THE IMPACT OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION ON PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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THE IMPACT OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION ON PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Por mi papi, Manuel Casales: te extraño más cada día que pasa.
Y por mis hijos, McGinnity y Clayton: sin ellos, yo no sería yo.

Abstract

Although immigration, primarily that of a foreign-born labor force, is not a new concept in United States history, numerous factors have caused it to become more controversial over the course of the last three decades. One of the most prevalent and pressing areas affected by this issue is public education. Classrooms across America have been flooded with students who are unable to understand or speak English fluently. Language diversity is a reality that will only continue to grow. While past legislature has failed to provide schools, students and community members with the information, tools and resources they need to understand and positively respond to the challenges faced by this demographic shift; that need not remain true. Presented in this paper are critical developments in illegal immigration along with the creation and progression of bilingual education policies and their impact on the academic achievement of English language learners. The findings of this study highlight the need for increased awareness and advocacy for legislature designed to support the public education system and the diverse group of students it serves.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

While immigration, primarily that of a foreign-born labor force, is not a new concept in United States history, numerous factors have caused it to become more controversial over the course of the last three decades. In fact, according to *Los Angeles Times* reporter Sam Quinones, the massive number of undocumented immigrants that arrived in the American South during the 1990's marked the largest influx of foreign-born workers to that region since slavery (Quinones, 2007, n.p.). This enormous demographic shift has sparked some of the most heated debates and political propositions of the 21st century. One of the most prevalent and pressing areas affected by this issue is public education. Program development, budget debates and managing the vast cultural differences between immigrant children and the dominant culture in U.S. schools are but a few of the myriad number of challenges brought about by the insurgence of illegal immigrants in America.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact that illegal immigration has had on the public education system and to identify if and how this has affected student achievement. An analysis of past and present research of issues surrounding illegal immigration, bilingual education and best practices in ELL instruction is the basis for the information presented in this paper.

Significance of the Study

Illegal immigration in the United States has caused the number of English language learners to grow exponentially over the last decade. The barriers to success faced by these students include obvious issues such as communication and cultural conflicts, but there are a number of other challenges that ELLs face such as poverty, unprepared schools, lack of access to resources and maintaining balance between language, identity and culture in a country where assimilation is not only valued, but expected. Legislative change based on sound educational practices and comprehensive school reform should and can happen. If it does, the United States can turn what many view as a crisis into a positive situation that can ultimately improve our public education system and our country.

Despite a history of immigration that has characterized the establishment and diversity of the United States, current controversies over illegal immigration and subsequent legislative action regularly dominate news headlines. Since the end of the Mexican-American war in 1848, Latin American immigrants have traveled north into United States territory for many of the same reasons this country was founded; freedom and opportunity being the two most prevalent. While the motivating factors for immigration into the U.S. have remained relatively the same, the increased volume of these immigrants, along with their movement from southern and coastal areas to the American midwest has made them more visible and in some ways, more vulnerable.

The rise and fall of the economy, the end of the Cold War and the beginning of an even more tumultuous war on drugs, trade agreements, natural disasters and political unrest

combined with a growing desire for perfection in the U.S., have contributed to radical changes in immigration numbers and trends. The number of illegal immigrants entering the country along the U.S. - Mexican border started to slowly snowball during the Reagan Administration and appear to have increased exponentially ever since. (Kimer, 2005) This large-scale demographic shift has triggered an uprising of political stand-offs and fierce battles over issues of state vs. federal power, patriotism, civil rights and humanitarianism. The multitude of societal changes and challenges born from illegal immigration in the United States are immeasurable.

One of the most significant public systems affected by these changes is public schooling. Classrooms across America have been flooded with students who are unable to understand or speak English fluently. In addition, many of these students are unable to read or write in their native language. To compound the problem, the teachers and administrators at the helm of these classrooms are undereducated, underfunded and generally altogether unprepared when it comes to providing this student population with the social, emotional and educational support they so badly need in order to succeed. (Crawford & Krashen, 2007)

Presented in this paper are key aspects of immigration patterns and trends along with current legislature surrounding this issue. The development of bilingual education policies in relation to English language learners and their impact on student achievement will also be examined.

The findings of this study could be used to guide professional development programs, to implement immigrant resource plans and to highlight the need for increased advocacy of immigration policies designed to support schools and the diverse group of students they serve.

It is my hope that with continued research and advocacy for legislative action, both the U.S. government and public education system will recognize the contradiction of expectations for immigrant children and/or English language learners that have developed over the last century and that both parties will actively work to change what is easily recognized as a broken system.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

I. Immigration in the United States

American is undeniably a nation of immigrants; David Nieto of the University of Massachusetts even goes so far as to say that immigration is "one of the *authenticities* in the history of the United States…" (Nieto, 2009, p.61). A timeline of some of America's most notable moments in history can also serve as a framework for the flow of immigrants who have entered the U.S. over the past 150 years.

With the California Gold Rush came a wave of Chinese immigrants hoping to strike it rich. The Homestead Act of 1862 brought thousands of European immigrants, looking for a piece of land to call their own. Just a few years later, Irish immigrants who had come to America during the Irish Potato Famine, along with Chinese and Japanese newcomers, collaborated in the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad (Harvard, n.d.).

Between 1830 and 1930, more than forty million immigrants entered the United States (see Table 1, p.5), and as America developed its status as a leading world power; it also took advantage of a seemingly unlimited supply of cheap immigrant labor. In fact, countless numbers of immigrants, legal and illegal alike, played a major role in building and

US Immigration Numbers From 1830-1930	
1831-1840	599,125
1841-1850	1,713,251
1851-1860	2,598,214
1861-1870	2,314,825
1871-1880	2,812,191
1881-1890	5,246,613
1891-1900	3,687,564
1901-1910	8,795,386
1911-1920	5,735,811
1921-1930	4,107,209
Total	**37,610,189**

Table 1.US Immigration Numbers From 1830–1930 (Harvard)

maintaining the fields, factories and coast to coast infrastructure that ultimately allowed the U.S. to retain its reverence as the land of opportunity.

As the U.S. moved into the 20th century, two Great World Wars sparked the development of the Bracero Program. Implemented in 1942, the program brought more than a million Mexican laborers into U.S. territories to cultivate America's farmland and continue the harvest of seasonal crops (see Table 2). One year after the Bracero Program was scrapped, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Immigration and Naturalization Act, which allowed thousands of Filipino, Korean and other Southeast Asian immigrants to escape political unrest and settle in the United States (see Table 2).

Ten years later the Vietnam Conflict, one of the most controversial and notably protested wars in American history, came to a dramatic end. The U.S. withdrawal from the war as the North Vietnamese conquered Saigon, quieted much of the anti-war sentiment; it also brought thousands of Vietnamese immigrants into the United States. (Animated Atlas, n.d.) (Wiki) And later, as Americans prepared to welcome a decade of change, the communist Khmer Rouge fell to the Vietnamese Army in Cambodia; sending more than 150,000 Cambodian refugees to the safety of the United States.

With each passing decade, came new groups of people; each with their own culture, language and expectations for what the future would hold. Immigration, however is not only

the foundation of America's history, it is also a very real aspect of America's future. "The United States is not only nation of immigrants as seen in some idealized and romanticized past; it is also a living nation of immigrants even today." (Nieto, 1992, n.p.) In fact, current estimates place the number of undocumented immigrants living in the U.S. at eleven million or more (Hansen, 2009). When you factor in the children born to undocumented immigrants as well as those living here legally, the numbers are staggering. America is a nation of immigrants indeed.

II. The Controversial Reality of Immigration

While the circumstances and sheer volume of this migration is fascinating, the ways in which it has shaped America is most interesting. It is true that the scores of immigrants who made their way to the United States drastically changed the demographic and cultural make-up of the nation. Upon examining this unique immigration history and the educational practices derived from it, the controversial nature of this subject is also important to note. In a nation founded by immigrants, many of whom emigrated for the purposes of political or religious freedom and the desire to pursue their dreams, it took just one year after the United States Constitution went into effect in 1789 for the first of dozens of federal policies to be enacted regulating immigration into the country. What must be acknowledged here is the ethnocentrism and anti-immigrant sentiment that has existed for centuries and has continued to grow amongst Americans over the years; many of whom were the children or grandchildren of immigrants themselves.

The Reagan Era of the 1980's, followed by the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the devaluation of the Mexican peso in the 1990's triggered a tidal

wave of immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries into the United States (Díaz-Rico & Weed 148) (Ovando 14). The cultural and linguistic differences that came with this demographic shift were threatening to many Americans. According to David Nieto, "Such a shift has triggered feelings about the unity of the nation, the endangered dominant ethnic identity, and the gradual decline of the English language." (Nieto, 2009, p.65)

Most recently, the state of Arizona implemented Senate Bill 1070, allowing local law enforcement to arrest any person they suspect of being an illegal immigrant as well as requiring all immigrants to carry documentation of their residency or citizenship status with them at all times (see Table 2). The bill, which was signed by Governor Jan Brewer in April of 2010, has been the source of countless protests, rallies and boycotts throughout the state; making national headlines almost daily. While portions of the bill have been temporarily tabled as the result of an injunction placed on it by a U.S. District Judge; the development, signing and support of the bill are certainly indicative of the widespread discontent and anger that has grown from the massive increase in illegal immigrants who have entered and settled in the U.S. over the last three decades (Associated Press, 2010).

The influx of illegal immigrants in United States that began in the early 1980's has created a firestorm of controversy regarding such issues as increased border patrol, labor shortages, gang activity, drug trafficking, eligibility for healthcare, enrollment in postsecondary education, and establishing an official language of the United States. Bilingual education and other programs serving English language learners have also been influenced by Americans' feelings about illegal immigration. According to James Crawford, president of the Institute for Language and Education Policy, "Bilingual education is arousing

passions about issues of political power and social status that are far removed from the classroom." (Crawford, 2001, p.13).

III. The Development of Bilingual and ELL Education Policies

Immigration trends in the United States also coincide with an inconsistent stance on the education of non-native speakers of English. While a number of local policies allowing or disallowing native language use in public schools can be traced as far back as the 1600's, the federal government took no formal stance on the issue until the 1968 amendment of the Elementary and Secondary Education act of 1965 (see Table 2). The Bilingual Education Act, more commonly referred to as Title VII, provided supplementary funds for districts that planned and implemented bilingual and ELL programs (Nieto, 2009, p.63). The enactment of Title VII was a clear victory for non-native speakers of English and proponents of bilingual instruction; however it failed to require bilingual programs to use any language other than English in their implementation (Crawford, 1995, p.40). Fortunately, what the Bilingual Education Act lacked, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and the U.S. Supreme Court tried to make up for in the years to follow.

In 1970, J. Stanley Pottinger, Director of the Federal Office for Civil Rights, issued a memorandum to all school districts with a student minority population greater than 5 percent. The memo served as a reminder of the districts' responsibilities under Title VII and also required school administrators to communicate with the parents of its students using a language they could understand. In addition to highlighting the responsibilities of the districts, the memorandum established the OCR's role in enforcing acts like Title VII and it set the tone for a decade of change in how school administrators, as well as the general public

viewed ELL and bilingual programs (Crawford, 1995, p.43).

Three important developments in the history of Bilingual Education came in 1974. The Bilingual Education Act was reauthorized and amended; eliminating income guidelines for students in bilingual programs. It also allowed native speakers of English to participate in bilingual programs as well (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010). Equally important was the introduction of the Equal Educational Opportunities Act which made it unlawful for schools to ignore language barriers faced by their students and prohibited the discrimination of students based on race, ethnicity, language of origin and disability status (Ovando, 2003). Arguably the most significant event in the world of bilingual education in 1974 was the U.S. Supreme Court case of Lau v. Nichols (see Table 2). According to Carlos Ovando, "the Lau verdict abolished the sink-or-swim practices of the past and led to the passage of the Equal Educational Opportunities Act…" (Ovando, 2003, p.9). The ruling made it very clear that *same* and *equa*l are not synonymous in the world of education. After hearing the case, Chief Justice Douglas stated that:

> There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education. (Lau, 1974, n.p.)

Following the historic ruling of Lau v. Nichols, numerous court rulings and five additional reauthorizations of the Bilingual Education Act contributed to the development of current legislature on bilingual and ELL education; at the same time shaping the American perspective of bilingual instruction.

In 2002, the Bilingual Education Act was replaced by Title III of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Among the changes made to the act, all references of bilingual or bilingualism were eliminated. In addition, no specific instructional approaches were

recommended or required under the law (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). The vague nature of NCLB, along with its strong focus on standardized testing have caused proponents of bilingual education to consider the act a major setback in the development of sound educational practices for ELLs. In reality, a three-question test for evaluating compliance of current federal laws was developed nearly thirty years ago following the case of Castañeda v Pickard (see Table 2). The Castañeda case essentially put more weight behind the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 by declaring that the "good faith efforts" referred to in the EEOA must be proven by developing programs for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students that:

1. Are based on sound educational theory.
2. Are implemented effectively, with sufficient resources and trained staff
3. Following a trial period, must be evaluated and found to be effective in overcoming language handicaps.

This tool, which is merely a guideline, is used by the Office of Civil Rights in determining whether a district has taken the needed steps to support ELLs and provide them with the same academic content as their English proficient classmates (Crawford, 1995)(Crawford & Krashen, 2007).

In 1998, California, a state with one of the largest populations of English language learners in its public school system, passed Proposition 227; eliminating bilingual education programs for ELLs (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). Arizona and Massachusetts soon followed suit in 2000 and 2002, respectively; passing even more stringent English-only mandates for public school systems (Crawford, 2001). While some might assume that these legislative changes were made in an effort to improve student performance or derived from research that showed bilingual programs to be ineffective, a strong case can be made to the contrary.

The term bilingual education is used to describe a very broad range of language programs, including several that don't actually utilize or appreciate a student's native language. Bilingual programs that fail to make use of all students' assets, such as language and culture; have been found to be the least effective in the instruction of English language learners. Program models such as pull-out English language instruction or English submersion can be classified as this type of bilingual program. Conversely, programs such as dual-language immersion, which is centered on both the native language of the students as well as English for content instruction, have proven to be the most effective and supportive models of bilingual education (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010).

A multitude of researchers, teachers and linguists have produced evidence that true bilingual programs are the most effective approach to teaching non-native speakers of English. In a collaborative publication Stephen Krashen and James Crawford, two leading researchers in the world of ELL and bilingual education state that:

> A large body of research shows that, other things being equal, bilingual programs are more successful in teaching English and in fostering academic achievement in English. They can also provide valuable opportunities to cultivate bilingualism and biliteracy, not only for ELLs but for English-speaking students as well. (Crawford & Krashen, 2007, p.10)

In addition to widespread evidence that bilingual education truly is effective, countless books, journal articles and research summaries have reported that negative or ambivalent attitudes about bilingual and ELL instruction are the byproduct of Americans' feelings about immigrants and other minority groups.

According to a 2010 CNN news report:

> Georgia's public colleges have adopted new policies that…will prevent illegal immigrants from attending five high-demand schools and from being admitted ahead of legally and academically qualified residents at the rest of the state's public

institutions of higher learning. (Gast, 2010, n.p.)

Unfortunately, the state of Georgia is not the first state to implement such drastic and economically damaging measures; South Carolina also does not allow students into its public colleges who are unable to provide documentation of residency or citizenship (Gast, 2010).

In examining illegal immigration and its impact on public education, the question of relevance must be addressed. Based on numbers alone, the need for increased awareness and advocacy regarding ELL and bilingual programs is clear. America's Hispanic population has almost tripled in the last thirty years and the Asian and Pacific Islander population has more than tripled (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). In addition, more than two-thirds of America's English language learners, the majority of whom are immigrants or the children of immigrants, are native speakers of Spanish. In fact, as of 2007, one in ten students in the United States were English language learners; a number that has almost certainly risen since then based on the projected growth rate of immigrants with school-age children (Crawford & Krashen, 2007).

Also important is the distribution of immigrant families in the United States. In past decades, most Latin American immigrants settled in the south and west, but this too has changed. Increasing numbers of immigrant families have made their way north, settling into Midwestern states like Illinois, Nebraska & Iowa where factories and farms offer job opportunities (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). Essentially, what was once a localized concern that affected only a small number of school districts throughout the U.S. has become a widespread issue that should be recognized and examined by legislators, school administrators, teachers and parents alike.

IV. Social Dominance and Academic Achievement

With the multitude of extremist efforts made by America's white majority to seemingly maintain their position of social dominance in the United States, it would be logical to conclude that these actions have had a profound impact on education programs and overall student achievement; primarily that of undocumented students or the children of illegal immigrants.

Given what we know about English language learners, practices for effective instruction and current mainstream attitudes regarding illegal immigration, the question remains: does illegal immigration affect the academic achievement of ELLs? Simply put; yes, there is a correlation. The contradictory legislature that requires public education systems to provide all children, regardless of legal status, with an equal and meaningful education (see Table 2), yet denies undocumented persons eligibility to obtain a drivers license, access to federal loans to pay for secondary education, or at the very least, obtain legal employment has created a climate of confusion, frustration and resentment. Factors such as low socio-economic status, a growing anti-immigrant sentiment, misguided legislature and the continuum of language, culture and identity that often goes unacknowledged and unsupported are all contributing factors to the negative impact that illegal immigration has on the academic success of English language learners.

Two specific groups in the United States have been shown to have a distinct academic disadvantage in comparison to their classmates. These two groups include immigrants and economically disadvantaged minorities (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010). Unfortunately, the vast majority of English language learners fall into one or both of these categories and according

to James Crawford and Stephen Krashen, "Numerous studies have shown a close correlation between household income and achievement test scores for all students, including ELLs." (Crawford & Krashen, 2007, p.35) This is supported by numbers provided by the Children's Defense Fund, which show that students living in poverty score significantly lower on tests of math, reading and vocabulary when compared with students who are not living in poverty (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010). Economically disadvantaged students are faced with a number of barriers to their success in the classroom. Lack of nutrition, frequent changes in housing or homelessness, limited access to technology, inability to contribute or devote resources to the educational effort and lack of healthcare are some of the issues prevalent among students who live below the poverty line. Each of these factors deprives students of some of their most basic needs, which in turn has a negative impact on their academic achievement.

In addition, many illegal immigrants come to the United States to escape the poverty they faced in their country of origin (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010). As a result, they similarly lack literacy and other academic skills in their native language. Research has proven that increased literacy in one's native language has a direct positive impact on literacy development in a second or additional language (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). When you consider the combination of immigrant status, living below the poverty line and lower than average literacy skills, it is clear that many ELLs face what must feel like impossible hurdles in the public education system.

The Development of American Perspectives on Immigration & Bilingual Education	
1492	Christopher Columbus reportedly discovers the New World. (Leigh, n.d.)
1607	Jamestown, Virginia is founded. (Leigh, n.d.)
1620	Puritans, also referred to as Pilgrims, arrive in New England on the Mayflower. (Leigh, n.d.)

The Development of American Perspectives on Immigration & Bilingual Education	
1787	The United States Constitution is written and signed. (Leigh, n.d.)
1790	"The Naturalization Act of 1790 establishes a uniform rule of naturalization and a two-year residency requirement for aliens who are "free white persons" of "good moral character"." (Harvard, n.d.)
1848	The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo brings the Mexican-American War to an end. Under the treaty, Mexico gives the US control of present-day Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, California and parts of Nevada and Utah. In addition, the Rio Grande officially becomes the border between the two countries. (Leigh) The Treaty also grants citizenship to the 80,000 Mexican Nationals living in the conquered territories. (Harvard, n.d.)
1849	Immigration from China increases dramatically as a result of the California gold rush and westward expansion. (Harvard, n.d.)
1862	European immigrants hoping to claim a piece of land to call their own, emigrate to the US in large numbers following the implementation of the Homestead Act, which provides free land to settlers who are able to develop and live on the land for at least five years. (Harvard, n.d.)
1870	The Naturalization Act of 1870 goes into effect, granting citizenship to both whites and African-Americans. Asians are excluded from citizenship according to the Act. (Harvard, n.d.)
1882	The Chinese Exclusion Act is signed, strictly regulating immigration from China into the U.S. (Harvard, n.d.)
1896	The U.S. Supreme Court rules that state laws mandating "separate but equal" services are not unconstitutional, thus providing federal support of racial segregation. (Wiki)
1906	"The Naturalization Act of 1906 standardizes naturalization procedures, makes some knowledge of the English Language a requirement for citizenship, and establishes the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization in the Commerce Department to oversee national immigration policy." (Harvard, n.d.)
1924	The Immigration Act of 1924 is signed, strictly limiting European immigration and further prohibiting Asians from entering the country. (Harvard, n.d.)
1940	The Alien Registration Act is implemented, requiring all non-citizen residents of the United States to register with the federal government and provide fingerprints. (Harvard, n.d.)
1942	The Bracero Program is formed, allowing Mexican Nationals to enter the US as agricultural laborers. Originally developed as a short-term solution to the lack of available farm labor in the US during WWII, the Bracero Program remained in effect for more than twenty years and employed more than 4 million Mexican laborers. (Espinosa, n.d.)
1952	The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) is passed, establishing a preference system for immigrants based on their ethnicity, family ties to the U.S. and refugee status. (Wiki)
1953	Operation Wetback, a plan to identify and deport Mexican Nationals living in the US illegally is put into effect. As a result, more than 1 million Mexican and Mexican-American citizens are deported. (Espinosa, n.d.)

The Development of American Perspectives on Immigration & Bilingual Education	
1954	The U.S. Supreme Court declares segregation of public schools unconstitutional after hearing the case of Brown v. Board of Education; overruling federal support of "separate but equal" that was established in the 1896 case of Plessy v. Ferguson. (Nieto, D., 2009)
1964	The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is signed into law, prohibiting discrimination by government and public institutions based on gender, race, ethnicity or religion (Crawford, 1995)
1965	The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 is signed by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt; allowing for greater numbers of non-European immigrants in the United States. (Animated Atlas, n.d.)
1968	The Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) of 1965 is amended to include Title VII, The Bilingual Education Act. This is the first federal law pertaining to bilingual education. It recognizes bilingual programs as effective forms of instruction for non-native speakers of English and provides funding to schools that develop and implement such programs. (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010)
1970	The Office of Civil Rights issues a memorandum to school administrators, reminding them of their responsibilities to provide some form of special language instruction to students with limited English proficiency. The memo also prohibits placement of English language learners in special education classes based on their English proficiency and requires administrators to communicate with parents in a language they can understand. (Crawford, 1995)
1974	Lau v. Nichols, a lawsuit filed on behalf of the Chinese-speaking students in San Francisco public schools, is heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. The court rules that identical educational opportunities are not necessarily equal educational opportunities; making it illegal for schools to exclude students from effective educational practices based on their English proficiency. (Ovando, 2003)
1974	The Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) is passed, making it unlawful for public schools to discriminate against students and employees based on their race and/or ethnicity, language of origin or disability status. The act specifically states that language barriers impede equal participation of students. (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010)
1974	Title VII of the ESEA is amended, specifically linking bilingual education to the provision of equal educational opportunities. The first of six amendments to the Bilingual Education Act, it also requires schools to use a portion of their budget to train bilingual teachers. (Crawford, 1995)
1975	The U.S. Commissioner of Education issues the Lau Remedies, detailing how districts should identify and evaluate students with limited English proficiency. Instructional practices, a timetable for mainstreaming students and what professional standards teachers should meet are also included. (Crawford, 1995)
1978	The Bilingual Education Act is reauthorized, highlighting the importance of developing English fluency and transitioning students into English-only classrooms. It also allows for the inclusion of English-speaking students in bilingual programs. (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010)

The Development of American Perspectives on Immigration & Bilingual Education	
1979	After years of terror and genocide in Cambodia, the Vietnamese Army overthrows the communist leaders known as the Khmer Rouge. The political upheaval causes more than 150,000 Cambodians to take refugee status in the United States during the early 1980's. (Kemp & Rasbridge, n.d.)
1980	The Refugee Act is passed, revising the number of refugees allowed into the U.S. in a given year. (Animated Atlas, n.d.)
1981	After hearing the case of Castañeda v. Pickard, the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals outlines three criteria for programs serving ELLs: 1. It must be based on sound educational theory. 2. It must be implemented effectively, using adequately trained personnel and resources. 3. It must be evaluated as effective in overcoming language barriers. (Crawford, 1995)
1982	The U.S. Supreme Court hears the case of Plyler v. Doe. Citing the Fourteenth Amendment, the court rules that students cannot be denied an education based on their immigrant/legal status. (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010)
1984	The Bilingual Education Act is reauthorized for the third time. The amendment supports both transitional and developmental bilingual programs. It also provides funding for family English literacy and emphasizes teacher training and goal-setting for ELLs. (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010)
1986	The Immigration Reform & Control Act (IRCA) is passed, implementing criminal and civil penalties for employers who knowingly hire undocumented immigrants. The IRCA also gives amnesty to thousands of immigrants living in the United States illegally. (Nadadur, 2009)
1988	The Bilingual Education Act is reauthorized. The amendment includes an increase in funding for state education agencies, new time limits on participation in transitional bilingual programs and the development of fellowship programs for professional training. (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010)
1990	The Immigration Act of 1990 increases the number of legal immigrants allowed into the United States and develops a lottery system for granting visas. In addition, it tightened border patrol along the US-Mexico border. (Wiki)
1994	The Improving America's Schools Act is passed as an amendment and reauthorization of the ESEA (1965), including Title VII. The amendment calls for improvement in research and evaluation at the state level, reinforcement of professional development programs and increased attention to language maintenance and world language instruction. It also provides funding for immigrant children and modifies requirements for Title 1 services, making ELLs eligible for participation. (Nieto, D., 2009)
1994	California passes Proposition 187, making it illegal for children of undocumented immigrants to attend public schools. The proposition is later declared unconstitutional and is dissolved. (Nieto, D., 2009)
1998	California's quest for implementing English-only programs continues with the passage of Proposition 227, which eliminates bilingual education programs (including all forms of native-language instruction) across the state. (Nieto, D., 2009)

The Development of American Perspectives on Immigration & Bilingual Education	
2000	Following California's lead, the state of Arizona passes Proposition 203, which eliminates bilingual programs in public schools and prohibits instruction in any language other than English. (Crawford, 2001)
2001	The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is passed as a reauthorization of ESEA, replacing Title VII with Title III. The revisions focus primarily on English instruction that provides students with the academic content needed to meet state achievement standards. (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010)
2010	Governor of Arizona, Jan Brewer signs State Senate Bill 1070, allowing law enforcement officers to stop, question and detain any individual they believe to be an illegal alien. The bill also makes illegal immigration a state misdemeanor, as opposed to a strictly federal-level violation of the law. (Federation, 2010)

Table 2 The Development of American Perspectives on Immigration & Bilingual Education

CHAPTER III

IMPLICATIONS

I. How is Academic Achievement Affected?

There are numerous theories of second language acquisition, each unique in its complexities. While research can be found to support or refute any of these theories, there are some that have stood out amongst the others and are generally more supported or based on valid research. A few general principles should be considered regarding the acquisition of a second language and in evaluating best practices for teaching English language learners:

1. Language acquisition can be fostered by providing students with a combination of comprehensible input and a variety of opportunities to interact with others in a context that is purposeful and supportive.
2. "Full cognitive development occurs in language-affirming classroom contexts that build on students' linguistic foundations, rather than destroying them" (Ovando, 2003, p.19)
3. The acquisition of a new language occurs within social and cultural contexts and is part of a larger process of acculturation, or adapting to a new culture.
4. To successfully foster the acquisition of English, teachers must provide students with a positive, nonthreatening environment that builds self-esteem and increases motivation (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010).

5. One's language is deeply rooted in their culture and subsequently, their identity. To deny or disregard an individual's language is to disregard them as an individual.
6. "Teaching language minority students successfully means above all changing one's attitudes towards the students, their languages and cultures, and their communities." (Richard-Amato & Snow, 2005, p.145)

Effective instruction for English language learners can hardly be summarized so briefly. On the other hand, it is my belief that in order to find success in teaching ELLs, the aforementioned principles should be essential components of the foundation of the program; bilingual or otherwise.

As I've noted multiple times thus far, Stephen Krashen is one of the most cited and well-versed experts in the field of second language acquisition. His Monitor Model can be found in dozens of ELL and bilingual reference materials and he has collaborated with many other leading researchers in the field as well. One of Krashen's hypotheses refers to the affective filter which, "…addresses emotional variables, including anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence. These are crucial because they can block or facilitate input…" (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010, p.55). In essence, Krashen's hypothesis highlights the importance of providing students with a supportive, low-stress environment in order for language acquisition to occur. This theory is especially important to consider, given the national and local attitudes that many Americans have developed about illegal immigrants and whether or not they should even be provided with free public education.

> The community in which immigrants live, work, and go to school helps form the societal context. The attitudes and perceptions of community members shape school programs and policies. In a community…which has a large immigrant school-age population, negative attitudes toward immigrants have clear educational consequences. (Freeman & Freeman, 2001, p.186)

What this ultimately means is that school communities are really microcosms of the larger

communities in which they are housed and regardless of what the general population thinks about a target group (in this case ELLs and/or illegal immigrants); teachers have a responsibility to develop and maintain a positive and supportive learning environment. In her article *Connecting the Dots: Limited English Proficiency, Second Language Learning Theories, and Information Literacy Instruction,* Miriam Conteh-Morgan describes her interpretation of how the affective filter hypothesis dictates effective approaches to teaching:

> The social context in which teaching takes place should, therefore, provide the low affective filter that moves input on to the next level. The non-threatening atmosphere has to be felt the moment students walk into the class, and it is expected that the filter gets lower as the class progresses. (Conteh-Morgan, 2002, p.192)

It is no longer enough for teachers to simply provide students with the academic content deemed appropriate by administrators and public instruction officials; now, more than ever, educators must model, cultivate and praise acceptance and an appreciation for every students differences.

Another factor that must be considered is the preparedness of school administrators, teachers and paraprofessionals for understanding and serving such a rapidly growing, diverse group of students. The number of English language learners that enrolled in U.S. schools over the last 15 years increased by more than 65% and it has been projected that by 2043, one out of every three students in America's schools will be an English language learner. (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). In the world of education, this growth rate is more than alarming; it is unheard of. When you also consider that the distribution of ELLs has spread amongst states, counties and cities that were up until this point, monolingual, it is easy to understand why schools would not be prepared to deal with this influx of students. According to James Crawford and Stephen Krashen, "…most colleges of education and the

legislators who fund professional development programs have been slow to adjust to (the) changing demography. As a result, the supply of certified bilingual and ESL teachers has failed to keep pace with the growing demand." (Crawford & Krashen, 2007, p.45).

One might argue that good teaching practices are universal and in some respects, that may be true. It would be foolish however, to deny the importance of providing students with teachers who understand the diverse cultural and linguistic needs of all of their students. In his 2009 commentary; *A Brief History of Bilingual Education in the United States*, David Nieto states that "when students are placed into mainstream classes whose teachers do not…have the adequate knowledge to meet their unique needs, they often struggle and fall behind academically." (p. 66). Lack of training, combined with a lack of resources, which many educators can tell you is a reality in numerous areas of education, can easily lead to frustration on the part of both student and teacher.

Adding to the problem are the obstacles created by vast cultural differences between immigrant children and the dominant culture in U.S. schools. Arguably the most important, yet overlooked challenge faced by English language learners is the complex relationship between language, identity and culture. In her guide for teachers and administrators entitled Supporting English Language Learners, Farin A. Houk explains: "Language is an essential part of culture and identity. When we deny children's first languages, we deny their very wholeness as human beings." (Houk, 2005, p.41). Teachers of English language learners must recognize the role that language plays in representing the culture of their students and in shaping their identity. The three components work systematically, each building on the other. If a student's language is removed or dismissed, the two remaining components will

inevitably suffer and be forever altered.

By recognizing a students' specific funds of knowledge, or the skills and knowledge that each student possesses based on his/her past experiences, teachers can find ways to empower all students; even those who are not part of the mainstream culture (Houk, 2005, p.ix). One of the greatest assets that many English language learners bring to the classroom is a wealth of diverse experiences which differ from those of other students who do not share the same cultural identity. Teachers who fail to recognize this, present their students with further barriers to success.

> Language is one of the most salient aspects of culture….Because language and culture are intimately connected, and because both bilingual and multicultural approaches seek to involve and empower the most vulnerable students in our schools, it is essential that their natural links be fostered. (Richard-Amato & Snow, 2005, p.137)

For many English language learners, the process of assimilation means letting go of aspects of their native culture; the culture they share with the other members of their family and that they are able to best identify with. This can be a confusing, frustrating and embarrassing process for students.

II. What Teachers and Administrators Can Do

The manner in which teachers and school administrators tackle the challenges their students face can begin almost instantly. Merely acknowledging that language is a component of culture and that culture is part of the foundation on which we build our identity; teachers can take the first steps toward helping their students find balance between two languages and two cultures. Beyond that, teachers and administrators must work collaboratively to:

1. Facilitate the development of cultural democracy within the school by affirming the cultures of all students and helping immigrant students or ELLs make sense of

the mainstream culture. In doing this, students will be supported in their journey toward biculturalism and all students will develop a greater appreciation for diversity.

2. Strive to play an active role in the advocacy of all students, especially those whom don't belong to the dominant culture. Staying informed of relevant political issues and supporting legislature that provides immigrant students and/or ELLs with programming that is most conducive to their success is one way of doing that.
3. Acknowledge that the so-called "rules" have changed for the American education system. What used to be the norm, is no longer so. Rather than ignore the diverse learners represented by the student population, school staff must work as agents of change both in and outside of the school setting; paving the way for student success.
4. Communicate. Maintaining open lines of communication between students, parents, teachers and administrators is one of the most effective ways for schools to recognize deficit areas within their schools and work together to overcome them.
5. Commit to quality, comprehensive professional development in understanding second language acquisition and strategies for teaching English language learners. Working as a team to develop a consistent, functional knowledge of what ELLs need and how to provide if for them will lead to greater long-term success.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

In summary, the world of education in the United States is more challenging, complex and diverse than ever before. A country founded and shaped by a history of immigration has continued to evolve, yet not necessarily always learning from its mistakes. Illegal immigration continues to be a highly debated and controversial issue; one that has now made its way into classrooms across the country via the rapidly growing English language learner population. At the same time, an inconsistent history regarding ELL and bilingual education policies has only added to the difficulties faced by both students and teachers alike. As a result, school administrators and teachers must educate, advocate and prepare for the ever-changing needs of all learners.

The influx of illegal immigrants in the United States will likely not be curbed for many years to come. The same can be said for the growing population of English language learners in the public school system. Rather than decline, language diversity is a reality that will only continue to grow. While past legislature has failed to provide schools, students and community members with the answers, tools and resources they need to understand and positively respond to the challenges faced by this demographic shift; that does not need to remain true. The obstacles faced by English language learners can be lessened, even potentially eliminated. Without communication, education and acceptance however, that will not happen.

1. The general public including school professionals, legislators and parents need to be educated in best practices for teaching English language learners. Understanding what works and what doesn't is crucial for positive change to occur.
2. Legislative change is essential in order for schools to be provided the adequate resources and funding needed to implement changes and develop effective programs that meet the needs of all students.
3. Comprehensive school reform must come in the form of increased and improved teacher training, ongoing and meaningful professional development, cultural awareness programs that target teachers, students and parents and the implementation of parent/teacher partnerships that address communication barriers, cultural awareness and parent participation.

If each of these areas is addressed, I believe that many of the barriers faced by English language learners can be dismantled and that schools can find a way to increase the academic achievement of all students.

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