

Doctor of Education: Leadership, Learning and Community

The Relationship Between the Utah 50/50 Dual-Language Immersion Model and Literacy in the Alpine, Davis, and Granite School Districts in Utah: Considerations for and Implications of Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficiency in Fourth Grade

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Introduction: The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the Utah 50/50 dual-language immersion (DLI) model and English Language Arts (ELA) proficiency for regular education fourth-grade students, Special education students (SwD) and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in Utah. Three districts, Alpine, Davis and Granite were chosen for the study.

Problem of Practice: The problem of practice is that only 36% of 4th grade students are ELA proficient according to NAEP in 2015, resulting to devastating academic and social consequences.

Research Method: This study followed a qualitative descriptive study design and utilized quantitative data to support the findings. The data collected were fourth-grade SAGE ELA test scores for All, SwD and LEP students. Subsequently, five interviews were conducted: One with the founder of the Utah 50/50 DLI program and four with USBOE members working in the domains of SwD and LEP.

Summary of Findings: The research shows that there is a positive relationship between the DLI model and literacy in the Alpine, Davis, and Granite School Districts in Utah for LEP and SwD students. This was confirmed by the fourth-grade SAGE ELA test scores provided by the USBOE and by the interviews with the founder of the DLI program, Gregg Roberts, as well as with the four USBOE members. It was also confirmed by the research on neuroscience, claiming that bilingualism was strengthening the literacy's pathway in the brain.

Limitation(s) of Study: The study focused on 3 districts in Utah and only 4th grade students and data collection were limited. Therefore, implications of the study may not be generally applied to other areas than these districts.

Implications/Significance of Study: The outcome from the literature review on bilingualism and its effect on reading English showed that students in DLI programs or bilingual students performed better in ELA and therefore had a higher level of proficiency than monolingual students. Therefore, the hope for this study is to guide policymakers as well as administrators, general education teachers, and LEP and special education teachers realize that perhaps one should look beyond classical methods already in place, such as RTI programs, to develop literacy skills, especially for SwD and LEP students to improve not only their academic outcome but also their social insertion to society.

