

**STANFORD UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**CASE: 2006-7**  
**DATE: 12/14/06**

**IMPLEMENTING A DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM AT PS 12<sup>1</sup>**

It is subsidiary to the idea of standardization, which seeks to reduce schools . . . to mechanical copies of each other in which no improvement is permitted which does not come from the central office (Thomas, quoted in Labaree, p. 87).

Failing schools are easy to criticize but difficult to fix. Even when the causes for failure seem obvious, the existing structures within schools are difficult to change. Some argue a need for increased accountability while others put their faith in distributed power and teacher leadership. What follows is the story of a school as it tried to implement a Dual Language program in order to address its perpetual failure to provide effective instruction to English Language Learners. It illustrates both top-down and bottom-up reform and the intersection of the two.

**An introduction to Dual Language programs**

Dual Language programs promote proficiency in both English and another language. While a variety of languages are taught simultaneously with English in Dual Language programs, the vast majority of such programs in the United States provide instruction in Spanish and English. Before Dual Language programs, bilingual programs mostly adopted a transitional model. In the transitional model, Spanish speakers<sup>2</sup> are instructed in Spanish as a means to learn English. Transitional models commonly allow Spanish instruction for three years with a declining percentage of Spanish instruction as the years progress<sup>3</sup>. Dual Language programs depart importantly from transitional bilingual programs on a number of features. First, Dual Language programs aim for proficiency in a second language. Thus, in the case of Spanish/English programs, Spanish is not only a means to learn English but also an end in itself. Second, Dual Language

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<sup>2</sup> While the transitional model would potentially be applicable to languages other than Spanish, it is most often seen with Spanish due to the large percentages of Spanish speaking students in the United States

<sup>3</sup> Often times Spanish instruction comprised 75/50/25 percent of instruction during those three years.

programs include both native English and native Spanish speakers in the same setting. Ideally any given classroom contains an equal balance of English and Spanish speakers learning the other's language.

A clear separation of the two languages is a key aspect of Dual Language programs. Dual Language programs differ in the percentages they allot to the two target languages. For example a 90/10 model designates 90% of instruction to the minority language in the early grades, gradually increasing English instruction as students progress through grade levels. The emphasis on the minority language counteracts the higher status of English, and both native-English and native-Spanish students obtain high levels of biliteracy. A 50/50 model divides instructional hours equally between English and the other language. These programs don't produce as high levels of biliteracy as the 90/10 models do, but they tend to be more politically acceptable. (Christian, 1994; Cloud, Genesee & Hamayan, 2000; Lindholm-Leary 2001; Soltero, 2004).

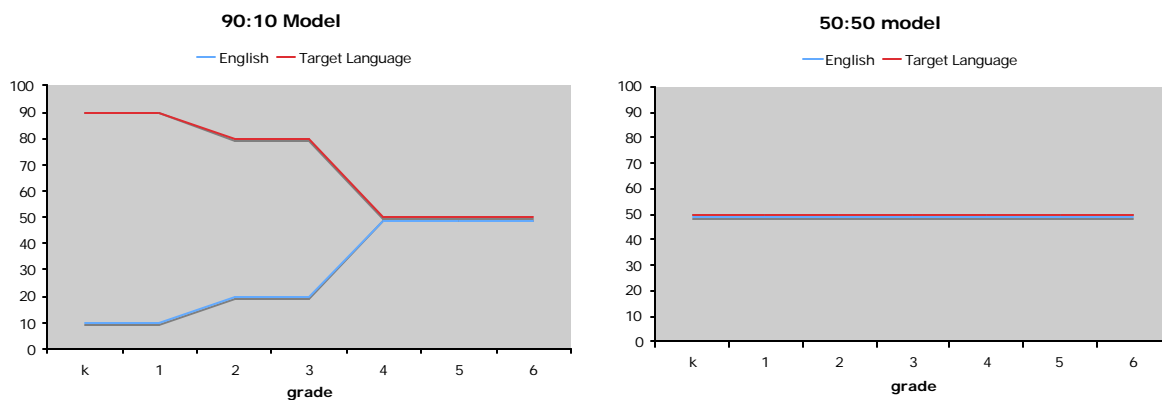


Figure 1. Language Allocation in 90:10 and 50:50 Dual Language models. Adapted from Christian, 1994.

Dual Language programs also differ in the way that they separate the two languages. Languages can be divided temporally, alternating by period, day, week or month. Alternatively, the two languages can be separated by teacher or by assigning separate subjects to each language.

### New York City and bilingual education

New York City approves three models for teaching its 140,000+ English Language Learners: ESL, Transitional Bilingual and Dual Language (see Figure 2). Although Dual Language programs only serve a small percentage of English Language Learners, they have become more popular rhetorically and continue to grow in a climate where Transitional Bilingual programs are declining. In the summer 2006 *Directory of Dual Language Programs*, New York City boasted 65 programs in 63 schools with plans for 10 additional programs.

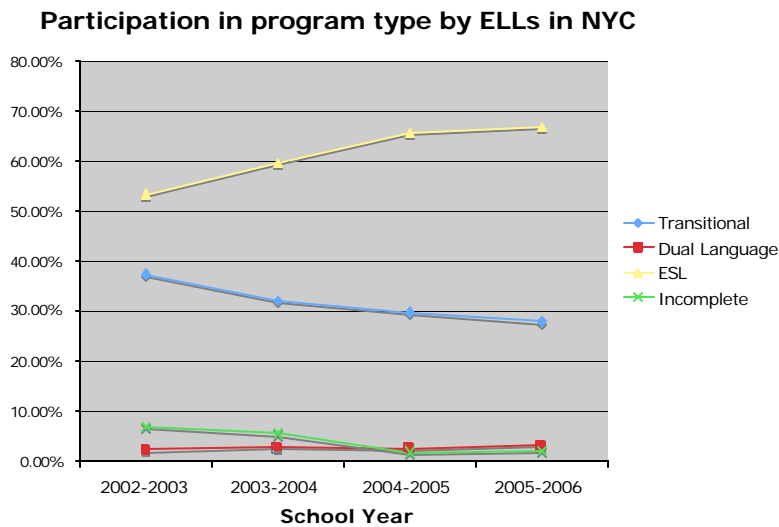


Figure 2. From *ELLs in New York City: Student Demographic Report*, p.6

Note: Relative program size is represented by percentage of ELLs enrolled in the program. The actual number of students enrolled in Dual Language programs is under-represented as less than half of the students in typical Dual Language classes are designated ELLs.

In the Fall of 2002, a year after being elected to office and in the spirit of No Child Left Behind, Mayor Michael Bloomberg and his Chancellor of schools announced a citywide reform initiative called Children First. As a first step, Children First aimed to both “stabilize and bring coherence” to the system of education in New York City’s 1,400 schools. The then 40 districts were consolidated into 10 districts with new governing systems, and a universal curriculum in math and literacy instruction was adopted throughout the city. The reform also consisted of seven recommendations specifically aimed at ELLs to be rolled out sequentially over the course of three years.

<b>The ELL Recommendations</b>	
1.	Improving instruction for English Language Learners by aligning all programs for English Language Learners with the citywide comprehensive core curriculum in mathematics and literacy.
2.	Appointing 107 new Instructional Support Specialists to support teachers and drive best practices into classrooms with English Language Learners.
3.	Creating a new ELL Teacher Academy to provide rigorous professional development for teachers, administrators and other pedagogues involved in the education of English Language Learners.
4.	Providing coherent, system-wide language allocation guidelines for all programs for English Language Learners.
5.	Implementing effective monitoring and assessment of programs for English Language Learners.
6.	Holding schools and principals accountable for improvement in the academic achievement of English Language Learners.
7.	Improving communication with parents and families of English Language Learners through Parent Coordinators at the school.

Table 1. Children First ELL Recommendations from *ELL; An Introduction to ELL Recommendations*

As with the math and literacy programs, the mayor sought consistency and uniformity in programs for ELLs (recommendation 4). The addition of 107 Instructional Support Specialists in the second recommendation provided the necessary district

personnel to coordinate programs between schools and ensure compliance in a way that wasn't possible before. While the Children First initiative was likely driving much of the focus at the district level, it rarely entered conversations at the school level.

The Children First initiative identified the development of Dual Language programs as a way to address chronic low achievement of ELLs. Prior to 2006, the city provided only vague principles to guide Dual Language programs. The Division of English Language Learners published limited documents, all labeled as “draft” or “field test.” The wording of the documents presented different Dual Language models as suggestions, with headings reading “What are the most common organizational designs?” and discussion of specific models as “variants” (Dual Language/Two-Way Model: Guidelines and Strategies for Implementation, Spring 2003, p. 7). The guidelines presented the four different models in the table below.

<b>Variant</b>	<b>Description</b>
90:10	Students receive the majority of instruction in the minority language in the lower grades. Formal English literacy instruction begins for all students in 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade. By 4 <sup>th</sup> grade instruction is divided equally between English and the other language.
50:50 Alternating Day Variant	English and the other Language are used for instruction on alternating days. Monday in English, Tuesday in Spanish etc. All subjects are taught in the language of instruction for the particular day.
50:50 Half Day Variant	English and the other Language alternate by mornings and afternoons. English is used for all “morning” subjects for one week while Spanish is used for all “afternoon” subjects. The languages switch for the following week.
50:50 Roller-Coaster Variant	One language is used for instruction in the morning and the other in the afternoon. The next day the language that had been used in the previous afternoon is used again.

Table 2. Dual Language models from *Dual Language/Two-Way Model: Guidelines and strategies for implementation, Field Test 2003*.

The models could be implemented in “self-contained” configurations where one teacher provides all instruction or “team-teaching” configurations where “there are two classes that receive instruction from two teachers (11).” In the summer of 2006 a new document emerged, organized by the Chancellor’s seven recommendations, as the primary source of information on programs for ELLs. The new document, inconsistently distributed, used stronger language and omitted the 90:10 variant. The omission came without warning and was an attempt to limit variation across models in different schools.

## **PS 12**

PS 12 is housed in a modern five-story building below two floors that serve as the Region 10 offices.<sup>4</sup> It is located in Washington Heights, a predominantly Dominican neighborhood in the northern tip of Manhattan. According the 2000 Census, 74% of the neighborhood is comprised of Spanish-speaking residents, 94.5% of which are Dominican. The community is growing and the median household income with it, rising from \$28,865 in 1999 to \$52,578 in 2006.

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<sup>4</sup> Pseudonyms are used for certain people and places to protect their identity.

Some demographics for the students and staff of PS 12 are provided in Table 3. PS 12 is unique in its high percentage of teachers with limited teaching experience. The principal is fond of hiring *Teach for America*, *Peace Corps Fellows* and *New York City Teaching Fellows*; all programs that place new teachers in schools and simultaneously train them in local universities. These teachers typically bring energy and idealism in the school but also struggle with a lack of support and preparedness. Because teaching English Language Learners in New York State requires additional certification that few teachers have, these positions are often filled by Teaching Fellows at PS 12. At the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year for example, the eleven classroom teachers primarily responsible for the education of English Language Learners had a combined total of fifteen years of experience; nine years if you excluded the author.

Total Number of students	680
Number of ELLs	288 (48.8%)
Hispanic	95.2%
Recent immigrants (immigrated within last 3 years)	11.3%
Eligible for Free Lunch	91%
Teachers with 2+ years teaching experience	40% (compared to the city average of 68.7%)

Table 3. 2004-2005 demographic statistics for PS 12 from <http://schools.nyc.gov/OurSchools/Region10/M048/default.htm>

The 2004-2005 school year marked the fifth year of PS 12’s designation as a “school in need of improvement.” The “need of improvement” label came in part from the poor performance of English Language Learners on City and State tests. Of the possible options, PS 12 chose to go through a restructuring process. Restructuring largely consisted of breaking the school into two groups: an upper elementary group of teachers and students grades 3-5 and a lower elementary group of teachers and students grades K-2. In actuality, the change resulted mostly in the addition of an assistant principal. In restructuring the ELL program a Dual Language model was adopted in grades K-1 to slowly phase out the existing Transitional Bilingual program.

### Students scoring proficient or higher

	ELLs	Non-ELLs	ELLs in other NYC schools with similar demographics
English Test	7.4%	50.5%	19.0%
Math Test	29.6%	68.7%	35.3%

Table 4. 2004-2005 fourth grade New York State Test results from: <http://schools.nyc.gov/OurSchools/Region10/M048/default.htm>

### Bilingual Education at PS 12 (Year 0)

When I arrived at PS 12 in the Fall of 2003, I joined the staff as a second grade teacher in the school’s Transitional Bilingual program. The bilingual team consisted of 5 teachers from K-4 and between us we taught roughly 100 of the English Language

Learners in the school. The other ELLs were haphazardly distributed amongst English-only classrooms where they supposedly received daily pullout ESL instruction. Not uncommonly, however, teachers would be unaware or unable to identify the ELLs in their classrooms when it came time for the state ELL test in the Spring. Clearly, ESL services were provided to these students on a sporadic basis at best.

The Transitional Bilingual program lacked cohesion as well. Grade level distinctions served as the primary organizing factor for professional development, meetings and the distribution of materials. The Transitional Bilingual “team” had very little opportunity for interaction and each teacher made instructional decisions according to their individual preferences. The schedules distributed by the assistant principals made no indication of language of instruction, leaving teachers to interpret “Transitional Bilingual” in their own manner. Some taught primarily in Spanish while others favored English. Curriculum materials and professional development also failed to acknowledge the existence of a Transitional Bilingual program in the school. Materials were provided almost exclusively in English and accommodations for ELLs were rarely discussed. Problems with staff further weakened the program. Twice in the three years I worked there, a bilingual teacher quit or was removed after the school year had begun. Both times the principal failed to find a substitute or utilize one of the many out of classroom teachers in the building. Instead she opted for a series of substitutes on short-term basis. The parent coordinator, who had been a bilingual student herself, was against bilingual education. Students were often placed haphazardly into classrooms with availability taking precedence over students’ needs. It was not uncommon therefore, as a bilingual teacher in PS 12, to receive a class of students very poorly academically prepared, ridden with behavior problems and uncommitted to bilingual instruction. Many parents were new immigrants and didn’t know of their rights in the education system. Not surprisingly, bilingual education had long since become synonymous with failure in the PS 12 community.

The district was largely absent in the 2003-2004 school year as well. Regional personnel came around with their clipboards a couple of times looking for various compliance items in the classroom environment. They provided professional development on understanding the English Language test scores but provided little direction or support.

### **Key Players in the bilingual program of PS 12**

*Ms. Wallace, principal:* Tracy Wallace is an approachable leader, open to suggestion. Her management style is passive and she avoids conflict when possible. She self admittedly knows very little about bilingual education or the education of ELLs and she doesn’t speak Spanish.

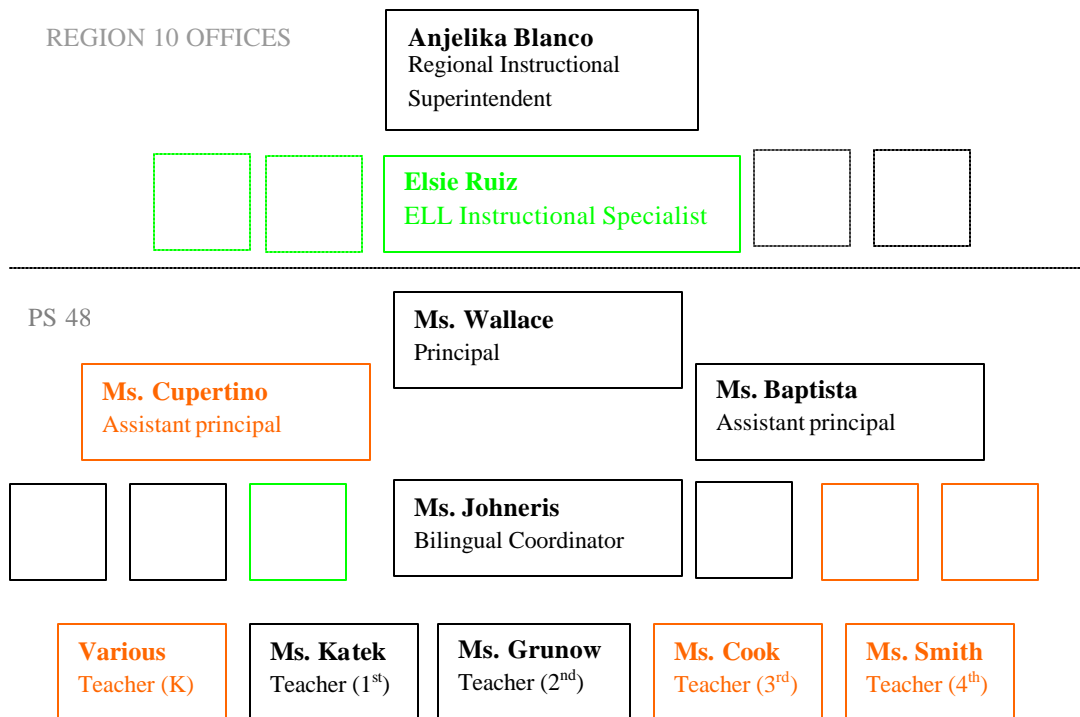
*Ms. Baptista, assistant principal:* Ana Baptista, is a native Spanish speaker but not an advocate of bilingual education. She was often involved in decisions about the bilingual program because she could speak Spanish. Her husband works in the Region 10 office on the floor above PS 12. She and Ms. Wallace did not get along well and they avoided each other except when communication was necessary.

*Ms. Johnson, bilingual coordinator:* Ruth Johnson worked as both the bilingual coordinator and the Teacher Union representative. Her role as bilingual coordinator largely consisted of testing and compliance issues for ELLs. She also served as the

liaison between the district and the staff. When funds designated for English Language Learners arrived, she was responsible for spending them, which she did without input from the teachers. In general, she served neither as an advocate nor a leader in the bilingual program. She did what people asked; whether it be deliver a message from the district or a request to switch programs by a parent. Her communication with teachers was limited to compliance issues but she served as the “go-to” person for the administration.

**Ms. Grunow**, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher: I began teaching at PS 12 in the Fall of 2003 after teaching for four years in Colorado. Due to this experience, I mentored other bilingual and ESL teachers on either a formal or informal basis. I often acted as the spokesperson for the bilingual teachers, voicing concerns, which occasionally caused tension with the administration. During the Spring, upon Ms. Wallace’s suggestion, I applied and was accepted to Bank Street College’s Bilingual and ESL Teach Leadership Academy (BETLA). The program advocated for the improvement of educational experiences for English Language Learners through developing teacher leadership. It brought me, and PS 12, into contact with ELL educators and administrators from across New York City, including those working in well-established, successful Dual Language programs. It also provided me with an extra professional period during the day with which I was expected to take a leadership role in improving educational opportunities for ELLs.

**Ms. Katek**, 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher: Ms. Katek entered as the first grade teacher the same year I did. She had been in the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic and was participating in the Peace Corps’ Teaching Fellow program.



v Present all three years      v Entered at the beginning of Year 1      v Entered at the beginning of Year 2

Figure 3. Organizational chart for PS 12

### **Transitional Bilingual to Dual Language**

Talk of switching to a Dual Language model surfaced in the Fall of 2003. By winter, it had been decided that the incoming kindergarten and first grade classes for the following year would be Dual Language programs, with the program extending by one grade each year. Ms. Katek and I were particularly excited about the changes, because we firmly supported bilingualism. As we began to formulate classes in the Spring for the following school year, it became clear that almost half of the students in my 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom would be retained. The new 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom would be made up of half retained students who I had taught primarily in English and half of promoted 1<sup>st</sup> graders who Ms. Katek had taught primarily in Spanish. It made sense to apply the 50:50 model of Dual Language to the second grade class as well. I was anxious to become part of the Dual Language program and liked the opportunities it would provide for collaboration with Ms. Katek. We presented the idea to Ms. Wallace and she had no objections. The remaining three bilingual teachers indicated they would not be returning to PS 12 the following year. The kindergarten teacher refused to relinquish her position officially and ended up returning the next year at the last minute, but not knowing this we didn't include her in the planning.

Since the switch in programs required a substantial change in philosophy and teaching methods, both Ms. Katek and I expected to receive training during the Spring to prepare for the following year. Ms. Johnson had begun recruiting both Spanish speaking and English speaking students for the program under direction of the administration but with no involvement of the teachers. Rosters were formed, but no other plans were discussed.

On the last day of school Ms. Katek stopped by my classroom on her way up to the Regional offices. Since our school administration had failed to provide us with any training or plans, she intended to get what she could directly from the Regional office. When we arrived we happened to find the Regional Instructional Specialist for ELLs, **Angelika Blanco** (see Figure 3), in the office. The conversation began as a request for resources but quickly turned to a discussion of PS 12's education of English Language Learners. Ms. Blanco was attentive to our concerns in a way no else had been in PS 12. Both Ms. Katek and I were critical of the school's treatment of ELLs. We discussed the haphazard services and disorganized placement. Ms. Blanco claimed that she suspected this chaotic reality but because Ms. Wallace always completed the paperwork correctly she had no way to substantiate her suspicions. She blamed Ms. Wallace for our lack of training, claiming she had sent Ms. Wallace information about Dual Language professional development opportunities. She even called in the serving Regional Superintendent, who also happened to be in her office, to hear our version of PS 12's ELL services. She provided us with a book on Dual Language endorsed by the district and signed us up for summer classes in Dual Language at Bank Street College.

The following day, Ms. Wallace paid me a visit in my classroom. She evidently had heard of our visit to the district and was concerned about it. She communicated a very different version of events from that of Ms. Blanco. She portrayed the Region as a nuisance more interested in criticizing than lending support. She blamed Ms. Blanco for the lack of communication and assured me that we wanted to keep her out of our part of the building as much as possible. I downplayed the visit and credited Ms. Katek with the



idea. I agreed to speak with her first next time. At the time Ms. Katek and I were both new to and naive about the functioning of the New York City Public School System as a whole. We didn't know whose version of events to trust.

### **The First Year of the Dual Language Program (Year 1)**

Ms. Katek and I read the Dual Language book provided by Ms. Blanco and went to the summer workshops. We met a month before school and began to discuss the model for PS 12. We were both excited about the emphasis Dual Language placed on true bi-literacy but concerned about PS 12's motivation in implementing Dual Language. Neither the parents nor the school administration seemed particularly interested in bi-literacy, making Dual Language an odd choice. According to the text, the 90:10 model was the most efficient at producing truly bi-literate students and we both preferred this model. At the same time we recognized Ms. Wallace would most likely be uncomfortable with such an emphasis on Spanish. As a second option we supported a 50:50 model with Ms. Katek and I team-teaching the 1st and 2nd grades. We met with Ms. Wallace a few weeks before school started. She rejected the 90:10 model, citing the importance of the English test scores, but accepted the team-teaching model. The students would rotate between us on a weekly basis with Ms. Katek serving as their Spanish teacher and me as their English teacher. Team teaching usually occurred only in schools with two Dual Language classes on the same grade level so teachers were only teaching one curriculum. We both thought that only preparing one language would reduce work as much as adding a grade level would increase it, and were also willing to work more for the added benefit of working together. We recognized the importance of building consistency and collaboration within the Dual Language program and identified team teaching as the most effective way to achieve these aims. The kindergarten teacher had still not made her intentions known for the following year, so we assigned the class a 50:50 day-by-day model because it would be the easiest for anyone to implement.

Over the summer a variety of new staff members were hired who would come to play important roles in the formation of the Dual Language model at PS 12.

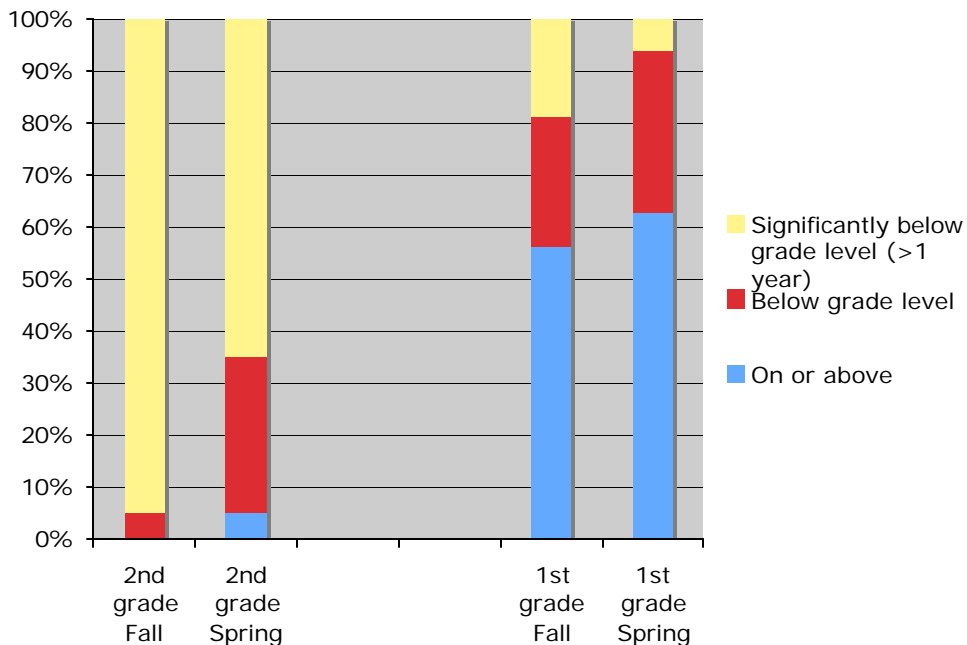
*Ms. Cupertino, assistant principal:* Ms. Cupertino was added as part of the restructuring process as the assistant principal for grades 3-5. This would be her first year as an assistant principal and she was hired on a probationary basis. Her husband worked in the Central personnel office and had a close professional relationship with Ms. Wallace. As a former bilingual teacher, Ms. Cupertino was given the responsibility of overseeing the bilingual program. She ended up concentrating most of her energy on the upper grade teachers and limited her interactions with Ms. Baptista, leaving the Dual Language program without much leadership.

*Ms. Cook & Ms. Smith, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers:* Ms. Cook and Ms. Smith were hired as the new bilingual teachers for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms. They were first year teachers recruited by the NYC Teaching Fellows and Teach for America programs respectively. Both were pursuing master's degrees in bilingual education. They were interested in becoming part of the Dual Language program as the program grew and anxious to find a support system within the school. Like both Ms. Katek and myself, they had both learned Spanish while studying abroad and were interested in bilingualism. I mentored both of them as part of my BETLA teacher leadership responsibilities.

The first year was not without its challenges. Parents, particularly those of the English speakers, were dubious of the program. They worried about their children learning enough English and were unsure about the bilingual environment. Ms. Johnson removed students without consultation of the teachers and little was done by the administration to educate or reassure the remaining parents. In addition Ms. Katek and I did not receive much administrative support. Our classrooms were on different sides of the building and had different layouts, which made the switching of students more difficult. Our schedules were minimally coordinated, creating constant logistical problems and requiring collaboration to occur outside of the school day. We worked late most evenings and half days on Saturdays. Other staff members in the school were unaware of our Dual Language model, creating constant communication problems. Officially, on paperwork, I was the second grade teacher and Ms. Katek the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher. Our different schedules on different weeks required us to assume each other's responsibilities and attend grade-level meetings according to which grade we were teaching, creating confusion. During a short conversation with the K-2 literacy coach in February of that year, I became aware that she didn't know that I was teaching both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Curriculum materials continued to be only in English and no modifications were provided to accommodate children learning all subject matters in two languages.

In spite of these challenges, the program was having positive effects for the children. The students adjusted well to the two classrooms and teachers, speaking to me only in English and to Ms. Katek only in Spanish. The majority of the children were progressing academically in both English and Spanish.

English Reading Test Scores Across Year 1



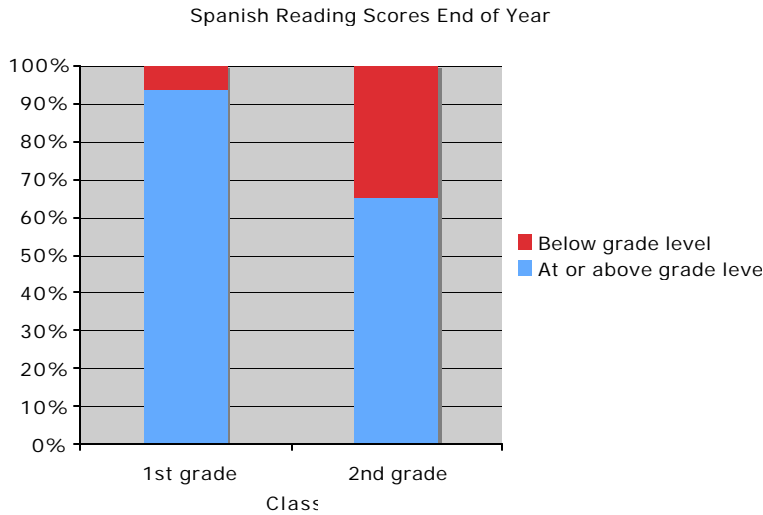


Figure 4. Spanish and English scores from the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) collected in the Fall and Spring of every school year.

In response to a survey, parents expressed satisfaction with the program. Only one parent decided to stay in the school and withdraw their child from Dual Language. Parents were particularly supportive of the separation of language by teacher. The separation seemed to assure them that each language (particularly English) was receiving adequate attention. Through our constant collaboration, Ms. Katek and I formed a shared vision of the Dual Language program. We both felt our teaching had improved drastically as a result of the collaboration. The school administration began to provide limited opportunities for teachers of ELLs to collaborate. Once a month the professional development period was dedicated to team collaboration during which Ms. Katek and I met with the kindergarten Dual Language teacher until she left on a leave of absence in November. I was allowed to form a monthly study group for teachers of ELLs.

The Region's involvement was limited this year. They stopped by for a couple of visits. Their biggest complaint with the Dual Language program was that the two classrooms did not look similar enough. They wanted them to mirror each other, only differing in the language of the writing on the walls; a difficult task given the differences in space and furniture. The Region also began developing more district-wide professional development opportunities for Dual Language teachers as part of the Chancellor's seven recommendations. Ms. Katek and I attended a both of the workshops provided. The content was primarily Region guidelines and compliance issues.

### **Planning for Year 2**

Ms. Katek, Ms. Cook, Ms. Smith and I began having regular conversations about the Dual Language program for the following year as early as March. We had gotten to know each other through the study groups and mentoring I had organized with the urging of BETLA. Both Ms. Katek and I were considering leaving PS 12. I had made a variety of contacts through BETLA and considered moving to a more successful, established program. Ms. Katek was considering returning to Chicago. In April, Ms. Wallace called a planning meeting for the Dual Language program including for the first time all three school administrators, Ms. Johnson and the four teachers. The meeting was

overwhelmingly positive. For the first time, the teachers felt that Dual Language was being supported and a real possibility for improvement. The administrators committed both time and resources to the program. They acknowledged shortcomings and seemed committed to resolving them. The unified support and chances for collaboration excited us and convinced the entire team of teachers to stay. We agreed to meet as a team of teachers to make recommendations to the school administration for the program in the upcoming year and the principal found a way to pay us for our time.

We began planning by taking a close look at student data. We elicited feedback from the parents through surveys and we consulted current research. We attributed our relative successes largely to the team-teaching aspect of the model and the cohesion it created. We sought ways to continue and spread that consistency in the following year. We also agreed that we would prefer to divide language by subject instead of by week. Conversations with students led us to believe that the arbitrary week-by-week schedule prevented students from making connections across a unit of study. We identified our biggest challenges as the incoming 1<sup>st</sup> grade class that had been taught by a string of substitutes, and creating opportunities to support the new teachers trying to learn the Dual Language technology. We primarily worked with models presented in research and examples of models used by recognized Dual Language programs throughout New York City that I had come into contact with through BETLA.

After a great deal of discussion we determined that all five classes would follow the same basic schedule with one language in the morning and the other in the afternoon; a model used by Amistad. Even the 4<sup>th</sup> grade Transitional Bilingual classroom could approximate the model putting the entire school on the same language policy; a major accomplishment for the school.

**UNIT 1:**

Literacy (English)	PREP	LUNCH	Math and Content Areas (Spanish)
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**UNIT 2:**

Literacy (Spanish)	PREP	LUNCH	Math and Content Areas (English)
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Although we wanted to incorporate as much collaboration as possible we hesitated to adopt a team-teaching model for kindergarten and first grades. Switching teachers is more developmentally difficult for younger children, we weren't sure who the kindergarten teacher would be and the first grade class needed as much consistency as possible. We only created team-teaching on for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms, who were accustomed to team-teaching from the year before. PS 165 similarly combined the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades in the Gifted and Talented strands of their model.

	Teacher style	Teacher
Kindergarten	Self-contained	unknown
First grade	Self-contained	Ms. Katek
Second grade	Team teaching	Ms. Cook
Third grade		Ms. Grunow
Fourth grade (Transitional bilingual)	Self-contained	Ms. Smith

Next we matched teachers with the model. Since Ms. Katek and I had already worked together and had the most experience we decided not to work together again. We assigned Ms. Katek to the 1<sup>st</sup> grade class because we believed they would benefit from her experience. She would collaborate with the incoming kindergarten teacher as much as possible. I would team-teach the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades with Ms. Cook who had struggled the most in her first year of teaching. Ms. Smith would take the 4<sup>th</sup> grade class. The final model was presented and accepted by the school administration.

Our model was unlike any other Dual Language program in New York City. It applied elements from both best practices and pedagogical research to the specific reality at PS 12. We believed this intermediary design would get us to a place where we could successfully adopt a more traditional program. While our model differed from “traditional” Dual Language models, it fell within the guidelines provided by New York City to plan our Dual Language program. Languages can be divided by subjects and team-teaching of students is allowed. Team-teaching across grade-levels is uncommon in practice but not prohibited by New York City Public Schools.

Meanwhile, the Region began working on formalizing the Chancellor’s Recommendation #4 wherein schools establish guidelines for their ELL population. Each school would begin writing a document called the Language Allocation Policy. The purpose of the document was as follows:

LAP principles are designed to help schools determine their own language allocation policy. Individualized school LAPs must address the complex composition of each school’s ELL population, taking into account differing languages, cultures, education levels, amount of time spent in English-speaking school systems, abilities, and economic backgrounds (2)

I had been exposed to the LAP document and process before it arrived to the school in BETLA. BETLA leaders were excited about the flexibility and accountability the document promised. In some ways we were ahead of the game, as we had developed our model informally using the same process required by the LAP.

### **Building excitement**

During the Spring, kindergarten students were recruited for Dual Language program. Ms. Johnson and Ms. Wallace included the teachers in the recruitment process and provided coverage for our classrooms so that we could attend the parental meetings. We also met with the parents of the incoming 1<sup>st</sup> graders who were apprehensive about the program. Curriculum planning began during the summer and classroom arrangements were made to facilitate team teaching in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. In the fall, both Ms. Blanco

and Ms. Cupertino coordinated the schedules to allow for a common planning period for all the bilingual teachers and clearly outlined the languages of instruction. Ms. Cupertino acquired funds for the bilingual team to be paid to meet weekly after school, and committed her own attendance. Materials were ordered to support the models. Mr. Omar was hired to teach the kindergarten Dual Language class. We, as the bilingual team, arrived at school weeks early to begin to plan, and arrange classrooms. We spent weeks rearranging the materials and the rooms so they were identical. We interacted daily and used each other to bounce ideas off one another. When Mr. Omar arrived, we left what we were doing and helped him set up his classroom. There was a general buzz of excitement amongst the teachers. Ms. Cook, who had begun to think that teaching wasn't for her, considered teaching for a longer period of time. The Dual Language program gained visibility within the school as a whole and a common direction was forged for the first time.

### **Enter: The Region (Year 2)**

The Friday before the rest of the school staff returned from summer vacation, Ms. Wallace asked me to come into her office at 3:30 in the afternoon for a meeting with her and Ms. Cupertino. They had just received word that from the Region that the model we were planning was not acceptable. In particular, the Region opposed team-teaching across grade levels and wanted us to use a day-by-day model for dividing language. The administrators apologetically concluded that we would have to comply with the Region's request. Given the Region's limited involvement, it was unclear how they heard of our specific model. Ms. Smith had discussed our plans during a workshop at Teacher's College in the summer and worried that someone from the Region did not approve. Ms. Wallace and Ms. Cupertino suspected that Ms. Baptista had raised concerns through her husband.

I spread the word to the rest of the teachers. The primary reaction was anger and frustration. We felt we had gone through a defensible decision making process that was in the best interest of the students and the Region was unraveling much of our progress. We were also frustrated with the school administration for not standing behind the decisions we had made. Ms. Cook was particularly distraught at the idea of facing another year of teaching alone. During the weekend, I contacted Ms. Wallace requesting an audience with the Region. We wanted to share the process we had gone through in arriving at our model. We were sure that once they saw the thought behind the model they would take us more seriously. Surprisingly, Ms. Wallace agreed. The new Regional Instructional Specialist for ELLs, Elsie Ruiz, was scheduled to meet with Ms. Wallace on Wednesday, at which point we could talk with her. We put together evidence outlining our rationale. Elsie never showed for the meeting on Wednesday. It was rescheduled for Thursday and she did not make it either. Friday was the last day before classes started. When we approached Ms. Wallace, she gave us permission to leave the Dual Language program as planned until the Region showed up.

The first day of school began with the program as planned. I would have the second grade in the morning and the third grade in the afternoon and vice versa for Ms. Cook. Fifteen minutes into the school day, Ms. Cupertino came into my classroom frantically instructing me to take apart the plan immediately. I was only to teach the third grade using a day-by-day model. Apparently Ms. Baptista had become aware that we

were planning to “disobey” the Region and was threatening to inform the Region. I calmly explained that the plans for the first day had already been made but placated her by agreeing to “fix” things the following day. At our first opportunity Ms. Cook and I spoke to Ms. Wallace. She authorized us to continue as planned, as long as Ms. Baptista didn’t find out. Meanwhile she would contact the Region. There were no signs of the Region for the following weeks. Ms. Cook always walked with the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders in the hallways and we avoided Ms. Baptista whenever possible. We created the appearance of complying while simultaneously following our original plan. We stopped talking about long term plans and began thinking only about the following day. While we preferred ‘flying under the radar’ to disassembling the program, we eventually grew tired of not knowing what to expect.

After a number of requests, Ms. Wallace set up an after school meeting with all 5 teachers and Ms. Cupertino (not Ms. Baptista). They came into the meeting with the intent of dissembling the program. They expressed extreme doubt that the Region would accept our model. We emotionally reinforced the desire to have an audience with the district and argued that they owed us on the grounds of the work we had put into PS 12’s bilingual program. Ms. Wallace eventually conceded and agreed to arrange a meeting with Elsie Ruiz for the following Tuesday afternoon during our normal study group session. What we didn’t know at the time was that Elsie had been invited to sit in on our study group and had no idea we were inviting her to discuss program structure.

### **The big meeting**

On Tuesday, Ms. Wallace, Ms. Cupertino, the 5 bilingual teachers assembled after school to wait for Ms. Ruiz. I had prepared a PowerPoint presentation documenting our decision to document our model. I had also spoken to my mentor through BETLA who was a retired principal and was more knowledgeable of the politics of the school system. She suggested key points to highlight and questions to ask. Ms. Ruiz arrived and formally introduced herself to us for the first time. She was new to the Region and would be working for Ms. Blanco. We gave Ms. Ruiz a copy of the presentation and each of the teachers took turns explaining the slides. We reviewed our goals, focus, research and planning process. Then we displayed the student data and impressive gains in learning our students made the year before as evidence that we were on the right track. We used the Region’s favorite buzzwords like “data-driven instruction”, “learning communities” and referred to the Chancellor’s agreements. We got about halfway through when Elsie interrupted. She applauded our efforts but asserted that there was no way our model would be accepted by the Region and Ms. Blanco. A discussion ensued. We tried to engage Ms. Ruiz in a discussion about what would best serve the needs of our school. Ms. Ruiz opposed both the team-teaching of 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grades and dividing the language by subject. Ms. Cook, Ms. Katek and I were the most adamant in our position, supporting our decisions and pointing out other schools with similar aspects. Ms. Ruiz’s arguments against the model ranged from “your program needs to look like other schools’ programs” to “you can’t base your program on other schools’ programs because they have different populations.” She frequently referred to herself as the messenger with her hands tied. Ms. Wallace was noticeably physically uncomfortable with the conflict and encouraged us to accept what Ms. Ruiz was saying. The argument ended with Ms. Ruiz declaring “I’m not going to discuss this with you anymore, this is just how it is.”

At this point in the meeting, the tide noticeably turned. Ms. Cook and I were visibly defeated. Ms. Katek tried to keep up the momentum by pushing for a new plan for the current year. The decisions for the entire model of the program were made in the course of fifteen minutes. Ms. Katek believed her students would benefit from the 90/10 model and Ms. Ruiz conceded. Ms. Cook and I didn't want to switch languages every day so Ms. Ruiz allowed us to divide literacy by subjects but reinforced that math instruction must be switched day by day- a model that no other Dual Language program in the city of New York uses. Ms. Smith would use a 60/40 percentage. Each program was an impromptu compromise between the teacher for that grade level and Ms. Ruiz. Everyone was back to having a different model with a different philosophy. Ms. Ruiz quickly moved the conversation toward the topic of promoting bilingualism in PS 12 with evening celebrations as an attempt to turn the conversation towards a uncontroversial topic. The impact of the decisions was returned to at the end of the meeting at which point the Elsie, Ms. Wallace and Ms. Rudicendo applauded our efforts and offered their sympathies as to the unfortunate realities inherent in teaching. All shared a story of being a teacher and having to comply with decisions they didn't agree with. Teachers were promised support and given until the following week to implement the changes.

### **Since**

In large part we complied with Ms. Ruiz's mandates. We re-divided the students and reorganized the materials in the two classrooms. We met with parents to explain the changes. The model given to both Ms. Cook and I was novel and strange; neither one of us followed it precisely, each implementing it in our own way. Ms. Ruiz, nor any other Regional administrator returned to the building until the Spring. We continued to meet as a bilingual team when possible, but each of us had individually given up on PS 12. We each made new plans for the coming year. I applied to graduate school, Ms. Katek moved to Chicago, Ms. Smith changed schools and Ms. Cook left teaching. We worked actively during the year to build up the program and prepare as much documentation for the incoming teachers as we could. We left binders of curriculum materials and data bases of student data. This year, the Dual Language program is staffed by Mr. Omar and 5 first-year teachers. They never received the materials we left for them.

On a positive note, PS 12 has gained some prominence as a Dual Language school. When Ms. Baptista left, she was replaced with an assistant principal with extensive experience leading bilingual programs. Teachers receive regular staff development on meeting the needs of English Language Learners from the Region. In 2005-2006 PS 12's Dual Language program was chosen as one of ten schools to participate in a project with the Center for Applied Linguistics, a project it hopefully still participates in today.



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