

Exploring Case Studies in Reading

2010

Spanish Reading Instruction for English Language Learners

BASED ON THE CALIFORNIA READING FIRST YEAR 5 EVALUATION REPORT
2006–2007

NATIONAL READING
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER



Spanish Reading Instruction for English Language Learners

BASED ON THE CALIFORNIA READING FIRST YEAR 5 EVALUATION REPORT
2006–2007

This document was created by the National Reading Technical Assistance Center at RMC Research Corporation. The Center expresses its appreciation to Alice Furry, Lucy Levine, and Sharon Van Vleck for their contributions, and to Elizabeth Goldman, C. Ralph Adler, Robert Kozman, and Lisa T. Noonis for editorial, design, and production support.

Acknowledgments

Spanish Reading Instruction for English Language Learners is a topic for a collection of case studies on Reading First program implementation. This case study was selected by the National Reading Technical Assistance Center, which is grateful to the developers of the case study documented in *The California Reading First Year 5 Evaluation Report (2006–07)*. The contributing evaluators included Diane Haager, Ph.D., principal investigator; and the Educational Data Systems (eddata.com) team, Renuka Dhar, Mark Moulton, Ph.D., and Susan McMillan, Ph.D. The Center also appreciates the supportive efforts of the California Department of Education, under its Reading First Director, Sharon Johnson.

2010

NATIONAL READING
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER



This document was developed by the National Reading Technical Assistance Center. The document was produced under U.S. Department of Education Contract No. ED-08-CO-0123 with RMC Research Corporation. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the policies of the U.S. Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service, or enterprise is intended or should be inferred.

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/index.html>

Contents

Introduction	1
Definition of case study	1
Why read a case study on how well Spanish instruction transitions to English reading outcomes?	1
What is generally known about this case study's Spanish language learners compared with English Learners (ELs)?	2
Setting for this case study	3
Key questions for individual readers	4
Key questions for group discussion	5
References	6
Featured case study	7
Introduction	7
Data sources	8
English Learner student achievement	8
Participants' perceptions of the impact of Reading First on waived classrooms	10
Code characterization	12
Conclusions	16
Appendix 1	17
Reading instruction in Spanish: <i>What works, what doesn't work, and what's challenging</i>	18
Appendix 2	21
Activity: Prioritizing strategies to strengthen your school's program for English Learners	22
Activity form 1: Setting priorities English Learners	24
Activity form 2: Charting key features of high priority—new support efforts	25
Activity form 3: Action plan high priority—new support efforts for ELs	26



Introduction

This case study examines two approaches for teaching English Learners (ELs) to read: teaching students to read in their primary language (in this instance, Spanish), then transitioning to English, or teaching students to read in English only. The study has been prepared for individual readers, study groups, or school-site teams interested in and committed to reading instruction for ELs.

This introduction defines “case study,” states the intent of the study, reviews current research on primary language instruction in beginning reading, and provides background on the setting of this study. Guiding questions are also included for both individual readers and groups of readers interested in a follow-up discussion. Appendix 2 contains an optional activity school-site teams can use to explore their school’s primary language reading program or English-only program.

Definition of case study

A case study is a form of qualitative, descriptive research designed to examine the interplay of factors that explain how and why things happen within the context under study. A case study offers a holistic understanding about the program or activity and may suggest possible new factors or questions for further study or application.

Why read a case study on how well Spanish instruction transitions to English reading outcomes?

The aim of this case study was to obtain educators’ perceptions of the benefits of instruction in Spanish on reading achievement in English in grades two and three, following two or more years in the Spanish reading program.

Increasing research evidence suggests a modestly robust effect size on reading scores when EL students receive two to three years of primary language instruction. Under this condition, findings predict that an average student will achieve about 12 to 15 percentile points higher than an average student who only receives second language (i.e., English) reading instruction, as measured on a reliable and valid assessment of reading in English (Goldenberg, 2008, p. 16). Considerable research on beginning reading also supports the assertion that all learners, including primary language learners, need to acquire facility with the sounds and symbols of their language in order to learn to read in English (Goldenberg, 2008, pp.17, 22). Beginning learners need to become automatic enough at word recognition to build speed and accuracy in decoding. They also need to build an increasingly mature vocabulary to comprehend complex text. At the point of transitioning to their secondary language, primary language learners need the same technical skills that English-only learners need to be able to read in English.

This case study offers the reader an opportunity to analyze teacher, coach, and principal perceptions on what works, what doesn’t work, and what is challenging in instructing students in Spanish and then transitioning them to English; and to study achievement results of Spanish instruction students compared with students who were taught in English only. This document offers guiding questions so that the readers may discuss the study. Because this case study demonstrates how a state has supported an approach that is “in progress,” some questions may emerge that the study does not address.

What is generally known about this case study's Spanish language learners compared with English Learners (ELs)?

The number of Reading First states that approved primary language instruction for its English language learners is unknown. However, a national Reading First report, based on a sampling of schools that have specialized services for English Language Learners (U.S. Department of Education, 2008), found that:

- 18 percent offered English as a Second Language (ESL), and
- six percent offered reading instruction in a language other than English.

This case study comes from California, where high concentrations of state-classified ELs attend Reading First schools. According to the demographic figures reported in the study, ELs comprise between 53.7 to 58.5 percent of students in the 886 California Reading First schools in 110 districts; the average EL population in all of California's elementary schools is 29.5 percent (Haager, Dhar, Moulton, & McMillan, 2008). The only primary language reading programs approved for California's Spanish language programs were translations of two core English reading programs which were assigned to "waivered classrooms" (California Education Code Section 310 classrooms) in which parents of ELs requested that their children be instructed in Spanish initially and then transitioned to English. The grade two and grade three students in waived classroom were required by law to take the California Standards Test (CST) in English Language Arts at the end of each year. The Reading First goal for these "waivered" students was the same for all other ELs and English-only students—to become proficient English readers by the end of third grade.

The case study included an open-ended question on the required Reading First annual survey for teachers, coaches, and principals with a Spanish instruction program in their schools. The question was: *If you had waived classrooms in your school where instruction is provided in Spanish, what is your opinion of the impact of the Reading First program on the instruction and learning of students in waived classrooms?* There were 2,285 responses to the question: 1,772 K–3 teachers, 246 coaches, and 260 principals. The teachers who responded may have included those who taught both the Spanish program and the English-only program. According to other items in the survey, 392 teachers taught the Spanish-translated version of the English K–3 program for one of the adopted programs and 1,171 teachers for the other adopted program. Thus 1,563 or nine percent of teachers responded out of the total survey respondents of 17,261 teachers, which demonstrates that approximately 9 percent of the Reading First classrooms used the Spanish reading programs (Haager et al. 2008, A-17 to 24; A-24 to 28, respectively).

The case study also includes findings on outcomes of ELs in the Spanish program compared with ELs in the English-only program. The difference in the number of students in the waived classrooms and in the English-only classrooms that include cohorts of students in the Reading First program for two or three years by the spring of 2007 is considerable (Haager et al., 2008, p. 129):

- Grade two: 4,386 waived classroom students vs. 29,637 English-only classroom ELs
- Grade three: 2,412 waived classroom students vs. 26,721 English-only classroom ELs

Setting for this case study

The California Reading First Year 5 Evaluation Report (Haager et al., 2008), explores the instructional value of waived classrooms compared with English-only instruction classrooms to examine the impact of Reading First on ELs who have received reading instruction in Spanish in a “waivered” classroom. As in any field study, it is difficult to control variations in the instructional approaches taken in the schools with ELs in Spanish-waivered classrooms. An analysis of the survey data shows more teachers teaching the Spanish program in kindergarten (466) and grade one (492), a moderate reduction of teachers in grade two (407), and a considerable reduction of teachers in grade three (198). This suggests that students receiving instruction in Spanish may be transitioning to English-only instruction in either grade two or grade three. It is important to note that both Spanish-waivered classroom students and English-only classroom students also receive English language development instruction (similar to English as a Second Language instruction) for a minimum of 30 minutes daily.

The evaluators concluded that *teachers, coaches, and principals perceived that Reading First has resulted in improved outcomes for ELs served in waived classrooms, primarily as a result of setting high expectations and accountability for ensuring students are proficient by the end of third grade* (Haager et al., 2008, p. 140).

Key questions for individual readers

What are the achievement outcomes of waived and non-waived ELs in grades two and three on the California Standards Test (CST) for English-Language Arts?

Grade two

- What percentage of grade two students reach proficient and above levels on the CST in waived classrooms after two to three years in the Spanish reading program?
What speculations do the evaluators suggest to explain the findings?

Grade three

- What percentage of grade three students reach the proficient and above levels on the CST in waived classroom after two to three years in the Spanish reading program?
- What speculations do the evaluators suggest to explain the findings?

Conclusions

- How do the percentages of ELs at the proficient and above levels in waived classrooms compare to those in non-waived classrooms?

What are the general impressions of the impact of Reading First on reading instruction in Spanish from the perspectives of teachers, principals, and coaches?

- Program
- Materials
- Academics
- Transition
- Bilingual/biliteracy/English only
- Equity
- Improvement
- Assessment
- Time
- Professional development

Key questions for group discussion

Group discussion questions require the use of *What Works? What Doesn't Work? And What's Challenging* found in the Appendix.

Discussion group prompts:

Discuss the three inquiries below based on teacher, coach, and principal perceptions of how well Spanish instruction transitioned to English reading achievement:

1. Compare and contrast the perceptions of success (*What Works?*) in the Spanish instruction program to the challenges (*What's Challenging?*) in transitioning to English instruction.
2. Find the challenges (*What's Challenging?*) perceived as the most difficult in providing primary language reading instruction and identify the reasons why.
3. Discuss the relevance of these findings for teaching reading in a primary language and then transitioning to English for ELs.

References

- Goldenberg, C. (2008). Teaching English language learners: What the research does—and does not—say. *American Educator*, 32(2), 8-23, 42-44. Retrieved September 11, 2009 from http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/summer08/goldenberg.pdf
- Haager, D., Dhar, R., Moulton, M., & McMillan, S. (2008). *The California Reading First year 5 evaluation report*. Morgan Hill, CA: Educational Data Systems. Retrieved May 27, 2009 from http://www.eddata.com/resources/publications/RF_Evaluation_2006-2007.pdf
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies. (2008). *Reading First Implementation Evaluation Final Report*. (20-21). Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved June 5, 2009 from <http://www.ed.gov/rschtat/eval/other/readingfirst-final>



Featured Case Study

Spanish Reading Instruction for English Language Learners
Based on The California Reading First Year 5 Evaluation Report
2006–2007

Introduction

California's Proposition 227 requiring instruction in K–12 schools to be provided in English allows the option for parents to sign a waiver indicating that they prefer their children to be educated in their primary language. Statewide, the majority of waived K–3 classrooms are providing instruction in Spanish. Additionally, AB 1485 in 2003 mandated that Spanish language instructional materials and support for teachers be available in Reading First schools. This bill also specified that students must be tested in English by the end of third grade. Thus, waived classrooms must include a transition from Spanish to English instruction during the K–3 years.

In the 2004–2005 school year, California's Reading First program began offering support for LEAs with "waivered" classrooms, that is, classrooms offering a bilingual instruction model using Spanish-language versions of the adopted curricula. The goal is for students receiving bilingual reading instruction in Spanish and English to become proficient in English by the end of grade three as evidenced by the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) test. Regardless of the LEA's selected curriculum, each LEA is required to implement fully the district's state-adopted reading/language arts program for an uninterrupted 60 minutes per day in kindergarten and 150 minutes per day in grades one through three, according to a district-approved pacing plan that outlines when each daily lesson is taught at each grade level in an academic year. This plan not only ensures that students will complete the grade-level curriculum but also that implementation occurs systematically in every Reading First school. The Reading First program included professional development for coaches, teachers, and principals regarding the use of the Spanish-language materials and assessments were developed in Spanish to monitor student progress.

This section examines the efficacy of the waived classroom option as part of the Reading First program for English Learners (ELs). We also examine the responses of participants to an open-ended question that provided teachers, coaches and principals opportunities to express their views of the impact of the Reading First program on waived classrooms.

This chapter yields the following key findings:

- English Learners in non-waivered classrooms show significantly higher grade two and grade three STAR scores than English Learners who have been in waived classrooms for two or three years.

- Many participants with experience in waived classrooms served by the Reading First program expressed positive perceptions of the program.
- Participants generally had positive opinions of the state adopted curriculum materials used in waived classrooms but expressed concerns regarding grammatical or typographical errors or problems with translation from English to Spanish in the materials.
- Participants perceived that Reading First has resulted in improved outcomes for ELs served in waived classrooms, primarily as a result of setting high expectations and accountability for ensuring students are proficient by the end of third grade.
- Though Reading First support is attributed to facilitating the transition from Spanish to English instruction for EL students in waived classrooms, participants expressed a need for further guidance on how to effectively conduct the transition.

Data sources

In this section, we compare student achievement results of students in waived Reading First classrooms with achievement results of English Learners in non-waived Reading First classrooms to determine their relative efficacy.

To gather additional information about the impact of Reading First on ELs, teachers, coaches, and principals had the opportunity to write in responses to an open-ended question: *"If you have waived classrooms in your school, where instruction is provided in Spanish, what is your opinion of the impact of the Reading First program on the instruction and learning of the students in waived classrooms? (If you do not have direct experience with waived classrooms, please leave this question blank.)"* The responses were compiled by respondent group in a text file and used in a qualitative analysis, described later in this chapter. In this chapter, we do not compare perceptions at high and low implementation sites due to the small number of schools with waived programs that fell into the low implementation category.

English Learner student achievement

The following tables report the percentage of English Learners from waived and non-waived classrooms who scored Proficient or above on the grade two and grade three CSTs, as well as their mean scale scores. English Learners are defined as members of a waived classroom if they received the Spanish form of the 6–8 Week Skills Assessments during the 2006–07 school year and if they attended such a classroom for two or three years. English Learners are defined to be from a non-waived classroom if, as of the 2006–07 school year, they have never attended a waived classroom.

Waived vs. non-waived EL students, grade two CSTs

Grade two English Learners	ELs in waived classrooms two or three years, 2006–2007	ELs in non-waived classrooms, 2006–2007
Number of EL Students	4,386	29,637
% Proficient and Above	15.5%*	26.5%
Mean Scale Score	297*	315

* Significantly lower than ELs in non-waived classrooms, $p < 0.05$.

Waivered vs. non-waivered EL students, grade three CSTs

Grade three English Learners	ELs in waived classrooms two or three years, 2006–2007	ELs in non-waivered classrooms, 2006–2007
Number of EL Students	2,412	26,721
% Proficient and Above	8.2%*	10.7%
Mean Scale Score	285*	293

* Significantly lower than ELs in non-waivered classrooms, $p < 0.05$.

These tables show that English Learners in waived classrooms do not score as high on the grade two and grade three CSTs as the English Learners in non-waivered classrooms do. In grade two, the non-waivered percent proficient and above is 11 percentage points higher than the waived percent proficient and above, translating to an 18 scale score point advantage. In grade three the differences are less dramatic, symptomatic of the grade three CSTs in general, but the pattern is similar. ELs in non-waivered classrooms score higher than ELs in waived classrooms.

While the pattern of higher achievement of ELs in non-waivered classrooms seems clear, it is less clear what caused this pattern. The simplest hypothesis is that reading instruction in a student's primary language is less effective than instruction in an English-only learning environment (immersion). However, this is a complex issue and other hypotheses have not been ruled out. For instance, it may be that the Spanish versions of the reading programs are not as well-written or conceived as the English versions. Some teacher comments suggest that the Spanish versions of the state-adopted programs do in fact suffer from typographical errors and translation problems. On the other hand, teachers generally found the Spanish materials to be adequate. Another possibility is that the teachers of waived classrooms may not be as generally effective as their colleagues in non-waivered classrooms.

It is also possible that the two student samples are not fully comparable. For instance, this study is forced to assume that the ELs in waived and non-waivered classrooms enter kindergarten at roughly the same average level of English ability. Perhaps students in waived classrooms come from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Perhaps they are dominated by a migrant population that does not receive the same degree and consistency of educational exposure. Perhaps their parents are not as educated or as motivated. Given the limitations of the available data, these hypotheses cannot be ruled out. Nonetheless, the size of the waived/non-waivered difference is sufficiently large to support a strong preliminary presumption that instruction in one's primary language is less effective in teaching English to ELs than immersion in English-only classrooms based on kindergarten through grade four findings.

The findings do not allow conclusions about when students should transition from waived to non-waivered classrooms. However, the data suggest that CST scores are slightly higher for students who have been in a waived classroom for three years than for two years, though the difference is not large. (Of course, students who have been in a waived classroom for zero years—i.e., who are in non-waivered classrooms—score highest of all, confounding efforts to infer a positive relationship between performance and years in a waived classroom.)

Note that these findings only compare two types of Reading First programs. They do not assess the impact that Reading First has on bilingual education relative to non-Reading First schools. For that, we rely on qualitative data.

Participants' perceptions of the impact of Reading First on waived classrooms

This section reports the qualitative analysis of an open-ended question regarding waived classrooms. Teachers, coaches, and principals responded to the question, *"If you have waived classrooms in your school, where instruction is provided in Spanish, what is your opinion of the impact of the Reading First program on the instruction and learning of the students in waived classrooms? (If you do not have direct experience with waived classrooms, please leave this question blank.)"* In this section, qualitative research methodology is used to examine findings from this open-ended question. Analysis yields the perspectives of school personnel who have experience with waived classrooms.

Of the 19,362 surveys collected, 11.8% of respondents provided written comments to this open-ended question. Of the 17,261 teacher surveys collected, 1,772 wrote narrative responses to this question, or 10.3%. Of the 1,028 coach surveys collected, there were 246 narrative comments submitted, or 23.9%. Of the 1,073 principal surveys collected, there were 260 comments submitted, or 24.2%. This response rate is lower than that of other open-ended questions because respondents were directed to refrain from responding if they did not have direct experience with waived classrooms.

Factors associated with the impact of Reading First on ELs

There was a generally positive impression of the impact of Reading First on waived classrooms in California. This comment from a teacher reflects the enthusiasm for Reading First and the feeling that the support is welcomed by those responsible for providing the instruction:

"I teach a waived biliteracy class and I think that having this program in Spanish is very valuable. My students are learning to read in Spanish quicker than I've ever seen in the 11 years I've been a bilingual teacher. This allows them to become English readers much quicker. My district has been working hard to teach us how to teach transferability so I am seeing more biliterate kindergarten students than ever before. I think it's great!"

The value of the explicitness of instruction as well as the structure and guidance are evident in this and many other comments. Despite the enthusiasm and positive regard for the program expressed by many, the topic of waived classrooms generated more negative comments than any other open-ended question. It appears that although Reading First has brought needed resources and support to the bilingual programs around the state, improvement in some areas is still needed. For example, there were positive and negative opinions about the curriculum materials (see the tables below). Participants were generally pleased to receive much-needed curricular materials. The negative comments focused more on translation errors or difficult vocabulary in the materials rather than generally negative perceptions about the instructional approach or curriculum.

The goal in waived programs is for students to be proficient in academic skills in English by the end of third grade. AB 1485 requires that schools use the English state assessments for EL students receiving instruction in waived programs. Generally, participants felt that having the professional development, curriculum, and support provided by Reading First made it feasible to transition students to English competency by the end of third grade. They felt that the AB 1485 requirements set the expectation and the Reading First Year 5 Evaluation Report provided needed support. However, many comments expressed concern about the transition in preparation for end-of-third-grade English testing. They expressed the need for more explicit guidance on how to do so.

This section describes categories of responses and their relative importance. The next table lists the codes, or categories of responses, in rank order in (descriptors are provided in the following section). Rankings are listed for the whole data set combined and then for teachers, coaches, and principals. This allows the reader to compare

the participant groups' perceptions in terms of relative importance of the response categories relative to waived classrooms. Note that this table depicts the relative frequency with which the codes occurred and should not be interpreted as ratings. The table also lists the percentage of the total codable responses that occurred within each category.

The responses to this open-ended question reflect unprompted reactions of participants. Therefore, the percentages represent the proportion of respondents who spontaneously chose to respond to a particular issue. For example, with regard to participants' perceptions of the materials, 15.4% of the responses (in the All Participants column) were coded as "Materials Positive" while 6.9% were coded as "Materials Negative." These figures do not add to 100% because there were many responses that did not mention materials at all.

In this table, we see general agreement across respondent groups for the codes of highest relative importance. However, notable differences occurred. For principals, the code "Same as Regular Classes" occurred with higher frequency than for teachers or coaches. For coaches, two codes occurred with relatively higher frequency than for teachers and principals: Equity of Program and Professional Development. The following response categories were considered of high importance across rating groups: Program Positive, Materials Negative, Academic Positive, and Transition Easier. Other categories occurred with varying frequency across groups. A few categories occurred with low frequency and should not be considered to represent a significant finding among participant group: Suggestions for Improvement, Academic Negative, Describe their Program, Transition Negative, Assessments Negative and Time is Problem.

Rank order and percentages of responses for categories

Response category (code)	All (2,278)		Teachers (1,772)		Coaches (246)		Principals (260)	
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
Program positive	1	33.9	1	34.7	1	31.3	1	31.2
Materials negative	2	15.4	2	17.7	3	17.1	2	14.2
Academic positive	3	13.9	3	15.3	2	21.1	3	13.8
Transition easier	4	10.0	4	12.9	4	16.3	5	11.9
Bilingual-biliteracy positive	5	8.0	5	8.8	8	5.3	6	8.1
Materials positive	6	6.9	6	8.4	6	9.3	11	5.0
Bilingual vs. English-only	7	6.5	8	6.8	12	2.8	12	3.8
Equity of program	8	4.6	7	7.3	5	11.8	10	5.8
Same as regular classes	9	4.1	11	3.4	9	4.9	4	12.3
Suggestions for improvement	10	4.0	13	2.8	7	6.1	12	3.8
Academic negative	11	3.9	10	3.7	11	3.3	14	3.1
Describe their program	12	3.6	9	4.1	9	4.9	8	6.5
Transition negative	13	3.6	12	3.0	7	6.1	7	7.7
Assessments negative	14	2.9	15	2.6	13	0.4	15	1.5
Time is problem	14	2.9	11	3.4	10	3.7	13	3.5
Professional development positive	15	2.8	14	2.7	5	11.8	9	6.2

Code characterization

For each code, or response category, in the table below, a brief definition is provided along with representative comments from each respondent group. These are listed in the order of frequency occurring within all respondent groups combined. Only codes that occurred within 10% or more of a respondent group are described.

Code descriptions and representative comments

Code description	Reasons and representative comments
Program positive Expresses a general positive opinion about Reading First and its impact on English Learners, specifically for waived classes, or regarding Spanish language instruction in reading as part of Reading First	"As the Spanish teacher for kindergarten, I feel the impact of RF programs is vital for our students to succeed in both languages (Teacher)." "I think that adopting <i>Foro abierto</i> for K–5 was an excellent decision. This will provide consistency and coherence to the Language Arts program. Teachers will claim that it is not good...but from my perspective it creates uniformity and consistency (Principal)." "Well, based on our data, our waived students are experiencing greater success than many of our non-waived classes. I have also been told that we have some of the highest scores in the district when it comes to Spanish language arts assessment. I think the fact that our waived teachers attended the 5-day training the last two years has impacted their delivery tremendously (Coach)." "Reading First has been beneficial for the waived classrooms because the teaching strategies are consistent in either classroom regardless of the language. The teachers benefit from the professional development planning time lesson studies etc. as do all staff. Support from the coaches is available to all teachers and this empowers everyone (Principal)."
Materials negative Indicates a negative perception about curriculum materials used in waived classrooms as part of Reading First	"Because of the number of errors in reading books, errors in the practice book pages, and the fact that the program is a direct translation of English puts the Lecture classes at a severe disadvantage (Teacher)." "<i>Foro abierto</i> was implemented this past year and teachers are not happy with quality level of the program (Principal)." "The translations into Spanish have to improve. There are a lot of spelling, syntax and grammar mistakes in the materials in Spanish. Also, assessment questions cannot be literally translated from English. That seems to be the case in some assessments. Some of those questions don't make sense. Also, it seems to me that the words in the vocabulary lists are simply translated from the English version. If there is an English vocabulary word that's appropriate for a second grader, that doesn't mean that the translation into Spanish is also appropriate for a second grader (Teacher)." "I have listened to major complaints that the program uses language from other countries that have little to do with either Mexican or High Spanish (Coach)."
Academic positive Expresses a positive opinion about the academic outcomes or impact of RF on academic gains, including reading, for Spanish speaking students	"I think that the impact [of RF] is positive. Our students who are receiving Spanish instruction are gaining the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed not only in Spanish but in English as well (Teacher)." "Students that have been provided instruction in Spanish are developing skills in Spanish that are being transferred into English. These students have shown great progress due to the fact that they have been able to develop a strong foundation in a language they understand (Principal)." "I think that the impact is positive. Our students who are receiving Spanish instruction are gaining the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed not only in Spanish but in English as well (Teacher)." "In general, students in my class are becoming better readers with this curriculum as opposed to the program that we used to use (Teacher)." "The Bilingual students are learning to read and write in a more systematic way using the program. As in the English classes, using the program gives consistency throughout the grade levels and allows for conversation among the teachers about theme-based instruction and strategies for teaching the program (Coach)."

Code descriptions and representative comments (continued)

Code description	Reasons and representative comments
Transition easier Indicates Reading First helps EL students in waived classrooms to transition to English instruction. The transition from Spanish to English instruction is easier because of what is taught or how it is taught	"Students are more successful in their learning because they understand the core curriculum. As the students learn English, they transfer the learned information (skills, concepts, vocabulary, etc.) allowing them to build academic experiences that they will so much need in the later years of school (Teacher)." "It has positively impacted instruction for our 2nd grade waiver class. After 2nd grade, we don't have any waiver classes. English Language Arts is formally introduced to these students in the second semester. Reading First support has been key in the facilitating the transition for these students into English Language Arts classes in the 3rd grade (Principal)." "I am a Bilingual second grade teacher who has been teaching <i>Foro abierto</i> this academic year. I find that students who are provided instruction in their primary language (Spanish) receive a foundation in reading. When given an ELD program and transferability strategies, the students are able to transfer or read in English more quickly and efficiently. The training and strategies given to me through Reading First have definitely helped me with my instruction (Teacher)." "The children in the bilingual programs consistently have higher scores than those in the English classrooms where the majority of children are still English Learners. The <i>Lectura</i> program supports the child's learning in their home language and allows them to transfer these skills to English (Coach)." "The biggest plus in my opinion is the continuity of instruction and the similarity of skills being taught in English and in Spanish. This allows for easier transfer to English. Students in the Waiver programs generally outperform students in the English programs on the SCOE assessments because they are learning in their primary language and because Spanish is so phonetically regular (Coach)."
Bilingual-biliteracy positive Expresses a positive opinion about the value or merits of teaching children to be bilingual or biliterate	"The instruction on the children's primary language helps them to succeed in English because they learn the vocabulary and language terms in the language they speak. Later on they transfer everything they know to the second language (Teacher)." "Based on our data, our waived students are experiencing greater success than many of our non-waived classes. I have also been told that we have some of the highest scores in the district when it comes to Spanish language arts (Coach)."
Materials positive Expresses an opinion that the curriculum materials used in waived classrooms are helpful or appropriate for Spanish speaking students	"The <i>Lectura</i> program is definitely a program that teaches all the aspects of reading and writing thoroughly. The students are receiving a strong base in their native language and it is helping them as the years progress. I have been able to notice the difference in language acquisition since we began using the Extra Support Handbook for 30–45 minutes of English Language Arts instruction. This component is definitely a benefit to the students and their bilingual education (Teacher)." "I teach L1 and the impact has been effective, again, because we know have a complete program—books, assessment materials, etc., that we have never had before (Teacher)." "The positive impact of Reading First on our bilingual classes is having all the materials for students in both languages (Principal)." "This school has Spanish dual-immersion classes. The impact of Reading First is the same for <i>HMR</i> and <i>Lectura</i> classrooms. Having CORE materials that are identical in both languages has been very helpful (Coach)."

Code descriptions and representative comments (continued)

Code description	Reasons and representative comments
Bilingual vs. English-only Provides an opinion of whether it is better to have a bilingual program or teach in English	"The students are more well-behaved because they are learning in their native language and are ahead in many ways in the <i>Foro abierto</i> program. The students in the English-only classes will have a head start however when it becomes all English (Teacher)" "I feel that students should be taught in English only because the state tests required are given in English. The state test in Spanish is given but does not count as does the English counterpart (Teacher)" "I do see that the instruction in primary language is very necessary. Some students don't have English support at home. They need to learn in any language. I completely disagree with the idea of testing them in English. I think it's criminal to test them in a language in which they are not comfortable (Teacher)" "The bilingual RF program forced our school to look at how we run our Bilingual classes, how we direct instruct in English, when we instruct in English, and when we provide Spanish support (Principal)" "I have mixed feelings about this topic. I have in the past been a strong supporter of the bilingual classroom. I have listened to major complaints that the <i>Foro abierto</i> program uses language from other countries that have little to do with either Mexican or High Spanish. I am slowly coming to the conclusion that unless a program is dual immersion it may not be the support our children need (Coach)"
Equity of program Expresses an opinion that there is now equity in the Reading First Program for bilingual or waived classes. May state that waived classrooms were excluded from training and support but now are included	"This is the first time the waived classrooms have had the same program as the English classes. We now can hold all programs to the same expectations and level of instruction by the teachers (Coach)" "Equal access in all areas is provided in these classroom settings (Teacher)" "The Reading First Program provides Spanish-speaking students with the same opportunities as the English program to excel in school since they learn the same skills and strategies used in English instruction (Teacher)." "We have treated both programs equitably through Reading First with its leadership and assistance. All the various aspects of the Reading First Program remain the same for our few waived classes (Principal)."
Same as regular classes States that there is no difference in the impact of Reading First on waived classes compared with regular classes	"The <i>Lectura</i> program aligns with the English program in teaching the comprehension strategies and skills vocabulary development spelling grammar writing etc. (Teacher)" "The RF Spanish program really is the same as the English program. There are equal services. (Teacher)" "Our Bilingual classrooms have received the same support as their counterparts in English under Reading First. I think the impact has been positive because it has helped us focus on teaching the components of reading (Principal)." "The student achievement expectation is the same in these classrooms. The expectations are the same; rigorous teaching is expected (Coach)." "The impact is equitable for all classes, both waived and non-waived (Coach)."
Suggestions for improvement Provides suggestions for improving the reading instruction or Reading First activities relative to waived classrooms.	Examples of general suggestions for improvement "We need to provide teachers with an explicit plan for getting all students proficient by the end of grade three and the training they need to do so (Coach)" "We need more guided practice and more visuals (Teacher)" Examples of program-specific suggestions "HM has too many comprehension skills that are not tied closely enough with the heavyweight language arts standards. Some of the comprehension skills need to be eliminated and replaced with multiple exposures to a single focus such as predicting and making inferences which are heavyweight standards (Teacher)" "I wish there were more guidelines on how to introduce the English sound-spelling cards and reading into the Spanish program (Teacher)"

Code descriptions and representative comments (continued)

Code description	Reasons and representative comments
Academic negative Expresses a negative opinion about the academic outcomes in waived classrooms	"Since my teachers know the non-Spanish version of the program, they help transition their students into reading in English. However, low comprehension and vocabulary scores are a problem for the Spanish speakers who transition into English-only classrooms (Coach)" "Our students in the bilingual program have a very difficult time transitioning into English and are usually very low in third grade. It is impossible for them to catch up (Teacher)" "When students who have been in Spanish classrooms in kinder to second grade come into our third grade classes, we have a hard time teaching them the third grade standards. We have to go back to first and second grade standards in order to teach them the third grade standards (Teacher)"
Describe their school's program Provides an anecdotal description of how their school operates waived classrooms	"Because there are limited resources to provide interventions in Spanish, we are having the bilingual classes only for those students who are on grade level in Spanish. If students are below grade level, we place them in English instruction with structured English immersion (Coach)" "We have dual immersion programs that consist of 50/50 (Spanish/English) and 90/10. In addition, we have a developmental biliteracy program (Coach)" "It has made us reflect on the delivery of instruction in our two-way immersion program. Our students now interact with the other students during deployment time, however, not at the expense of the core instruction (Principal)"
Transition negative Describes problems with transitioning students from Spanish instruction to English instruction	"There is no strong plan for transition from Spanish to English. That component should be built in and begun as early as first grade. The English Language Development curriculum is not enough, especially if we want the EL students college bound (Coach)" "The Reading First Program needs to provide clearer guidance on the transitioning process. We need specific assessment tools to measure their growth as they transition (Principal)" "I do not feel that Reading First and the core program help transition students from one language to another. The text in Spanish should also be introducing English elements as the years progress to help our students transition. Instead, students are forced from Spanish to English with little ease of transition (Teacher)"
Assessments negative Expresses a negative opinion of the assessment requirements, procedures or tools for students in waived classes	"Some of the assessments in Spanish have not been accurately translated and that makes it difficult for students to be and feel successful in this program (Teacher)" "Our students receiving Spanish instruction outperform their English speaking peers when taking the state's Spanish language assessments. However, when they take the English assessments, they are behind. It is apparent that EL students need a fairer system when taking state required tests (Principal)" "There are significant burdens for teachers who must assess their students in both English and Spanish at the expense of instructional time (Teacher)"
Time is problem Indicates that there is not enough instructional time to teach reading and language arts in waived classes	"The two and one half hours of Spanish instruction leaves insufficient time to cover information in English (Coach)" "Spanish scores have gone down since our district began parallel instruction in English with the support of the RTAC. Students in bilingual classes are no longer getting enough instructional time in Spanish (Principal)" "There are not enough instructional minutes in a day to provide an adequate Spanish program in addition to an English program (Teacher)"
Professional development positive Expresses a positive opinion about the professional development provided for teachers of waived classrooms.	"Participating in Reading First has helped our teachers teaching in waived classrooms to receive the same training as the English component. The training and coaching have helped increase student achievement in the waived classrooms (Coach)" "Because they (waived classroom teachers) went to the same training as their English-instruction counterparts, they had increased knowledge of both programs such that there was increased dialogue amongst teachers at the same grade level when they were discussing the best ways to help their EL students (Coach)" "The Reading First Program has impacted our alternative program in Spanish positively. Teachers of waived classrooms participate in all the articulations and professional development and follow pacing guides the same way teachers in English settings do. Consequently, students in waived classrooms have the same learning opportunities and expectations (Principal)"

Conclusions

In conclusion, this chapter finds that English Learners (ELs) in non-waivered classrooms show significantly higher grade two and grade three STAR (CST) scores than English Learners who have been in waived classrooms for two or three years.

Many teachers, coaches, and principals with experience in waived classrooms served by Reading First expressed positive perceptions of the program. Participants generally had positive opinions of the state adopted curriculum materials used in waived classrooms but expressed concerns regarding grammatical or typographical errors or problems with translation from English to Spanish in the materials.

Teachers, coaches, and principals perceived that Reading First has resulted in improved outcomes for ELs served in waived classrooms primarily as a result of setting high expectations and accountability for ensuring students are proficient by the end of third grade.

Though Reading First support is attributed to facilitating the transition from Spanish to English instruction for EL students in waived classrooms, participants expressed a need for further guidance on how to effectively conduct the transition.



APPENDIX 1

Reading instruction in Spanish:

What works, what doesn't work, what's challenging

Reading instruction in Spanish | *What works, what doesn't work, what's challenging*

[Note: T = teacher; C = coach; and P = principal.]

Description	What works?	What doesn't work?	What's challenging?
Program	• Vital for our Spanish-speaking students to succeed in both languages (T) • Spanish program consistent and coherent with English program (P) • Impact of 5-day training for the last two years improves teaching (C) • Benefit of planning time for lesson studies with support of coach (P)		• Spanish classroom students who stay in program from kindergarten through second grade have difficulty in learning grade three content standards—thus requiring a return to grade one and two standards (T)
Materials	• All aspects of reading and writing in program (T) • Complete program for lowest level English learner [Level 1] (T) • Both Spanish and English materials available for bilingual instruction (P) • Spanish dual-immersion classes with materials for both languages (C)	• Direct translation of English core program contains numerous errors (T) • Unhappy with quality level of the Spanish program (P) • Numerous errors [spellings, syntax, grammar] (T)	• Spanish used not typical of either Mexican or High Spanish (C)
Academics	• Gaining knowledge and skills to succeed in both Spanish and English (T) • Spanish skills transferred to English with a strong foundation for understanding language (P) • Becoming better readers as compared to former program used (T) • Learning skills in a more systematic way (C)	• Transition from Spanish program to English program shows low performance in comprehension and vocabulary (C) • Tendency of transition from Spanish to English program in third grade shows low performance (T)	

Reading instruction in Spanish | *What works, what doesn't work, what's challenging* (continued)

Description	What works?	What doesn't work?	What's challenging?
Transition	• Students more successful in understanding core program (T) • Strong transitions between second and third grade (P) • Program with transferability strategies offer quick and efficient path to English (T) • Bilingual programs consistent in obtaining higher scores than English classrooms with majority of English Learners (C) • Continuity of instruction and similarity of skills for easier transfer to English (C)		• No strong plan for transition from Spanish to English (C) • Need clearer guidance on the transition process (P) • Publisher programs need gradual integration of Spanish to English ongoing (T)
Bilingual-biliteracy/ English only	• Instruction in children's primary language helpful for teaching vocabulary and language terms in language they speak (T) • Data positive for waived students (C) • Children well-behaved when learning in their native language (T) • Necessary for instruction in primary language (T) • Bilingual classrooms now offer direct instruction (P) • Dual immersion best for supporting needs (C)	• Requiring all students in waived classrooms to take the state's CST in English and not Spanish (T)	
Equity	• First opportunity for Spanish students to be taught in Spanish core program (C) • Access to waived classroom setting (T) • Spanish speaking students learn same skills and strategies used in English instruction (T) • Leadership and assistance treated equally; requirements the same (P) • Alignment with English program: comprehension strategies and skills, development of spelling, grammar, and writing (T) • Same program with English and equal services (T) • Support the same for both Spanish and English programs (P)		

Reading instruction in Spanish | *What works, what doesn't work, what's challenging*
(continued)

Description	What works?	What doesn't work?	What's challenging?
Improvement			• Provide explicit plan to teachers on how to get students to proficiency in English by the end of third grade (C) • Need more guided practice and visuals (T) • Need more emphasis in published material on comprehension skills (T) • Need more guidelines on Spanish sound-spelling cards (T)
Assessments		• Incorrect translations for assessment items (T) • Need fairer system for state required tests (P) • Wasting instruction time for assessments in both English and Spanish (T)	
Time			• Insufficient instructional time to cover both Spanish and English instruction (C) • Insufficient instructional time for Spanish program (P) • Insufficient instructional time for Spanish program and English program (T)
Professional Development	• Training and coaching impact improved teaching (C) • Training increased knowledge of both Spanish and English program thereby increased dialogue amongst teachers at the same grade level (C) • Teacher participation improved articulation and access to professional development (e.g., pacing guides, expectations) (P)		



APPENDIX 2

Optional activity

Action planning to strengthen programs for ELs

Activity: Prioritizing strategies to strengthen your school's program for English Learners

Scenario

Following a group discussion on *What works, what doesn't work, and what's challenging*, the school's team desires to build consensus for two to three priority areas deemed beneficial in addressing the learning needs of its ELs.

There are three steps:

- Identify "most beneficial" efforts already existing and high priority—new support efforts for ELs that are likely to enhance reading achievement
- Chart key features of the selected high priorities
- Develop an action plan for two or three high priority—new support efforts.

Preparation

Have the following materials ready for the one- to two-hour activity:

- Copies of reading instruction in Spanish *What works, what doesn't work, and what's challenging* chart. *One copy for each participant*
- Copies of chart for setting priorities. *One copy for each participant* [use Form 1]
- Chart paper for charting key features of "high priority—new support efforts" [use Form 2]
- Copies of action plan form. *One copy for each participant* [use Form 3]

Directions

STEP 1/Activity form 1: School team members should:

- Identify the most beneficial categories associated with school's ELs for supporting increased learning and achievement in reading
- Identify two to three categories, based on team members' consensus, that are high priority—new support efforts to strengthen supports for increased learning and achievement in reading.

Use the reading instruction in Spanish *What works, what doesn't work, and what's challenging* chart (found in Appendix 1) to aid the discussion.

STEP 2/Activity form 2: School team members use chart paper to identify high priority—new support efforts and qualify (in brief descriptions) key features of each priority. It is suggested that two to three high priority—new support efforts be named for the current year.

Sample chart

Role to be prioritized to meet needs	Key features
Professional development	Grade-level training during team meetings Suggested topics: Acquisition of academic vocabulary Word-learning and word-meaning strategies Phonological, morphological, syntactical, and semantic structures of primary language that transfer to or differ from English

STEP 3/Activity form 3: School team members develop an action plan for the two-three high priority—new support efforts. Using the action plan form, team charts:

- Two or three high priority—new support efforts subcategories in the priority column
- Brief description of the strategy to be employed for each priority
- Action steps to be taken to implement the strategy
- External/district support needed for each strategy
- Statement of expected outcome and measures of success
- Implementation timeline for each strategy
- Rationale for the chosen high priority—new support effort action plan

Activity form 1: Setting priorities | English Learners

Directions: School team identifies four (4) existing categories of support available to ELs that are considered most beneficial, then the team recommends high priority—new support efforts to enhance reading achievement of ELs. Use the table below to:

Check [✓] School's top four most beneficial categories currently present in your school for English language learners; briefly describe each

Check [✓] School's top two to three categories considered high priority for new support efforts to increase reading achievement of English learners

Case study categories	Most beneficial	High priority—new support efforts
	Top 4	Top 2
Program		
Materials		
Academics		
Transition		
Bilingual/biliteracy/English only		
Equity		
Improvement		
Assessments		
Time		
Professional development		

Activity form 2: Charting key features of high priority—new support efforts

Directions: Use chart paper with the headings shown below. Build consensus among school team members on key features of two-three new support efforts.

High priority categories	Key features
1.	
2.	
3.	

Activity form 3: Action plan | high priority—new support efforts for ELs

Directions: Develop an action plan to address your identified priorities for the school year.

Priority	Strategy (general statement)	Action step(s)	External or district supports needed	Expected outcome (measurement of success)	Implementation timeline
1.					
2.					
3.					

NATIONAL READING
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

