This study unpacks the inherent tension that arises when any school adopts a particular model for reform – how to mesh a model with the reality of daily life in the classroom. In the field of bilingual education, programme models abound, and the literature reflects a great diversity among them, as well as efforts to evaluate their relative effectiveness. This interpretive, ethnographic study reveals how one particular programme model, two-way immersion, is enacted in the context of Monte Vista Elementary. The study illustrates the tension between the two-way immersion model and implementation at the school site. The staff developed a series of school-wide agreements regarding student placement, outcome goals, and literacy instruction. These agreements shaped the nature of literacy instruction, and for one teacher led to a focus on language of instruction rather than rich, authentic literacy events for all students.

Keywords: two-way immersion, bilingual education, educational policy, bilingual teachers

Introduction

Yeah it is dual language . . . in the process . . .. We haven’t really defined it like that. It is bilingual education but basically I would say, I don’t know if the word is correct, like catered to the need of each child. It is . . . biliteracy. (Interview #3, 139, 143) Alejandra, 2nd grade bilingual teacher, Monte Vista Elementary School

How to describe the program? We are calling it a two-way immersion and I don’t know . . .. I think programs evolve and over time they become well founded, where we know this is where it is going. But right now, we are still in that gray area. Are we . . . a two-way immersion? It is kind of looking year to year who the kids are.’ (Interview #2, 66, 70, 74) Elena, Principal, Monte Vista Elementary School

The words spoken by this teacher and principal point to an inherent tension that arises when any school adopts a particular model for reform – how to mesh a model with the reality of daily life in the classroom. In the field of bilingual education programme models abound, and the literature reflects the great diversity among the programmes, as well as efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of one model over another (August & Hakuta, 1997). Among them, two-way immersion has been touted as a model that integrates both English speakers and speakers of a minority language with the outcome goal of bilingualism for all students.
In the quote above, Alejandra, a second grade bilingual teacher at Monte Vista Elementary, identified the programme model at her school as being dual language, or two-way immersion, but hesitated on whether the programme followed the model exactly. Elena, the principal, also talked about the bilingual programme as generally being two-way immersion, with exceptions based on student needs. This interpretive, ethnographic study reveals how one bilingual education programme is enacted in the daily life of one elementary school. By following Alejandra through school meetings and the enacted literacy instruction of her classroom, this paper will trace the local construction of a two-way immersion model.

When teachers and administrators came together at particular meetings to discuss the two-way immersion programme at Monte Vista, their conversations centred on ‘implementation’. Implementation involved translating the officially constructed policy of a two-way immersion model into school-wide agreements for the school community. In this process, the staff focused on the ways a two-way immersion model prescribed outcome goals, literacy instruction and student placement. They discussed these key elements given their own context—what challenges they faced and the potential solutions. Their discussions brought to light a tension between the ideal notions of implementing a two-way immersion model and the reality of the diverse student population at Monte Vista. Efforts to reconcile this tension hinged on how students were framed in the school discourse. The staff distinguished among students based on their language and literacy abilities, a distinction that fell along racial and socio-economic lines. In these discussions, they articulated school-wide agreements that would adapt the key elements of the two-way immersion model to better serve the needs of their students. As background, I present a brief overview of the two-way immersion model as represented in the literature. The substance of this paper will deal with how Monte Vista Elementary defined two-way immersion and then implemented the programme. This discussion will focus on the school level negotiations, with a glimpse into Alejandra’s classroom level implementation.

Two-Way Immersion Programme Model

Bilingual education programme models incorporate instruction in the native language and English, and beginning literacy instruction in the native language for language minority students. According to a growing body of research, knowledge that one acquires through one language will pave the way for knowledge acquisition in the second language (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Cummins’ (1981, 1989, 1994) ‘threshold hypothesis’ states that language minority students need to reach a certain level of native language proficiency in order to facilitate second-language development. While the ultimate priority of any bilingual education programme model is to achieve English competence for academic success, some programmes promote maintenance of the first language as well.

Two-way immersion represents an effort to serve both language minority and language majority students through the same programme. In the literature and in the field, several terms are used to describe this educational programme model, among which are the following: two-way immersion; dual language;
bilingual immersion education; two-way bilingual, and Spanish immersion. The growth of such programmes has been considerable with the oldest dating back to 1963 in the state of Florida in the United States. In fact, as recently as 1999, there were 250 programmes in the United States involving up to 50,000 students (Genesee & Gandara, 1999). Two-way immersion programmes tend to share the following features (Baker & Hornberger, 2001):

- a non-English language (minority language) is used for at least 50% of instruction;
- only one language is used for instruction at a time: language is learned via content, and instruction is adjusted to student’s language level but is also challenging;
- both English and non-English speakers are present, preferably in balanced numbers, and are integrated for lessons.

The following three major intersecting dimensions provide a framework for categorising bilingual programmes: (1) goals of the programme; (2) sociolinguistic status of the languages of instruction; (3) the profile of the students being instructed (Christian & Genesee, 2001). In terms of goals, two-way immersion differs from the most prevalent form of bilingual education in the United States, transitional bilingual education, which essentially aims to move children into English-only instruction within two to three years. In two-way immersion, all students learn in the minority language for at least 50% of the day, beginning in kindergarten and through the grades. The overarching goal is bilingualism and biliteracy for all.

Two-way immersion differs from immersion bilingual education in terms of the sociolinguistic status of the languages of instruction and the profile of the students being instructed. Immersion programmes usually contain only language majority children learning most, if not at all, of the curriculum in a second language. A widely recognised form of immersion education is that found in Canada, where English speakers are immersed in French. In this context, it is an additive bilingual situation – where both English and French are prestigious languages. So, French immersion poses no threat to the English speakers’ native language development (August & Hakuta, 1997). In similar fashion, English is a high status tongue in the United States. So, the Spanish immersion component of the two-way model is justified as a viable way to promote bilingualism for English speakers.

In contrast, language minority students in the United States are predominantly from a working-class background and speak a low-status tongue in society (August & Hakuta, 1997), and consequently, the experience of English immersion could be devastating. As Baker (2001: 205) states, ‘Such a situation is different from the incorrectly termed ‘immersion’ or ‘structured immersion’ of children from language minority backgrounds in the majority language (for example Spanish speakers in the USA). Use of the term ‘immersion’ or ‘structured immersion’ in such a subtractive, assimilationist situation is best avoided.’ In other words, minority language students are developing their knowledge about the world through their first language, a language not valued in the broader society. To receive instruction in English only, would put them at a greater disadvantage – trying to master advanced intellectual concepts and acquire a second language (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). So, a programme modelled
after immersion in Canada would adopt the minority language as the target language, and consequently, this would become maintenance bilingual education for language minority students (Crawford, 1999).

In one of the most comprehensive evaluations of two-way programmes, Lindholm-Leary (2001) concluded that two-way immersion is effective in promoting high levels of language proficiency, academic achievement and positive attitudes to learning in students. In addition, in a longitudinal study of various bilingual education programme models Thomas and Collier (1997) found that children in ‘well-implemented’ two-way immersion classes outperformed their counterparts in transitional bilingual education or English only classes.

Variation within the two-way model

Still, as with all attempts at educational reform, diversity exists in the implementation of two-way immersion. August and Hakuta (1997: 155) identify the following key parameters on which variation may exist:

- proportion of students from the two language backgrounds in the classroom;
- amount of instructional time provided in the two languages;
- practices related to screening students and admitting newcomers after the first year;
- language choice for initial literacy instruction;
- language use in the classroom;
- whether students enter on a voluntary basis or are assigned by school personnel.

For example, the literature on two-way immersion documents variation in the amount of time spent learning in each language across schools. Often, a 50%–50% balance of languages is attempted in both early and late grades. This has been dubbed the 50:50 model. In other contexts more time will be allocated to the minority language (60%, 75%, and in fact 90% is not uncommon), especially for the first two to three years. In the middle and later grades, there is often a preference for a 50%–50% balance, or more of an emphasis on the majority language (Baker, 2001). Overall, research has found a wide range of approaches in how individual districts and schools implement the key parameters outlined above (August & Hakuta, 1997; Crawford, 1999; Lindholm, 1990; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Monte Vista Elementary was no exception. They struggled to define what two-way immersion meant in their particular context, given the diversity of the student population.

Monte Vista Elementary’s Definition of Two-Way Immersion

In 1997, as part of a district-wide federal Title VII grant, the San Tomas Unified School District (STUSD) set out to restructure the bilingual education programmes. Monte Vista was one of the schools that aimed to develop ‘language programs whose goals are to support all students in their development of competence in English and an additional language(s), positive self-images and attitudes toward other cultures’ (STUSD document). This marked a shift from
programmes whose primarily goal was transition into English-only instruction to programmes that supported the development of bilingual competencies. The district’s description of the two-way immersion model was quite broad, identifying outcome goals, target student populations for enrolment in the programme, and guidelines for instruction (see Table 1).

Both English speakers and English language learners were to participate in the programme, and the goals were to facilitate the development of bilingualism and biliteracy. In terms of delivery, ‘students will have the opportunity to develop competency in both English and another language and to use the two languages to access the core curriculum’ (STUSD documents, 1999–2000).

The STUSD description of two-way immersion bore a strong resemblance to the 90:10 model developed by the California Department of Education in the 1980s. In the 90:10 model, 90% of instruction is provided in the minority language in the first year of the programme. This percentage decreases as the grade levels increase until a 50%–50% balance is reached in third or fourth grade. The 90:10 model was adopted by various schools, and in turn became one of the ‘primary variants of two-way programmes’ (August & Hakuta, 1997: 155). STUSD adopted a delineation of percentages similar to the 90:10 model. The percentage of instruction in the minority language would begin at 90% in kindergarten, decrease to 70% between first and third grades, and by fourth and fifth grades further decrease to 50%–60%. While not explicitly stated, this framework for language distribution implied that initial literacy instruction would be provided in Spanish only, for all students, in the early elementary grades. Although the district provided a broad definition of the programme model, it adopted a ‘hands-off’ approach when it came to implementation.

During the 1998–99 school year Monte Vista was awarded a federal Title VII school-wide grant to restructure the bilingual education programme in alignment with district guidelines. The distribution of language of instruction was described in terms of percentage of language use for the day or particular subject areas, and mirrored the description provided by the district. The findings presented in this paper will reveal what happened when the two-way immersion model came face-to-face with the reality of daily life at Monte Vista Elementary.

### Method and Participants

The ethnographic approach is well suited to a study that aims to uncover an understanding of some phenomena from the point of view of the participants (Heath, 1982a; Spindler & Hammond, 2000). In bilingual education research, Guthrie (1992: 174) states that ‘ethnography has gradually gained importance as an alternative methodology to discover the inner workings of a bilingual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of interest</th>
<th>Two-way immersion model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcome goals</td>
<td>Bilingualism and biliteracy for all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy instruction</td>
<td>Spanish literacy instruction for all students in early elementary grades (due to distribution of languages for instruction).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student placement</td>
<td>English speakers and English language learners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Two-way immersion model
programme . . . the interactions of various human and environmental elements involved’. Through the experiences of one focal teacher Alejandra, I uncovered how the two-way immersion model was socially constructed at both the school level and classroom level. This was a reality marked by multiple voices: her own, as well as those of her colleagues, the administration, and students. I chose a second grade teacher because traditionally in two-way immersion models second grade is a critical year for native language literacy development and the introduction of the second language.

Although the class was racially diverse, most students in Alejandra’s class were Latino and spoke Spanish as a primary language. Table 2 details the racial and linguistic diversity of the students at Monte Vista as a whole, and for Alejandra’s class in particular.

Just over half of the students at Monte Vista were of Latino descent and 61% of these students were identified as being limited English proficient (LEP) or non-English proficient (NEP) based on district assessment guidelines. Given that her class was bilingual, Alejandra had a larger proportion of these students in her class: 12 of the 14 Latino students in her class were identified as LEP or NEP, and 2 were identified as FEP (fluent English proficient). Alejandra’s class had two African-American students and one European-American student. Although there were just a few African-American or European-American students, they had an important role in the two-way immersion programme.

To triangulate data, I used a multi-layered data collection strategy that included ongoing open-ended interviews, participant observation, and content analysis of pertinent documents (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Spindler & Hammond, 2000; Weiss, 1994). I observed and took fieldnotes for seven school meetings (12 hours) that spanned the school year. This included staff meetings, grade level planning meetings, and bilingual team meetings. These events informed my understanding of how students’ literacy development was constructed in the frame of the school’s two-way immersion programme. At the classroom level, I observed and took fieldnotes for a total of seven language arts lessons (10.5 hours) that spanned the school year. I targeted literacy instruction because Alejandra felt that this would be particularly informative to my understanding of the bilingual education programme.  

In addition to participant observation, I conducted semi-structured interviews with Alejandra. The aim of the interviews was to understand Alejandra’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial and linguistic background</th>
<th>School-wide</th>
<th>Alejandra 2nd Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino &amp; LEP/NEP</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino &amp; native English or FEP</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European-American</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Race/Ethnicity &amp; LEP/NEP</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implementing Two-Way Immersion

Well first of all, I would say that we are not creating a model and sacrificing kids on the model. You sat in on many of our meetings. We go around and around, and what do we do? (Interview #2, 58). Elena, Principal

In the quote above Elena, the principal, revealed the central tension discussed in this paper – how to balance the implementation of a two-way immersion model with the equally important goal of sustaining diverse enrolment in the programme. She also made a specific reference to where the work of resolving this tension was done – school meetings. As the teachers and administrators came together to discuss programme implementation, certain programme elements became particularly salient: student placement, outcome goals, and literacy instruction.

‘Balanced diversity’ and student placement

Elena expressed a strong belief that public schools should reflect the broader diversity of society. At Monte Vista, this meant that African-American, European-American, and Latino students should be able to participate in an instructional programme that aimed for bilingualism and biliteracy for all students:

My whole goal… (was) to create balanced diversity. But you’ve got to have a hook or something that grabs people, so, I knew at the time that Spanish immersion . . . was really something attractive to . . . your middle class population because they value it and know the importance of second language acquisition. And, it really angers me and upsets me that people say that African-American children or children of color other than Latino, can’t handle a second language . . . because they . . . academically can’t do it . . . So I really wanted to get some of those kids into the program, to create a diverse population across general ed(ucation) and bilingual. (Interview #1, 54)

Eduardo, the bilingual education coordinator at Monte Vista Elementary, understood and promoted Elena’s efforts to attain ‘balanced diversity’ at the school by including European-American students:

Elena’s vision of the school was to have a school that was diverse and part of the diversity was balanced out by creating this bilingual program. It brought in some of the white families that years before had been doing the white flight to private schools. (Interview #2, 97)
As administrators and the focal teachers talked about student placement, they distinguished among the students based on their native language and entering literacy abilities. In this context, literacy was primarily equated with school-based literacy, focused on reading and writing. As students were grouped along these lines, race and class became salient. The Latino, Spanish speakers described in Table 3 were the primary group of students the two-way immersion programme intended to serve.

**Table 3** Spanish speakers at Monte Vista Elementary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic ability</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Well, the Latinos . . . <em>a lot of them come from poor families</em>. This is *(the) first generation or they’re . . . newcomers. <em>And a lot of the parents . . . have minimum education</em>. And some of them have quite openly admitted they don’t read or write well themselves . . . But they want an education for their kids . . . They expect schools, you know, that traditional view that ‘school’ does that for their children. <em>So, a lot of those children have big . . . deficits.</em> <em>(Elena, Principal, Interview #1, 68)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Latino kids . . . <em>come from low-income families. They have high academic needs</em>, some of them, and they also have needs to acquire English. <em>(Eduardo, Title VII coordinator, Interview #1, 22)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These students were viewed as having ‘high academic needs’, with a specific need to acquire English. Also, they were generally described as coming from a working-class background with parents who had low literacy abilities.

Among the English speakers the staff drew a distinction between those with high entering literacy abilities and low literacy abilities.

There were English speakers who were viewed as ‘really ready to move into literacy’. These students were predominantly middle class and European-American. For the most part, their parents were white-collar workers, or ‘professionals’. As presented in demographic data, this group of students were in the minority at Monte Vista. Although they lived in the surrounding neighbourhoods, they typically attended alternative or private schools. Then, there were the English speakers who were viewed as lacking ‘some foundation already in English literacy’. These students were predominantly African-American and working class. For the most part, their parents were blue-collar workers. In the description of English speakers, there is a clear delineation between literacy readiness and oral language development. While there was verbal praise for students’ rich oral language, it was not viewed as contributing significantly to their readiness for literacy. This view of oral literacy is not uncommon among educators dealing with speakers of non-standard English *(Heath, 1982b)*. ‘Wonderful oral language development’ was viewed as separate from ‘literature and literacy be(ing) part of their daily lives’, the latter being more aligned with a notion of literacy focused on reading and writing skills. This notion put ‘kindergarten readiness stuff’ such as being able to ‘tell the difference between numbers and letters’ front and centre.
As Table 4 reveals, the distinctions among the English speakers fell along racial lines. The students described as having high literacy abilities were predominantly European-American and from middle and upper-middle class backgrounds. The students described as having low literacy abilities were either working-class Latino Spanish speakers, or working-class African-American English speakers who were bused to Monte Vista Elementary as part of the district’s desegregation efforts. Still, Eduardo cautioned against stereotyping the latter group, ‘You can’t generalise or stereotype our African-American families.’ This call for caution foreshadows the staff’s discomfort with distinguishing among the student population in a way that played along racial and socio-economic lines.

### Differentiated outcome goals

The programme model cast a wide net stating the outcome goals as, ‘full bilingualism and biliteracy for limited English proficient and English proficient students’ (school document, p. 2). Still, the range of students’ language and literacy abilities led the staff to adapt this and other key elements of the two-way immersion model. As described in the introduction, the two-way immersion model targeted the needs of Spanish speakers by building native language literacy before introducing English literacy. Since their native language was not of high status, it was important to introduce native language literacy first. For the European-American students, native English speakers described as entering with high literacy abilities, immersion in a second language was not detrimental. Their native language, English, was a high status tongue. Still, what about the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Academic ability</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>That’s where with the big contrast shows. These kids that are coming from middle class homes that have been to preschools and read to a lot, and . . . have a much larger vocabulary, and are really ready to move into literacy. (Elena, Principal, Interview #1, 64) We have some families who are coming from the neighborhood now . . . And these families are electing to be here. They tend to be middle class or upper middle class families. They tend to be European-American. (Eduardo, Title VII Coordinator, Interview #1, 20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Generally speaking our kids (that) come from public housing . . . and poverty, usually come fairly low-skilled. You can tell they’re very verbal children, wonderful oral language development, a real strength. But generally speaking, have not been read to a lot, or . . . have . . . the kindergarten readiness kind of stuff. (Elena, principal, Interview #1, 64) They may not necessarily be kids who are, uh, experienced in having literature and literacy be part of their lives daily . . . But it depends on their family, you can’t generalise or stereotype our African-American families. (Eduardo, Title VII Coordinator, Interview #1, 18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(emphasis in italics added)

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**Table 4 English speakers at Monte Vista Elementary**

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As Table 4 reveals, the distinctions among the English speakers fell along racial lines. The students described as having high literacy abilities were predominantly European-American and from middle and upper-middle class backgrounds. The students described as having low literacy abilities were either working-class Latino Spanish speakers, or working-class African-American English speakers who were bused to Monte Vista Elementary as part of the district’s desegregation efforts. Still, Eduardo cautioned against stereotyping the latter group, ‘You can’t generalise or stereotype our African-American families.’ This call for caution foreshadows the staff’s discomfort with distinguishing among the student population in a way that played along racial and socio-economic lines.

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African-American students described as lacking a literacy base in their native language? They were the primary focus of the school-wide agreement to adapt outcome goals, and literacy instruction, in order to maintain their enrolment in the two-way immersion programme.

The staff ‘moved away from the traditional two-way immersion model’ and articulated a distinction between the ‘ideal’ outcome goals of biliteracy and bilingualism for all students and the goal of English language literacy and bilingualism for some students, ‘acceptable but not ideal’ (Principal Interview #2, p. 117). The focus on English literacy, stemmed from a broader concern: ‘We . . . recognize that the language of economic power in this country is English, and if our kids do not have English they’re not going to do well. So, the minimum we have to provide them with is English literacy. So, we must ensure that need’ (Eduardo, Interview #1, 46). In addition to English literacy, this subgroup of students would focus on developing oral bilingualism. Diana, a bilingual kindergarten teacher, explained, ‘So, they (those students striving for English literacy and bilingualism) are not going to speak like natives, but by the end of the programme, they should be able to speak in complete sentences. (To) speak somewhat grammatically correct by the end’ (Interview #3, 133). So, literacy, in English, was the priority, and bilingualism and biliteracy for all students remained an ideal. This clearly had implications for literacy instruction.

**Literacy instruction in two languages**

The 90:10 two-way immersion model implied Spanish literacy instruction for all students in the early elementary grades. However, at Monte Vista, ‘Native English-speaking students who are struggling with literacy will be provided ENGLISH READING instruction’ (programme description, 1999–2000). In practice, this meant that, in kindergarten all students would receive literacy instruction in Spanish. At the end of kindergarten, teachers would identify English speakers ‘struggling’ with Spanish literacy. Then, at first and second grade bilingual teachers would provide English literacy instruction for those students. Starting in first grade, literacy instruction was to be developed and delivered in two languages, Spanish and English. The principal elaborated on the challenges this posed for teachers:

> It’s a really difficult instructional delivery model for teachers, it’s complex, and some teachers have a lot of problems with it . . . It’s not clean. With immersion, you teach you know three hours of solid Spanish instruction . . . And then you move into your English instruction. (This) means you have to teach literacy in two languages . . . and it’s this huge dilemma for the teachers how to deliver the instruction. (Interview #1, 106)

While not articulated in any formal school document, these school-wide agreements were recorded during an officially sanctioned school meeting, and were recognised as agreed-upon provisions within the school community. Table 5 provides a comparison of the two-way immersion model and the school-wide agreements.

The staff articulated school-wide agreements for each key element of the two-way immersion model: outcome goals, instruction, and student placement. These agreements were how the staff aimed to meet the needs of a diverse
student population within the structure of a two-way immersion programme. In other words, how to implement a programme model in light of a particular school context.

**Ideal Implementation: In a Perfect World’**

The school-wide agreements articulated by Monte Vista Elementary flew in the face of guidelines for the two-way immersion model. The episode shown in Box 1 demonstrates how the key elements of outcome goals, literacy instruction, student placement were closely intertwined in discussions of this tension.

**Box 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>key element</th>
<th>Two-way immersion model</th>
<th>School-wide agreements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcome goals</td>
<td>Bilingualism and biliteracy for all students.</td>
<td>Bilingualism and biliteracy for all Spanish speakers and some English speakers. Other English speakers aim for bilingualism and primary language literacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy instruction</td>
<td>Spanish literacy instruction only for all students in early elementary grades, given clear distribution of languages.</td>
<td>'Biliteracy' Instruction: Literacy instruction provided in Spanish for all students at kindergarten. At 1st–5th grades provided in Spanish and English given the differentiated outcome goals for English speakers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student placement</td>
<td>Spanish speakers and English speakers.</td>
<td>'Balanced diversity': Spanish speakers and English speakers, European-American and African-American.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Two-way immersion and school-wide agreements
be wonderful in a perfect world. If we want integration, and (to) have access to the bilingual program for kids that may not have typically come into the program. Kids who are not necessarily middle class who (might not) have a reading background at home. We’re going to have some kids who are under-skilled that are in our classroom.’

As Eduardo describes the ‘under-skilled’ kids, Alejandra echoes his comment with a ‘mhm’, and interrupts adding that teachers have under-skilled children whom are native Spanish and English speakers. Eduardo doesn’t acknowledge her comment and continues, ‘And what I’m understanding is that creates (an) extra burden, extra work for the teacher/’

Alejandra, ‘Because I’m required not to teach her dual language, I’m teaching her in English. And then . . . I’m teaching Spanish/’

Eduardo, ‘Because we want minimally to have her be bilingual/’

Olga, ‘I think . . . maybe what Alejandra is saying is that when there’s . . . two languages going on in the same classroom . . . the EO (English only) kid tunes out the Spanish and just waits for her to come over and work on the English. So he’s really not learning any Spanish. So, why is he there? Is that what you’re saying?’

Sounding frustrated Alejandra adds, ‘It’s not sounding, I don’t mean I don’t want her in my classroom. I would never say that. I’m just saying that, I’ve had conferences with mom, she’s not doing any Spanish at home . . . . So, I had to move her into English.’ Eduardo asks pointedly looking at those gathered around him, ‘But . . . what is the solution for her?’

Alejandra quickly responds, and quite emphatically, ‘Aha! That’s what I’m saying honey. I got some here. She doesn’t belong in a bilingual program’ (pp. 11–12)

This episode clearly illustrates the tensions evident in trying to follow a two-way immersion programme while still maintaining ‘balanced diversity’ in individual classrooms. It also shows how in discussing ‘implementation’ of a programme model certain issues became salient. For example, for Alejandra the school-wide agreement to modify outcome goals for particular students was inconsistent with the programme model. So, providing English literacy to a subgroup of her class seemed inconsistent with the model as well. In fact, Alejandra was very vocal in her discomfort with the ‘difficult instructional delivery model’. Throughout the meetings she used phrases such as ‘my main concern’, (Bilingual Team Meeting 1/12/00, p. 7), ‘that’s what’s putting the load on me’ (p. 11), ‘this is my challenge’ (Bilingual Team Meeting 2/29/00, p. 26) when discussing providing literacy instruction in two languages. At one point she summed it up, ‘My challenge is that I don’t want to teach in two languages. It’s really hard for me to teach in two languages’ (p. 26).

In this episode, Alejandra referred to a particular student in her class; an African-American English speaker who had been identified as needing English language literacy. As she described Kiana’s situation, she exposed the inherent
tension she felt as a teacher. While at first Alejandra was cautious to avoid implying she did not want Kiana in her classroom, just moments later she said that Kiana ‘doesn’t belong in a bilingual programme’. So, while Alejandra was committed to the needs of individual students in the classroom, she was also committed to the vision of a particular model and its appropriate implementation. Alejandra was not alone in her concerns; for example, in the above episode we hear Olga voice allegiance.

At times the staff discussed the possibility of screening initial enrolment into the two-way immersion programme, primarily by avoiding placement of English speakers with low-literacy abilities. The episode denoted in Box 2 reveals how beneath the surface of such discussions, stirred broader concerns regarding the diversity of the student population represented in the programme, and a fear of instituting a system of tracking.

**Box 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement, Representation, and Tracking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual Team Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 29, 2000</td>
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</table>

Elena: ‘Well when they screen them, all they can say is that someone is committed or not, we don’t know, we don’t have a history. So, even when you screen you don’t know.’

Olga (first grade teacher): ‘Yeah, I know, (the only ones that know) are the ones that are teaching them.///’

Yvette (kindergarten teacher): ‘I just think that . . . it’s not fair to screen someone so young. And I think that it can end up being a race issue.’

Elena: ‘I know.’

Yvette: ‘I really do. And that’s what I keep hearing in my head . . . .’ A wave of incomprehensible chatter makes its way across the room as the tension rises.

Yvette continues, ‘Because I have kids, gueritos (a colloquial term used in México for European-Americans refers to light skin tone) in my classroom, and just because they’re prepared or their family has the support and the money or whatever. It’s not fair that they have the program, that they have dual language. It’s just not fair.’

Eduardo: ‘We’re being stymied by a demographic issue. I mean, generally where our parents are coming from . . . our African-American (students), (is an) impoverished community that has less access to resources. And so, we’re setting ourselves up for a situation like that. We have to still be fair. We have to give these kids the benefit of the doubt . . . . What I’m hearing you saying is that no matter how you screen a parent. They still in the end have a choice.’

Elena: ‘Right. Definitely.’ (p. 19)

As Yvette, a bilingual kindergarten teacher, spoke, she acknowledged the question simmering under the surface: what student population did Monte Vista intend to serve through the two-way immersion programme? If ‘balanced diver-
sity’ among African-American, Latino, and European-American students was the ultimate goal, then focusing on strict programme implementation might not be the best way to serve students. They should draw upon the two-way immersion model as a guide, but not as a road map for implementation. As Elena explained to the staff, this meant a recommitment to the school-wide agreements of differentiated outcome goals and providing English and Spanish literacy instruction. It meant building a programme from the needs of students, rather than implementing a programme model.

As she spoke, Elena urged the staff to think from the students to the programme, rather than from the programme to the students. She recognised the ‘range of abilities’ that might be represented in a class if it reflected the ‘balanced diversity’ she hoped the two-way immersion programme would achieve. She also admitted the challenge this posed for teachers, ‘I think everybody knows that we need to keep them in, but individual teachers when it comes down to the actual, and I don’t blame them, the typical issue is how do you do that? What does it look like in the classroom? It’s difficult’ (Interview #2, 122). So, how did the disjunctures between two-way immersion programme and school-wide agreements play out in Alejandra’s literacy instruction?

The Problematic Nature of Alejandra’s Literacy Instruction

Alejandra was very committed to implementing a two-way immersion model. She had expressly chosen to teach at Monte Vista because the programme would allow her to teach literacy in Spanish only at second grade. In light of this preference, it was not surprising that Alejandra said ‘I don’t believe in biliteracy’ and ‘it has been struggling for me this year to try to articulate a programme that doesn’t exist and to have it in my classroom’ (Interview #3, 165). The range of language and literacy abilities posed a significant challenge for her:

So, . . . the main differences is just the languages, then literacy. Language and literacy . . . it’s been my . . . problem to deal with it. Because I haven’t been able, well I’m getting there (smiles), slowly . . . Because my goal is for them to read, so I have to accommodate. It’s hard. (Interview #1, 59)

Overall, she viewed the two-way immersion programme at Monte Vista as one that ‘doesn’t exist’ because it did not follow directly from the programme model. At the school level, Alejandra voiced the challenges she faced in carrying out this ‘difficult instructional delivery model’, and her proposed solutions centred on ‘appropriate placement’. In her class, this was not a viable solution. The students in her class were her responsibility; they would not be transferred to another class. So, she was compelled to support their literacy development.

Although she did not agree with the school-wide agreements, she did address the modified outcome goals for English speakers struggling with literacy and the consequent call for literacy instruction in two languages. She incorporated a range of events during language arts, but focused on providing different reading groups as a way to address the range of language and literacy abilities. She described the event as ‘guided reading’, but in addition to reading a text, students discussed the text and completed a follow-up writing activity. The written response might include writing a summary, identifying the story
elements, or writing a story with a similar structure. The overall purpose of reading groups was to build ‘reading fluency, comprehension, (and) word recognition’ (Interview #3, 235, 239). However, the specific goals and language of instruction for each reading group were dependent on the language and literacy abilities of the students. Through reading groups she developed ‘a catered programme for the needs of the kids’ (Interview #3, 165). Through this delineation she struggled to resolve the tension between her belief in a two-way immersion model and the school-wide agreements, and consequently, she re-voiced distinctions among students that fell along racial and socioeconomic lines.

**Bilingualism and biliteracy for some, not all**

As Alejandra delineated goals for the English speakers she quickly moved beyond a general goal of becoming ‘fluent readers’. Like the school-wide discussions, she distinguished between English speakers based on their literacy abilities, and described specific goals based on how they were placed for reading group instruction. English speakers were spread across three different reading groups: Beginning Spanish, English, and Spanish Immersion.

**Beginning Spanish and the need to ‘catch up’**

Ted and John, who had been in the two-way immersion programme since kindergarten but lacked a ‘phonics’ base in Spanish literacy, were part of a beginning Spanish literacy group. Interactions during this reading group centred around a simple phonics-based text, decoding and discussing key vocabulary. In her own words, the central focus of the reading group event was ‘a lot of word recognition and phonics’. Every day the beginning Spanish group had priority, ‘I’m always trying to see like, Ted and John . . . because they need so much’ (Interview #1, 134). Alejandra was concerned that these students might not succeed in the two-way immersion programme, and consequently, they were given priority even though they were strong in their primary language literacy. The outcome goals for these students were bilingualism and biliteracy. Ted and John both came from a middle class background. Ted was Latino and John was Euro-American.

**English reading and the need to become ‘fluent readers’**

The English speakers with low literacy abilities, Marcus and Kiana, were placed in a native language literacy group. The parents of these African-American students were concerned about primary language literacy development. Alejandra described the students as being ‘in the same boat as John and Ted, but in their primary language . . . They’re behind in their primary language’ (Interview #1, 43). She wanted them to ‘become fluent readers and . . . writers, ultimately to achieve ‘complete balanced literacy’. She knew they came with rich oral language, but focused on improvements in reading and writing, not oral language: ‘Marcus and Kiana . . . They’re . . . very language enriched. They’re very verbal. Marcus can answer questions; he gets (it). But when it comes down to his writing because he’s so low, which there’s been big improvements with his writing’ (Interview #2, 143). This was indicative of the school-wide focus on building students’ literacy skills at second grade, one that defined literacy as reading and writing. As she began, Alejandra turned to me and in an aside explained why she had an English reading group, ‘because they are so low there
is no way to introduce a second language’. This falls in line with the school-wide agreements – such students would receive literacy instruction in English, moving them towards the outcome goals of primary language literacy and bilingualism.

Alejandra’s Spanish goals for these students did not focus on literacy. ‘Bilingual’ for them would mean, ‘they can understand. And probably speak. But not really read or write in Spanish.’ This set of goals reflected the school-wide differentiated outcome goals of bilingualism and biliteracy for some English speakers, and bilingualism and native language literacy for others. Furthermore, Marcus and Kiana were the only African-American students in Alejandra’s class. Just like school-wide discussions, distinctions among students fell along racial and socio-economic lines.

Despite the concern she expressed for Marcus and Kiana, Alejandra met with the English reading group every other day. This contrasted with the Beginning Spanish group that met with Alejandra every day. Alejandra explained that Marcus and Kiana had other support: ‘I’ll have Kiana and Marcus’ group every other day, because I give them my DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time. So they’ll have one on one. And Marcus and Kiana have a one on one Partner (school volunteer that met with them twice a week)’ (Interview #1, 134).

Interactions in this reading group centred on building reading fluency, comprehension, and writing skills. Alejandra read aloud while students followed along, using their eyes and their fingers. Then, she led a discussion about the story focusing on a sequence of events that documented both a ‘problem’ and a ‘solution’. She engaged students by asking them pointed questions about the sequence of events that required answers tied directly to the text. She prompted students regarding specific reading strategies. Once they had finished the discussion, students recorded the co-constructed summary on the corresponding worksheet. Alejandra believed that activities such as these would build both Marcus’ and Kiana’s reading fluency and independent writing abilities. The two reading groups discussed thus far accounted for only four of the students in Alejandra’s class. Where did this leave the large contingent of Spanish speakers and the remaining two English speakers, Alana and Elizabeth?

Building a foundation in Spanish speakers’ native language literacy

Overall, Alejandra aimed to build a foundation in students’ Spanish literacy abilities, ‘listening, speaking, writing, and reading’ (Interview #3, 247). While she mentioned listening and speaking, Alejandra focused on reading and writing as literacy development. This focus mirrored the need for students to come to a ‘literate balance in both languages’ by fourth grade (Elena, Interview #2, 88). For Spanish speakers this meant shoring up native language literacy and introducing English literacy through other areas of the curriculum:

I see my students in second grade . . . their listening and speaking skills are moving up . . . gaining those skills . . . and becoming proficient in those skills specifically. Listening, speaking, writing and reading . . . According to the grade level, I believe it is okay because I am building on their Spanish skills in order for them when they get to third grade they can get, ‘Oh yeah! I can transfer my knowledge of capital letters. I can transfer my knowledge of punctuation. I can transfer my knowledge.’ (Interview #3, 247)
The outcome goals for these students were bilingualism and biliteracy. For the nine students she viewed as high in their literacy abilities, Alejandra focused on getting them to work independently (Interview #2, 46) in their native language and becoming fluent in that second language, to become bilingual, at least the start of it now that they’re in a low grade (Interview #1, 19). In contrast, the two Spanish speakers with low literacy abilities, ‘came totally with beginning first grade skills ... had concept of print, letters sounds’ (Interview #3, 255). So, the focus in native language instruction would be on building fluency. Then, ‘in English ... can’t transfer yet, don’t read in English’ (Interview #3, 259). Still, Alejandra was committed to building a strong foundation in Spanish literacy abilities for all Spanish speakers, and they all participated in the Spanish Immersion reading group. Despite the range of abilities, she felt that their needs could be adequately met in one reading group.

Alana and Elizabeth, the two ‘Spanish immersion’ English speakers also participated in this group. Like Ted and John, they had been in the programme since kindergarten. Alejandra described them as her ‘Spanish Immersion’ group students. The goals for these students centred on Spanish literacy, and specifically focused on oral language production and increased comprehension. The outcome goal for these students, as well as the Spanish speakers, was bilingualism and biliteracy.

In this reading group, Spanish was the only language for instruction and student response, both oral and written. The interactions often focused on choral reading of texts, brief discussion, and individual writing activities. Thirteen students sitting at clustered desks probably influenced the nature of discussion, most often question and answer sessions primarily marked by choral responses. The primary focus was the individual writing task, during which Alejandra assigned native Spanish speakers to work with English speakers. In moving these students towards the outcome goals of bilingualism and biliteracy, they could, and should, draw upon their Spanish-speaking peers as resources. She always encouraged students to expand on their ideas, and reminded students of writing conventions. Finally, she reminded students of particular writing strategies, such as drawing upon the text as a resource for ideas. Unfortunately, Alejandra’s role was reduced to one of taskmaster – making sure students understood the task at hand and encouraging them to perform well.

In addition to the problematic dynamic of group size, the Spanish immersion group was also relegated the lowest priority. Alejandra met least frequently with these students; there was no guarantee that she met with them every day like the Beginning Spanish group, or every other day like the English reading group. The Spanish speakers had reached a basic level of Spanish literacy, so they were no longer the focus of her efforts during language arts. Consequently, Alejandra focused on the English speakers who had not achieved fluency in either their native language or second language. However, it seems problematic that 13 of 19 students in the class met most infrequently with Alejandra for literacy instruction so that two English speakers with high abilities in their native language could meet every day for literacy instruction in their second language.

While Alejandra’s literacy instruction came to life through a range of literacy events, the reading group event was particularly telling of how Alejandra addressed school-wide agreements regarding differentiated outcome goals and
the role of instructional language during literacy instruction. Alejandra’s primary struggle was related to providing literacy instruction in two languages while believing in programme implementation of a two-way immersion model that focused on Spanish literacy in the early elementary grades: ‘My challenge is that I don’t want to teach in two languages. It’s really hard for me to two teach in two languages’ (Bilingual Team Meeting 2/29/00, p. 26). As she struggled to address the range of language and literacy abilities in her class through literacy instruction, she reflected the broader tension of implementing two-way immersion programme while maintaining balanced diversity.

**Implications**

**Bilingual education programme models and implementation**

By revealing the complex reality of the local construction of a two-way immersion model, this study reveals that bilingual education programmes are socially constructed, not implemented, at both the school and classroom level. The staff at Monte Vista were actively constructing the two-way immersion programme, and this reality would help to explain the conflicting evaluations of bilingual education. Not only is there a wide range of programme models, but there is also the additional layer of diversity in how the programmes actually come to fruition in individual schools with teachers and students. It is important that the broader educational community move towards seeing teachers as active participants, and ‘policy implementation as an incident of teaching and learning, rather than as a process by which ideas are filtered through the educational system and enacted by practitioners’ (Jennings, 1996: 107).

Ultimately it is most critical for educators to adopt this view. In light of bilingual education programme models that provide guidelines for key elements such as outcome goals, language of instruction, and student placement, educators must recognise that their role extends beyond that of ‘implementers’. To this end, the staff’s efforts at Monte Vista Elementary to reconcile the 90:10 variant of two-way immersion with a commitment to ‘balanced diversity’ might have been a futile attempt to force a programme model on a student population with needs that called for a different type of programme. The two-way immersion programme aimed to serve working-class Latino students who tended to come to school without school-based literacy skills, even in their native language. However, it also aimed to enrol middle and upper-middle class European-American students who tended to come to school with school-based literacy skills, and working-class African-American students whose literacy abilities mirrored those of their Latino counterparts. So, while the two-way immersion programme model justified providing English speakers with Spanish literacy instruction in the early grades, it did so on a basis that might not apply to the situation of most African-American students enrolled at Monte Vista Elementary. The rationale is that English is the dominant language in this country, so Spanish immersion poses no threat to the native language development of English language speakers (August & Hakuta, 1997). However, this does not account for students who speak a non-standard variety of English.

Just as bilingual education aims to provide Spanish speakers with a bridge to English language proficiency through native language instruction, African-
American students who are speakers of African-American vernacular English (A.A.V.E.), have the right to an educational programme that values their linguistic background and provides them exposure to ‘standard English’. Research has documented the existence of A.A.V.E. as a language variety, or dialect, of English, and it is very likely that the African-American students at Monte Vista came to school with this repertoire. Just as Spanish is a low-status tongue in the United States, varieties of English that are associated with the working class and with ethnic and racial minorities are considered non-standard and less prestigious (Dyson, 1997). So, the rationale for providing English speakers with Spanish literacy instruction in two-way immersion would not provide these students with optimal support for their language and literacy development. As Delpit (1995) points out, ‘Teachers need to support the language that students bring to school, provide them with input from an additional code, and give them the opportunity to use the new code in a nonthreatening, real communicative context.’ Children should have the opportunity to use language for many different purposes, and teachers should adopt a straightforward, non-patronising stance where the students’ diverse language and literacy repertoires are valued (Dyson, 1997). Overall, as Delpit (1995: 68) explains:

While linguists have long proclaimed that no language variety is intrinsically ‘better’ than another, in a stratified society such as ours, language choices are not neutral. The language associated with the power structure – ‘Standard English’ – is the language of economic success, and all students have the right to schooling that gives them access to that language.

So, just as bilingual education aims to provide Spanish speakers with a bridge to English language proficiency through native language instruction, African-American students who are speakers of A.A.V.E. have the right to an educational programme that values their linguistic background and provides them exposure to ‘standard English’.

At Monte Vista Elementary, this means that the staff should consciously construct, rather than implement, an educational programme that focuses on the range of language and literacy needs of the student population. Then, they could design the language arts curriculum in a way that supported those needs. I believe that this would inevitably lead the staff away from a 90:10 model and towards one where all African-American students were offered English literacy instruction beginning in kindergarten and through the grades, if deemed appropriate, but that could maintain their enrolment in a bilingual education programme as well. In order to remain true to their commitment to a ‘balanced diversity’, they might consider a 50:50 model of two-way immersion, where throughout all grade levels students are immersed in each of the languages for 50% of the day. Also, all students receive literacy instruction in their primary language first.

For example, in an edited volume on bilingual education, Christian and Genesee (2001) include case studies of two-way immersion programmes. In particular the oldest two-way immersion programme in the Midwest region of the United States could serve as a model for Monte Vista. Inter-American, a public magnet school, has adopted a 50:50 model of two-way immersion for a student population with a demographic profile similar to Monte Vista Elemen-
tary: 65% Latino, 19% White, and 14% African-American and 2% Native American or Asian/Pacific Islander. All classrooms at the school are heterogeneous by race, ethnicity, native language and academic ability. However, in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, students are divided into native language literacy groups across classrooms. Then, in first grade, students receive formal native language literacy instruction from their classroom teacher. Native Spanish speakers remain in the classroom for Spanish literacy instruction, while native English speakers from all first grade classrooms receive pull-out Spanish as a second language instruction. Then, all students remain in the classroom for English language arts. The native English speakers are required to actively participate, while native Spanish speakers are permitted a more informal role. Beginning in second grade, all students receive formal literacy instruction in two languages. There is a separate time for literacy instruction in each language, and students remain integrated regardless of their native language (Urow & Sontag, 2001).

Maximising the context of literacy instruction for learning

How Alejandra viewed her students in the context of literacy instruction was shaped by the broader discussions of programme implementation at the school level. Discussion of the key elements of outcome goals, language of instruction, and student placement centred on students’ perceived language and literacy abilities. In the context of Alejandra’s literacy instruction, this translated to a focus on language of instruction, and consequently a narrow view of literacy, rather than the use of reading and writing for multiple purposes. As teachers construct classroom contexts for diverse students they must consciously address how and for what purpose language and literacy are being used (Ramsey, 1997); they must move beyond a simple description of the distribution of the language of instruction.

In the context of Alejandra’s reading groups, it was unfortunate that the events represented reading and writing as skills to be mastered, not tools with which students learned how to participate in the world. A sociocultural (Vygotsky, 1978) perspective of literacy recognises that literacy entails more than discrete skills. Literacy instruction can no longer be relegated to simple ‘skills and drills’ tasks, where skills such as letter identification and decoding are viewed as the strongest foundation for more advanced reading and writing (Needels & Knapp, 1994). Engaging in authentic literacy events entails working with all the subsystems of literacy. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are recognised as integral components and not separated in instruction (Edelsky, 1986; Peyton, 1985). Also, authentic writing entails communicating about important content for both the reader and writer (Ammon, 1985), where both participants are predicting and confirming from all the interdependent written language systems to make textual meaning (Edelsky, 1986, 1996). Furthermore, literacy instruction should allow for multiple, frequent opportunities for authentic writing in a diversity of social contexts that capitalise on the social nature of learning (Edelsky, 1986; Perotta, 1994; Peyton, 1985). While Alejandra did include more authentic literacy events such as interactive journals and buddy reading with fifth grade students, they were not central to literacy instruction. In fact, Alejandra should build on such events that engage students in authentic reading and writing for variety of purposes. While my primary intent is not to criticise
Alejandra, it is important to reveal how she negotiated the multiple factors that impinged upon her literacy instruction and the resulting shortfalls for students. At the same time, Alejandra’s literacy instruction reveals the inherent tension of implementing a two-way immersion model in light of a diverse student population.

‘To meet the needs of the kids, not the programme’

Throughout the two years I spent researching and writing about Alejandra and the staff at Monte Vista Elementary, teachers have asked me questions like: ‘So, is the bilingual education programme working? Does the school really have a two-way immersion programme?’ The teachers who asked these questions worked in contexts quite similar to that of Monte Vista Elementary, and their concerns and challenges were similar to those faced by Alejandra. They wanted to know whether the students were learning, whether the teachers were working well together, and whether the school had a ‘real’ two-way immersion programme.

To answer their questions, and at the same time, shift the conversation away from labelling the programme at Monte Vista, I often found myself telling a story. Through stories I could convey a complex reality – where multiple issues came into play. I told them about Alejandra, her commitment to providing Spanish speakers with primary language literacy, and the tension she faced in providing the diverse students in her class with appropriate literacy instruction. I told them how despite her commitment to a ‘clean’ implementation of a 90:10 two-way immersion programme, she provided reading groups in both Spanish and English for students with targeted literacy instruction. I also told them that in the end she decided to leave Monte Vista Elementary for a school with a ‘fully articulated’ two-way immersion programme.

Finally, I ended with a description of the last bilingual team meeting and the promising shift in the school’s conversation. The staff consciously moved away from viewing the two-way immersion model as something to be implemented, and towards discussing the language and literacy needs of their students in the context of the classroom: ‘We’re just trying to figure it out. We want to know what the teacher is doing and what the students are doing’ (Eduardo, October 5, 2000). They focused their conversation on how students and teachers were using language, both conversational and academic, throughout the day. Consequently, the staff refrained from discussing student differences in terms of whether they fit the programme. The focus was on teaching and learning in the classroom, what kids needed in their language and literacy development and how teachers could support them. This was a promising indicator of the staff’s efforts to build a bilingual instructional programme from the needs of a diverse student population, taking into account the dynamic nature of literacy instruction. In this moment in time, I saw a glimmer of hope for the future of Monte Vista’s two-way immersion programme – what the programme could become as teachers came together to discuss the complexity of their daily work with the ultimate goal of the academic success of all their students.

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Notes


2. The Bilingual Education Act is Title VII of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education (ESEA) Act, 1965. Under the 1994 reauthorisation of Title VII, local education agencies could compete for grants to restructure bilingual education programs. The most recent reauthorisation of ESEA (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001), effectively eliminated the Bilingual Education Act and instead created Title III: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students, which primarily provides block grants to states.

3. The data presented in this paper are part of a larger ethnographic study with additional observations of the school-wide designated English language development (ELD) classes. This study also included two additional focal teachers.

4. Alejandra incorporated a range of events for literacy instruction. Given her commitment to implementing a two-way immersion model, all students participated in a whole group, Spanish literacy event once a week. The event itself incorporated a range of activities, for example completing a monthly writing sample, comparing two stories in the reader, each student writing his own story using a commonly read text as a guide, or ‘read, copy, draw’ activity. The final activity involved students reading and copying a short text, and then drawing illustrations. Alejandra conducted the event in Spanish only, and encouraged student responses in Spanish, both written and oral. On one other day of the week students participated in events such as shared reading with a fifth grade ‘buddy’ or whole group lessons on the conventions of spelling, grammar and punctuation. During the remaining three days of the week students worked at literacy centres in pairs or small groups. Overall, the literacy centres served as a supportive organisational structure for the cornerstone of the literacy instruction, reading groups.

5. There was an additional English speaker who ended up in the bilingual program due to a lack of space in the English only 2nd grade class. She participated in a reading group with that class. There was an additional Spanish speaker who had Down’s Syndrome and rarely met in a reading group. She usually worked with the instructional assistant assigned to work with her or with the resource specialist teacher.

6. Still controversial is the role A.A.V.E. should play in literacy instruction. See *The Quarterly of the National Writing Project* 19 (1), 1999, for a series of articles dedicated to this topic.

Appendix: Transcription Conventions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Convention</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Italics</td>
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<td>(123)</td>
<td>Numbers between parentheses refer to paragraph number in interview document. If number of interview is not specified, then there is only one interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(p. 2)</td>
<td>Page number on document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>///</td>
<td>Interrupted/overlapping speech.</td>
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<tr>
<td>()</td>
<td>Missing text, incomprehensible, inaudible, or non-verbal action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underlined text</td>
<td>Indicates original text/speech is in Spanish. When an episode or quote (data excerpt) is predominantly in Spanish, I do not underline the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[] in classroom episodes</td>
<td>Words in brackets provide a translation from Spanish to English of written or spoken words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>When used in quotations of direct speech to break up a word, indicates slow enunciation of a word.</td>
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References


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