and universities; experimentation and dissemination of information on more effective utilization of television, motion pictures, and related media for educational purposes; and vocational education for technical occupations necessary to the national defense. (p. 2)

The National Defense Education Act gave English-speaking students the tools they needed to enhance the three main areas of deficit mentioned earlier, but the act also facilitated the use of native languages in schools where there was a high population of non-English speaking students.

A good example of how the National Defense Education Act facilitated other programs is portrayed in the events that occurred in Florida in the 1960s when the State of Florida experienced a wave of Cuban immigrants (Bennett, 1995). According to Bennett (p. 248), "...most of whom (immigrants) were highly educated, skilled professionals who held social and educational values compatible with Miami's mainstream..." Once again there was a situation similar to the mass immigration of Germans in the late

1800s that resulted in German instruction in public schools (1995). Here we had a large group of highly educated Spanish-speaking individuals concentrated in one geographical area. This resulted in the formation of Miami's Coral Way School in 1963 (1995).

In this school, students were grouped by language; Spanish-speaking students were instructed in Spanish in the mornings and English in the afternoons (Crawford, 1989). The school also provided English-language-dominant students the opportunity to be proficient in two languages and to attain an appreciation of both cultures (Bennett, 1995). The results in Miami were a success; students smoothly progressed in both languages (Crawford, 1989).

According to Castellanos (1983), the successful bilingual education programs in Miami and later in Texas, New Mexico, and California, created more interest in bilingual education at the federal level. These successful programs aided in the passage of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968.

"The passage in 1968 of the Title VII Bilingual Education Act as a new provision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 authorized funds for local school districts. These funds were specifically intended for programs for students who spoke languages other than English. Title VII funded 76 bilingual programs in its first

year, and served students who spoke 14 different languages." (Blanco, 1978, p. 457)

The purpose of this policy was to reduce the dropout rates for language minority students who were limited English proficient (Hatton, 1999). During this time, about 80% of the Mexican American students in California and the Southwest dropped out of school before graduating (1999).

Moreover, this act facilitated teaching students in their native language at the same time that they are receiving English instruction. The act provided Federal funding and encouraged local school districts to use approaches that incorporated native language instruction, including the training of teachers and staff (Crawford, 1989). Furthermore it allowed the development and dissemination of instructional materials to encourage parental involvement (1989).

In the 1970 Lau vs. Nichols court case in San Francisco a child was failing because he did not understand the language in which he was being taught. The case was taken to the Supreme Court where in 1974 the judge ruled that, "There is no equality of treatment, merely by providing students with the same facility, textbooks, teachers from any meaningful education"

(Crawford, 1989, p. 145). In 1975, the US commissioner of education announced the Lau remedies after most districts failed to meet their responsibilities. They provided basic guidelines for schools with limited English students.

In 1981, another marquee case was settled, Castaneda vs. Pickard. This case set the standard for the courts in examining programs for LEP students. According to court records, the plaintiff's complaint was as follows:

Plaintiffs appeal the judgment of the district court finding that the Raymondville Independent School District does not discriminate against Mexican-Americans in its ability grouping and teacher hiring practices, and that the Raymondville Independent School District has implemented an adequate bilingual education program under federal law. For the reasons [**2] set forth below, we affirm. Plaintiffs, Mexican-American children and their parents representing a class of others similarly situated, instituted this action against the Raymondville Independent School District ("RISD") alleging that the district engaged in policies and practices of racial discrimination against Mexican-Americans depriving Plaintiffs and their class of rights in violation of the fourteenth amendment and 42 U.S.C. § 1983 (1976), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq. (1976), and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. § 1701 et seq. (1976) ("EEOA"). Plaintiffs claimed that the school district unlawfully discriminated against them by using an ability grouping system for classroom assignment which was based on racially and ethnically discriminatory

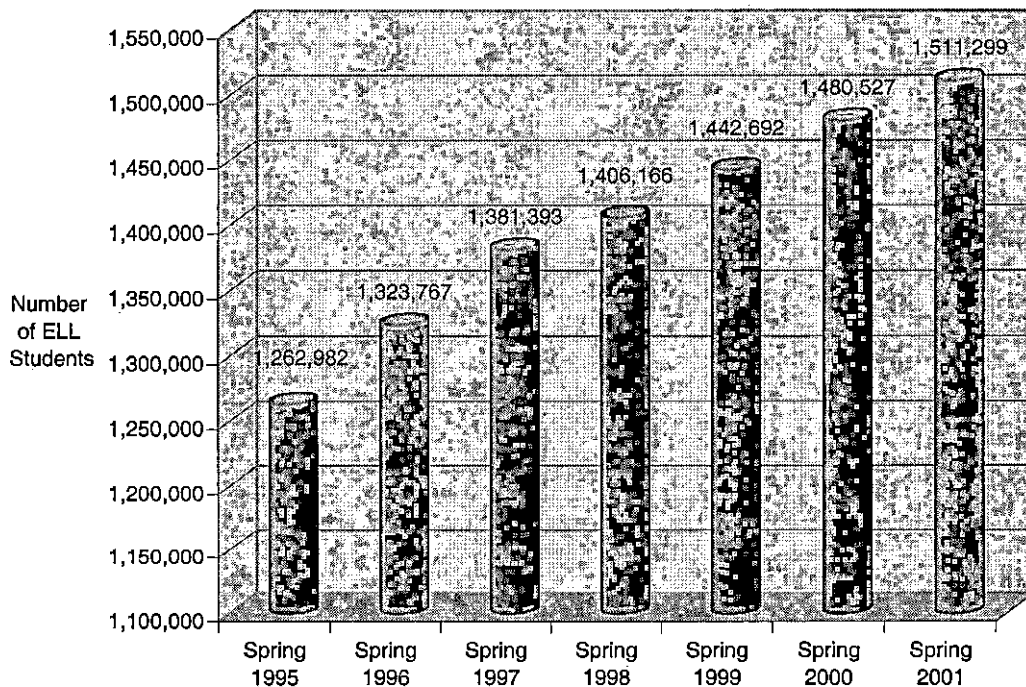
criteria and resulted in impermissible classroom segregation; by discriminating against Mexican-Americans in the hiring and promotion of teachers and administrators; and by failing to implement [*459] adequate bilingual education to overcome linguistic barriers impeding Plaintiffs' equal participation [**3] in the educational program of the district. The factual and procedural history of this litigation is set forth in our earlier opinion, *Castaneda v. Pickard*, 648 F.2d 989 (5th Cir. 1981), and we see no need to repeat that history here. (US Court of Appeals, 1986, p.36)

This case overturned the ruling from the 1978 case involving the same two parties. But the 1981 ruling dictated that school districts must have and provide the following: 1) a pedagogically sound plan for LEP students, 2) Sufficient qualified staff to implement the plan and 3) a system established to evaluate the program. This case has been used repeatedly to evaluate districts and their bilingual programs (Crawford, 1989).

Bilingual Education in California

Out of all the states in the Union, California is the most diverse and the most populated. According to the 2000 census, more than 34 million people live in the State (roughly 12.5% of the entire United States population). Furthermore, California has about 1.5 million English Language Learners enrolled in its private and public

schools across the State; that is about 25% of the total student population in the US. These 1.5 million students speak in 55 different languages, with Spanish being the most prevalent (California Department of Education). As seen in figure 1, the number of English Language Learners will most likely continue to increase.



Source: US Department of Education
 Figure 1. English Language Learners in California Public Schools

According to the United States Department of Education, California is the State that is most dramatically affected by bilingual education policy due to its high number of LEP students. The chart below demonstrates that 12 out of the top 20 school districts

with the highest number of LEP students are located in California, thus supporting the United States Department of Education's statement.

Table 1. School Districts with the Highest Number of Limited English Proficient Students: 1993-1994

	District	LEPs	Total Enrollment	% LEP
1	Los Angeles, CA*	291,527	639,129	45.6%
2	New York, NY**	154,526	1,015,756	15.2%
3	Chicago, IL*	57,964	409,499	14.2%
4	Dade County, FL*	54,735	422,658	13.0%
5	Houston, TX*	50,839	200,839	25.3%
6	Santa Ana, CA*	33,540	48,407	69.3%
7	San Diego, CA*	33,397	127,258	26.2%
8	Dallas, TX*	31,522	142,810	22.1%
9	Long Beach, CA*	26,042	76,783	33.9%
10	Fresno, CA*	24,022	76,349	31.5%
11	Garden Grove, CA*	17,856	41,664	42.9%
12	San Francisco, CA*	17,673	61,631	28.7%
13	El Paso, TX*	17,609	64,145	27.5%
14	Montebello, CA*	14,988	32,321	46.4%
15	Glendale, CA*	14,930	28,742	51.9%
16	Broward County, FL*	14,622	236,885	6.2%
17	Boston, MA**	14,518	59,613	24.4%
18	Oakland, CA*	14,044	51,748	27.1%
19	Pomona, CA*	13,381	29,880	44.8%
20	Sacramento, CA*	12,290	49,997	24.6%

*Data obtained from State Education Agency.

**Data obtained from Local Education Agency.

Because of this diversity and high number of English Language Learners, California has been a state in which a great amount of time has been dedicated toward educational

policy. The latest major change came in June 1998, when California voters passed Proposition 227 with a majority vote. This Proposition replaced one of the country's most extensive bilingual education programs for English Language Learners (ELL) (Baker, 1998). Proposition 227 dictated that the California bilingual education program already in place would be replaced by the Structured English Immersion (SEI) program (1998). California voters were handed the task of deciding which program was the best method to teach students in our public schools. The lack of knowledge regarding the two competing programs resulted in mass confusion

During the campaigning time, California voters were exposed to a plethora of information regarding the issue. It came in many forms and from many different individuals such as college professors, teachers, politicians, and students. This information, in turn, resulted in heated debates over bilingual education, further straining race relations in California. In Los Angeles, a white school principal famous for not supporting bilingual education, was attacked by several Latino students on his way to work (Trevino, J. 1999). When the dust settled, Proposition 227 had become one of the most successful initiatives in

California history, winning 61% of the votes (Mitchell, D. et al 1999).

California voters were enticed to approve Proposition 227 with the promise of better test scores, higher graduation rates, and more rapid language acquisition. These promises were supported by several studies performed in Texas, which showed that students learned better in SEI than in the traditional bilingual program (Gersten, 1995).

On the other hand, several noted scholars in the field felt ELL students should be taught all academic subjects in their native language for no fewer than five, and preferably seven, years (Gersten, R. 1999). According to Mitchell (1999), linguists remain divided on how to best design a program for LEP students. As this debate goes on, thousands of students in California are being affected by their decision.

Bilingual Education Program

Under the Bilingual Education program, students who enter school with limited English Proficiency (LEP) can receive continued instruction in their native language (Mitchell, et al., 1999), while slowly and simultaneously adding English instruction (Rothstein, 1998). Bilingual education is seen as a necessary component of

multicultural schools in which children are taught in two languages: English and the native language (Bennett 1995). The length a student remains in bilingual education varies by student; some spend five to seven years in this program before going out into the mainstream program (1999). The major goal of the bilingual education program is to make sure students do not fall behind in their other subjects as they are learning English (1998).

"The cornerstone of most contemporary models of bilingual education is that content knowledge and skills learned in a student's primary language will transfer to English once the student has experienced between five and seven years of native language instruction." (Gersten, 1999, p. 2)

Students will learn better and faster if they understand what is being taught (Bennett, 1995). Further, several noted scholars, such as Cummins (1994), also argued that English language learners should be taught all academic subjects in their native language for no fewer than five, preferably seven years (Gersten, 1999).

Several studies have shown the most effective way to English language literacy for language minority students is through first language instruction (Perez, et al., 1992). This is true for all language minority students, such as those who speak an African American dialect, as well as the myriad of American Indian and Asian languages

(Bennett, 1995). According to Krashen in Bennett (1995), "Children do not learn a second language through direct instruction. Instead, proficiency in a second language is acquired in the same way the first language was acquired, when it is understood. Therefore, Krashen recommends that teachers provide background knowledge in the native tongue to make English instruction more comprehensible." (p. 249-250)

One reason why the bilingual education program is effective, according to some researchers, is that native language instruction helps penetrate a child's affective filters, such as lack of motivation to speak the second language, lack of self confidence, and anxiety (Bennett, 1995). Reducing these factors, as well as others, may actually help the student grasp the new language faster and more efficiently. The effectiveness of the program is sometimes measured in the length of time it takes students to go into the mainstream program, but there are many other factors that dictate how successful a student learns English.

Structure English Immersion Program

The Structured English Immersion (SEI) has been defined in two parts: 1. English is used and taught at a

level appropriate to the class of English Language Learners (different from the way English is used in the mainstream classroom), 2. Teachers are oriented toward maximizing instruction in English and use of English for 70% to 90% of instructional time, averaged over the first three years of instruction (Baker, 1998). In California, ELL students will be fully immersed in English language instruction during their first year of public school (Mitchell, et al., 1999). The major difference between a bilingual education and an SEI programs is the percentage of instructional time the content knowledge is taught in English as opposed to Spanish or another language (Baker, 1998). Students are taught in English the majority of the time, 60%-90%, depending on the program.

Bilingual Education Versus Structure English Immersion

The debate is which program is more effective in mainstreaming English Language Learner. There is much debate, even within studies that have been published. Take for example the argument between Baker and Meier in the late 1990s. According to Baker, studies showed that students learn better in the Structured English Immersion (SEI) program than in the traditional bilingual program (Gersten, 1995). In his report, Baker explained how SEI

students outperformed bilingual education students in standardized test scores. Moreover, SEI students were found to have a lower dropout rate than bilingual education students.

According to Meier, there are several problems with Baker's study; one is that he manipulated earlier studies to come up with his own conclusions (Meier, 1999). For example, Baker compared an ill-defined bilingual education program with a well-defined English immersion program (1999). Meier contended that an ill-defined program will almost always be inferior to a well-defined program.

The war of words between supporters and opponents of both programs continues with the debate of what is best for students. Some researchers argue that Latino students spend far too much time in native language instruction and conclude that bilingual programs are hurting students they were initially established to help (Traub, 1999). This belief stands in contrast to what other researchers like Gersten (1999) and Cummins (1994) believe: That students should be taught all academic subjects in their native language for five to seven years. Nonetheless, an unbiased review of research addressing this problem indicates we do not have enough or adequate information to

determine the optimal time for a student to be taught academic content in English (Gersten, 1999).

The debate goes on as supporters of SEI quote successful programs like the Canadian Immersion program (Baker, 1998). On the other hand, supporters of bilingual education point to the success of the Coral Way School in Miami and most recently the success of some programs in Texas (Meier, 1999).

Factors Affecting Language Acquisition

Although comparing two competing programs has been a difficult task, researchers have had better luck pinpointing the factors that affect a student's rate and success in language acquisition. Bennett (1995) described some of these factors in the book Multicultural Education. They are also the key problems in comparing two different programs: each program is comprised of a different population of students, with different backgrounds, and different factors in favor of and against language acquisition.

In her book, Bennett pointed out that one of the key individual differences that influences language acquisition is the learning skills of a student. These learning skills dictate a student's ability to change or

attain new capabilities (Bennett, 1995). This concept in turn makes the assumption that a gifted and talented (GATE) student will be able to acquire a new language faster and more efficiently than an RSP student.

Another major factor in language acquisition is achievement level. According to Bennett (1995), it refers to the knowledge a student has previously acquired that relates to what is being taught. This translates to the level of background knowledge students bring with them from their native country. For example, students who come to the United States from areas where they have been able to attend school will acquire the new language faster than students who come from an area where schooling was not available. This is to say that a student who comes with background information can focus on the new language, rather than on cognitive information like learning how to add or subtract.

There are several other factors that Bennett (1995) considered important in influencing language acquisition.

These are:

1. Self-concept: set of beliefs that individuals hold true about themselves.
2. Gender: A student's gender affects learning in many ways. Boys are more adept at math and science while girls excel in English and humanities.

3. Special interests: refer to the hobbies and recreational activities they enjoy most and pursue whenever they can.
4. Physical characteristics: physical health, maturation affect intellectual and emotional growth and development. For example attractiveness, health and vitality, size, age, strength, agility, coordination.
5. Peer relations: social structure of the classroom and the social status of the individual student with respect to classmates can have in impact on student learning.
6. Family conditions: the child's experiences at home, as well as a wide range of factors such as love and emotional support, sibling relationships, parents; occupations, special learning experiences, economic resources, ethnicity.
7. Beliefs, attitudes, and values: the heart of what is meant by culture.
8. Sense of ethnic identity: the degree to which a member of any particular ethnic group retains the original culture that was learned from family and closest childhood associates.
9. Teacher perceptions of individual differences related to ethnicity and poverty: Teachers tend to regard these as deficits or disadvantages.

The most important factor that Bennett (1995) wrote about is motivation. It is the inner drive that gives students their desire and intent to learn (1995). For example, English language learners who attend a school where the majority of the community, students, and teachers speak the native language, will probably not be too motivated to learn English since they do not have to

in order to survive in that particular community. On the other hand, a Spanish-speaking student who lives in a community with a minimal number of Spanish speakers will be more motivated to learn the language in order to survive in the community. The charts below summarize some of the factors that motivate students to learn a new language or retain their native language.

Table 2. Political, Social, and Demographic Factors

Native Language Retention	Native Language Loss
Large number of speakers living in concentration (ghettos, reservations, ethnic neighborhoods, rural speech islands)	Small number of speakers, dispersed among speakers of other languages
Recent arrival and/or continuing immigration	Long, stable residence in the United States
Geographical proximity to the homeland; ease of travel to the homeland	Homeland remote and inaccessible
High rate of return to the homeland; intention to return to the homeland; homeland language community still intact	Low rate or impossibility of return to homeland (refugees, Indians displaced from their tribal territories)
Occupational continuity	Occupational shift, especially from rural to urban
Vocational concentration, i.e., employment where co-worker share language background; employment within the language community (stores serving the community, traditional crafts, homemaking, etc)	Vocations in which some interaction with English or other languages is required; speakers dispersed by employers (e.g., African slaves)

Low social and economic mobility in mainstream occupations	High social and economic mobility in mainstream occupations
Low level education, leading to low social and economic mobility; but educated and articulate community leaders, familiar with the English-speaking society and loyal to their own language community	Advanced level of education, leading to socio-economic mobility; education that alienates potential community leaders
Nativism, racism, and ethnic discriminations as they serve to isolate a community and encourage identity only with the ethnic group rather than the nation at large	Nativism, racism and ethnic discrimination, as they force individuals to deny their ethnic identity in order to make their way in society

Source: Bennett (1995, p. 252)

Table 3. Cultural Factors

Native Language Retention	Native Language Loss
Mother-tongue institutions, including schools, churches, clubs, theaters, presses, broadcasts	Lack of mother-tongue institutions, from lack of interest or lack of resources
Religious and/or cultural ceremonies requiring command of the mother tongue	Ceremonial life institutionalized in another tongue or not requiring active use of mother tongue
Ethnic identity strongly tied to language; nationalistic aspirations as language group; mother	Ethnic identity defined by factors other than language, as for those from multilingual

tongue, the homeland national language	countries or language groups spanning several nations; low level of nationalism
Emotional attachment to mother tongue as a defining characteristic of ethnicity, of self	Ethnic identity, sense of self derived from factors such as religion, custom, race rather than shared speech
Emphasis on family ties and position in kinship or community network	Low emphasis on family or community ties, high emphasis on individual achievement
Emphasis on education, if in mother-tongue or community-controlled schools, or used to enhance awareness of ethnic heritage; low emphasis on education otherwise	Emphasis on education and acceptance of public education in English
Culture unlike Anglo society	Culture and religion congruent with Anglo society

Source: Bennett (1995, p. 252-253)

Table 4. Linguistic Factors

Native Language Retention	Native Language Loss
Standard, written variety is mother tongue	Minor, nonstandard, and/or unwritten variety as mother tongue
Use of Latin alphabet in mother tongue, making reproduction inexpensive and second-language literacy relatively easy	Use of non-Latin writing system in mother tongue, especially if it is unusual, expensive to reproduce, or difficult for bilinguals to learn

Mother tongue with international status	Mother tongue of little international importance
Literacy in mother tongue, used for exchange within the community and with homeland	No literacy in mother tongue; illiteracy
Some tolerance for loan words, if they lead to flexibility of the language in its new setting	No tolerance for loan words if not alternated ways of capturing new experience evolve, too much tolerance of loans, leading to mixing and eventual language loss

Source: Bennett (1995, p. 253)

Summary

The literature important to the project was presented in Chapter Two. A brief history of bilingualism in the US which focused on the large migration waves of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This chapter also looked at bilingualism in California specifically, focusing on the high and growing number of ELL students.

The major components of a bilingual education program and structure English immersion program were analyzed. A brief comparison and the politics behind the two competing programs were provided.

Lastly, chapter two provided information regarding the factors that affect language acquisition. These factors include political, social, demographic, cultural, and linguistic factors.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter Three documents the steps used in developing the project. Specifically, the population served in the study, treatment of data, and data analysis procedures.

Development

Resources and Content Validation

This thesis used two major resources: United States Department of Education data and school district personnel, specifically the program specialist in charge of redesignation. These two resources were used due to their accuracy, availability, and reliability.

Population Served

The City of Rialto has a population of 91,873. The population is broken down into the following ethnic categories: 21% White, 22% Black, 2% Asian, 51% Hispanic, and 4% other.

The average age in Rialto is 29.4 years with a very young working population. The average home price is about \$135,000 and the average household income is \$49,000. The City has four fire stations, 26 churches, one public

library, one 18-hole golf course, one sports center with an Olympic size pool, and three community parks.

The Rialto Unified School District is considered a fairly large school district for a city the size of Rialto. This is mainly because Rialto is a residential city with few large businesses. Most of the land of the City is allocated for residential property. The Rialto USD serves students in a 55 square mile area. The district boundaries go out of the City of Rialto and serve nearby cities such as San Bernardino, Colton, and Fontana. The District was founded in 1891 and was unified in 1964.

The District is composed of 30,161 students. The ethnic breakdown is 11% White, 26% Black, 2% Asian, 60% Hispanic, and 1% other. Twenty two percent of the district population is considered English Learner and 18% Fluent English Proficient.

Students are divided into 17 elementary schools, five middle schools, two high schools, and three alternative schools. About 60% of the students in the district receive free or reduced lunch, with about 4,600 students receiving aid through Cal Works. Cal Works provides food stamps and other services to low income families.

This thesis focused on the English Language Learners and the number of students redesignated each year from the Rialto Unified School District.

Data Sources

The US Department of Education database was used to collect the demographic data for the District. The Department of Education collected and stored the information that school districts provided at the end of the school year. The following information was collected in this manner:

1. District Demographics
 - a. Total population
 - b. Ethnicity breakdown
2. District LEP student demographics
 - a. English Learners
 - b. Fluent English speakers
3. Redesignation rates
 - a. Number of redesignated students from 1996-2001

Interviews with District personnel were used to review the implementation of the Structured English Immersion program and redesignation procedures. The following individuals were interviewed.

1. District Administrator: Principal at Jehue Middle School
2. School program specialist: responsible for testing and redesignating LEP students

3. School board member

Data Analysis Procedures

The district demographical data were used to demonstrate the diversity of the school district, both ethnically and socio-economically.

Redesignation rates were analyzed by observing the percent change from the 1995-1996 through 2000-2001 school years. The total number of English Language Learners was compared to the number of redesignated students for that year. Using these two numbers, the percentage of the total ELL population that was redesignated was calculated. These numbers will be analyzed to construct an unbiased conclusion to this research thesis.

The school personnel interviews were collected and used to inform the reader of the redesignation procedures.

Summary

Chapter three covered several aspects of the methodology behind this thesis. A brief overview of the development process of the thesis, followed by a description of the city of Rialto and its demographics. Lastly, the steps taken in obtaining and analyzing the data were provided.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

Included in Chapter Four is a presentation of the results found upon completion the thesis. The results are followed by a brief discussion of the findings.

Presentation of the Findings

Implementation of the Program

The Rialto Unified School District implemented a Standard Bilingual Education program between September 1995 and June 1998. During this time, 35% of the students received academic subject instruction in their primary language, 35% received academic subject instruction in a bilingual setting, and 30% received their academic subject instruction in English with primary language support in the form of tutors and in-classroom aides.

In the fall of 1998, the Rialto Unified School District switched from the Standard Bilingual Education program to a Structured English Immersion program. This change forced the school District to place 50% of the LEP students in the SEI program (taught 70%-90% of the time in English), 49% in the mainstream academic program (100%

English instruction), and 1% in an alternative course of study.

Redesignation Procedures

The Rialto Unified School District has used the same redesignation procedures for over a decade. The program specialist at the school site starts the redesignation process by looking at acceptable CELDT scores. In order for students to be redesignated, they must meet all of the following criteria (see appendix 1: Redesignation form):

1. CELDT Overall Proficiency level score of Early Advanced or Advanced.
2. Teacher evaluation of academic performance:
Student must achieve grade of at least three (C equivalent) in English, Mathematics, Social Sciences, and Science.
3. English Language Arts California Standards Test (CST) scale score of 325+.
4. A writing sample demonstrating that writing is at a proficient level or above.
5. Parent opinion and consultation.

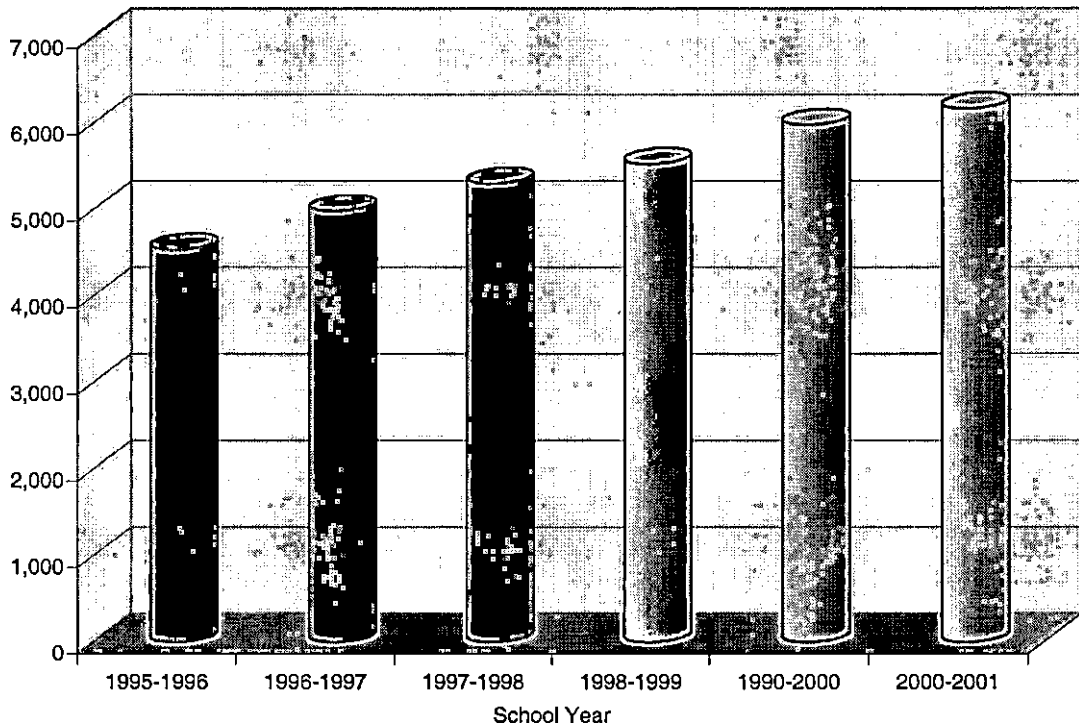
Redesignation Data

Table 5. Redesignation Rates for the Rialto Unified School District

School Year	Number of ELL Students	Number of ELL Students Redesignated	% Redesignated	Average
1995-1996	4,528	121	2.7%	2.2%
1996-1997	4,978	78	1.6%	
1997-1998	5,298	114	2.2%	
1998-1999	5,524	161	2.9%	3.9%
1999-2000	5,977	213	3.6%	
2000-2001	6,165	327	5.3%	
Average	5,412	169	3.1%	

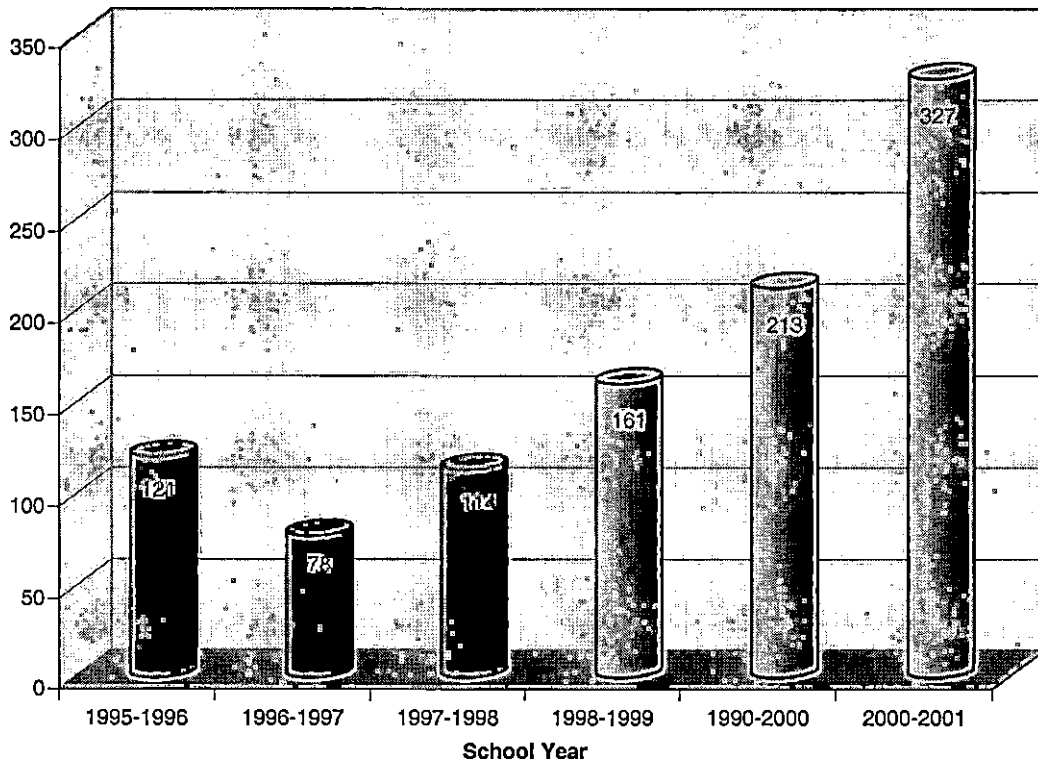
Source: US Department of Education

Table 5 represents the redesignation rates of the Rialto Unified School District from fall 1995 through June 2001. During the three years prior to SEI, the District redesignated an average of 2.2% of the eligible Students. During the three years of SEI implementation, the District redesignated an average of 3.9% of the eligible students. We also see a gradual increase in redesignation percentage during the last three years of the study.



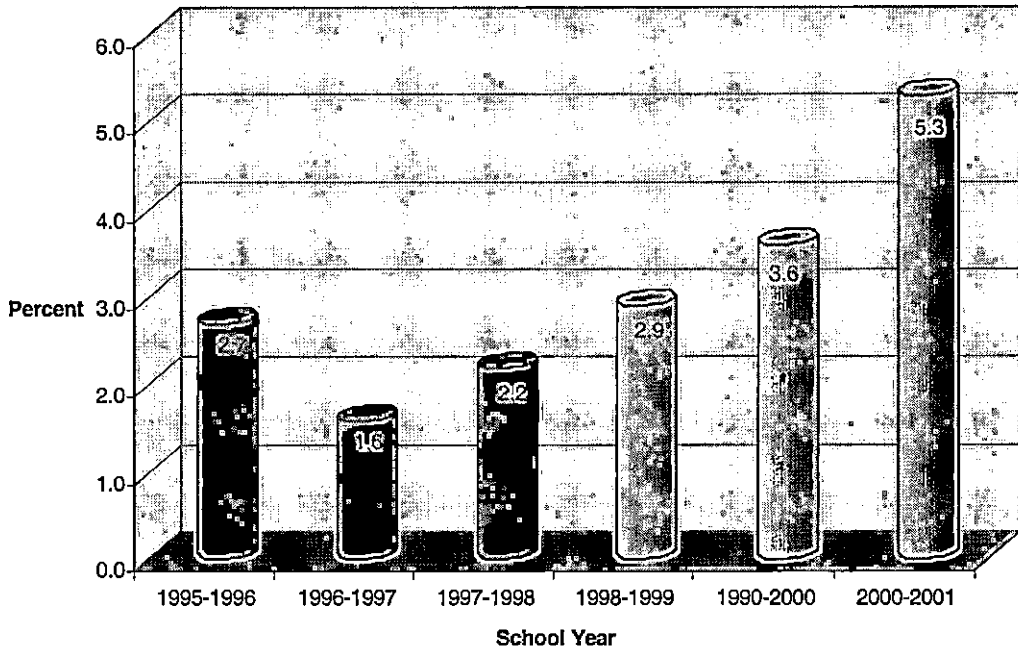
Source: US Department of Education
 Figure 2. Number of English Language Learners in the Rialto Unified School District.

Figure 2 shows the number of ELL students enrolled in the RUSD during the six years of the study. During the 1995-1996 school year, the District had over 4,000 ELL students enrolled in its schools. There has been a gradual increase in the number of ELL students in the District over the last five years of the study. During the 2000-2001 school year, the number of ELL students had reached the 6,000 mark.



Source: US Department of Education
 Figure 3. Number of English Language Learners Redesignated

Figure 3 shows the number of redesignated students over a six-year period. We see during the years (1995-1998) of bilingual instruction there was an up and down effect. The number of redesignated students by spring 1996 was 121, which decreased the next year to 78, and then increased again to 114 the following year. On the other hand, during the years of SEI (1998-2001) we see a gradual increase in the number of ELL students redesignated. It increased from 161 in the spring of 1999 to 327 in the spring of 2001



Source: US Department of Education
 Figure 4. Percent of Total English Language Learners Redesignated.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of eligible ELL Students that were redesignated during the six years of the study. We see the same up and down patter for the three years prior to SEI as we did in Figure 2. We also see a gradual increase in the percentage of redesignated students during the years in which SEI was implemented.

Discussion of the Findings

Implementation of the Program

The Rialto Unified School district implemented an SEI program the same year California residents voted for Proposition 227. The District eliminated native language

instruction in fall 1998, so that only one percent of the LEP students were receiving this type of instruction. On the other hand, the number of LEP students receiving subject matter instruction in English increased from 30% to 99% after the implementation of SEI.

Redesignation Procedures

The Rialto Unified School District implements a strict and clear redesignation procedure. All five criteria must be met to redesignate a student in language learning programs. Further, each school site has a program specialist/resource teacher who is in charge of monitoring CELDT assessment and starting the redesignation process.

Redesignation Data

Table 2 illustrates the redesignation rates from the 1995-1996 through 2000-2001 school years. The findings show a gradual increase in the number of redesignated students over the last six years. It also indicates that the total population of ELL students has also gradually increased over the same time period.

During the years that the District used bilingual education (1995-1998) it was found that, on average, 2.2% of the total ELL population was redesignated. During the years in which the District used English Immersion (1998-

2001) it was found that, on average, 3.9% of the total population of ELL population was redesignated.

Special attention should be given to the data for the 1998-1999 school, which was the first year the Standard English Immersion program was implemented. During this school year, there was a small change in the percentage of redesignated students.

Figure 2, 3, and 4 visually illustrate the gradual change in ELL population, the number of redesignated students, and the percentage of the total ELL population that was redesignated.

Summary

Chapter four presented the findings of this thesis. Data supporting the implementation of the SEI program was presented followed by the redesignation guidelines used by the District. This chapter also included a table and three charts that visually show the finding of the thesis. Finally, the chapter ends with a brief discussion of the data obtained.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Included in Chapter Five is a presentation of the conclusions gleaned as a result of completing the thesis. The recommendations obtained from the project are presented. Lastly, the Chapter concludes with a summary of the chapter.

Conclusions

The conclusions extracted from the project follow.

1. The Rialto Unified School District used a standard bilingual education program prior to the passage of Proposition 227.
2. The Rialto Unified School District implemented A Standard English Immersion program in the fall of 1998, after the passage of Proposition 227.
3. There was a gradual increase in the percentage of the total LEP population redesignated since the passage of Proposition 227.
4. The increase in redesignation rates, though significant, can not be solely attributed to Standard English Immersion since there were

other programs implemented in the district at the same time.

Recommendations for Further Research

These recommendations are based on identifying other factors that aid in the language acquisition. Proposition 227 changed one program in the school system, but other programs were also changed or other new programs were implemented. The recommendations resulting from the project are as follow:

1. Study other educational programs that were implemented around the same time as SEI. For example, after school tutoring, parent institutes, Saturday academies, etc. and their impact on language acquisition.
2. Assess the readiness and competency of the staff regarding the redesignation procedure before and after Proposition 227.
3. Study teacher preparation programs, staff development programs, and school focus regarding LEP students before and after Proposition 227.

Summary

Chapter Five reviewed the conclusions extracted from the project. It presented an unbiased conclusion based on the data obtained. Lastly, several recommendations for further research derived from the thesis were presented.

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