Sustaining Effects in DLL Programs

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Abstract

The study discussed herein examined the long-term impact of Descubriendo La Lectura (DLL) programs on second and third grade Spanish speaking students. The purpose of the study was to determine whether former DLL students sustain the gains they made in the program as they moved through the grades. Subjects included 264 students (184 second graders and 80 third graders). One-half of the subjects were former DLL students and one-half were students who were randomly selected from the grade cohort. Former DLL students and random sample students were compared on qualitative and quantitative measures. Results on all measures indicated that DLL students were either on par or ahead of random sample students, suggesting that DLL programs have sustaining effects for Spanish speaking students just as Reading Recovery programs have for English speaking students.

Reading Recovery programs in English have demonstrated much success in helping students who are struggling to learn to read (Clay, 1989; Pinnell, Lyons, DeFord, Bryk, Seltzer, 1994). The program consists of an average of 12 to 15 weeks of individually tailored instruction provided by a highly trained certified teacher. Reading Recovery programs are specifically designed for first grade students. The impact of Reading Recovery programs in English has been well documented and has indicated that the majority of children in Reading Recovery programs make accelerated progress while they are in the program. Their accelerated progress enables them to catch up with their peers, and exit the program in a short amount of time. In addition to accelerated progress, and a high rate of discontinuation, Reading Recovery programs in English have demonstrated that three years after successfully leaving the program, children still retain their gains. That is, they continue to make average progress and are on par with grade level peers even though they are no longer receiving individual attention or other special reading programs.
Sustaining Effects in DLL Programs

(e.g., Clay, 1985; DeFord, Pinnell, Lyons, & Young, 1987; Lyons, Pinnell, McCarrer, Young, & DeFord, 1988; Rowe, 1995).

In 1988, the Reading Recovery program in English underwent a recon-
struction into Spanish, and has continued to evolve. The Spanish reconstruc-
tion has been named Descubriendo La Lectura (DLL) and is now being im-
plemented in eight states in the United States. Research on student acceleration
in Descubriendo La Lectura programs has demonstrated that DLL, like
English Reading Recovery, does enable students to catch up to their grade level
peers (Escamilla, 1994a). To date, how-
ever, little research exists that examines
the sustaining effects of Descubriendo
La Lectura on Spanish speaking stu-
dents after they leave the DLL program
and continue through the grades.

The purpose of this study, then,
was to assess the sustaining effects of
DLL programs on students who had the
program in the first grade and were in
second and third grades during school
year 1996-97. This study was an initial
attempt to examine the long-range
effectiveness of DLL.

As part of this study, it was also
important to examine additional vari-
ables that apply to the teaching of
Spanish speaking children in the United
States that are peculiar to them and do
not occur with English speaking stu-
dents. For example, in the United
States, English speaking students who
received and were discontinued from
English Reading Recovery programs
continue to receive English reading
instruction throughout their school
years (through secondary school and
college). Such is not the case for
Spanish speaking students, the majority
of whom are in Transitional Bilingual
Education Programs in U.S. schools
(Fradd & Tikunoff, 1987). In these pro-
grams, students are expected to transfer,
at some point in their elementary
careers, from reading in Spanish to
reading in English.

The criteria for transfer from
Spanish to English reading vary by
school and by school district, with
some school districts transitioning chil-
dren as early as second grade and oth-
ers as late as sixth grade. It is important
to note that children can also be in
classrooms labeled as bilingual class-
rooms and yet no longer be reading in
Spanish.

Therefore, in examining sustaining
effects of DLL programs in Spanish, it
is important to study children’s success
vis-a-vis their continuing opportunities
to learn to read in their native language
(Spanish), as well as to examine
whether any of their Spanish reading
ability transfer as they begin to learn to
read in English.

Given the above, a second purpose
of this study was to examine the read-
ing environments of children who have
been discontinued from DLL to study
how such environments may affect stu-
dent progress in learning to read in
Spanish and English.

During the 1996-97 school year,
2,924 Spanish speaking students partici-
ated in DLL programs across the
United States (National Data Eval-
uation Center, 1997). Of these students,
1,575 or 81% were discontinued su-
cessfully from the DLL program. The
number of DLL programs continues to
grow, as does the number of Spanish
speaking children entering public
schools in the United States. The
growth of such programs, along with an
increase in the number of children in
need of them, makes it imperative to
study long-term effects.

The Study

Participants

This study involved schools and teachers
from certified Descubriendo La Lectura
Programs in California, Arizona, and Texas. The study included
264 students (184 second graders and
80 third graders). Students were divid-
ed into groups as follows: (a)
Descubriendo La Lectura (DLL) chil-
dren who were served and discontinued
from the program (n = 89 second
graders; n = 42 third graders); and (b)
random sample children drawn from
second and third grade classrooms in
the schools participating in the study (n
= 95 second graders; n = 38 third
graders). The study also included 39
schools and 63 teachers from the three
participating states.

All sites are members of the
Descubriendo La Lectura Collabora-
tive, which is a membership organiza-
tion of school districts with DLL
teacher leaders and teachers who are
implementing certified DLL and bilin-
gual education programs. Members of
the collaborative, the purpose of which
is to assure quality implementation of
DLL and bilingual education programs,
meet twice a year at different locations
to discuss issues related to the imple-
mentation. As a part of membership,
school districts sign a set of agreements
to ensure quality program implementa-
tion. Among these agreements are the
following:

1. Members of the collaborative
agree to participate in research on
program effectiveness, particularly
longitudinal research.
2. Members of the collaborative
agree that Spanish speaking
students in bilingual programs will
continue to receive Spanish
reading instruction through the
third grade, although it is strongly
recommended that the students
continue their literacy develop-
ment in Spanish beyond
the third grade.
3. DLL teachers will have strong
academic and instructional
backgrounds in both Bilingual
Education and Reading Recovery
theory. They will be certified in
DLL, and hold bilingual and
biculural endorsements
(Guidelines for Participating in
Reading Recovery in Spanish,
1995).

The guidelines above reflect stan-
dards and expectations for teachers
implementing DLL programs, but do
not cover basic bilingual classroom
teachers. In English only classrooms
in the United States, the majority of teach-
ers are native speakers of English and
have completed state approved pro-
grams to obtain teaching licenses. Such
is not the case in Spanish language
bilingual education classrooms. In
many cases, bilingual education class-
rooms have personnel consisting of an
English speaking teacher and a bilin-
gual paraprofessional. In these classes,
the paraprofessional is responsible for
all Spanish language instruction includ-
ing reading and writing. In other cases,
bilingual classroom teachers hold
licenses to teach, but have not ob-tained
state bilingual endorsements. Thus, they
may not be well versed in bilingual
teaching methodology, including the
teaching of reading and writing in Spanish.

Given the above, it is important, in studies such as this one, to consider the qualifications and experiences of the persons who are directly teaching Spanish speaking children (i.e., the basic bilingual education teachers). For this study, all bilingual teachers were asked to complete a survey to determine whether they were native speakers of Spanish, and if they held full bilingual endorsements. A sample survey is included in Appendix A. Table 1 presents results of attributes of second and third grade teachers who participated in the study. Data are separated by state, and do not include DLL teachers.

Table 1 illustrates that 72% of the teachers in the basic bilingual classrooms in the study were native Spanish speakers and 80% held bilingual endorsements. The caliber of classroom teachers in this study helped to insure that former DLL students and other bilingual students had opportunities to continue to learn to read in Spanish in classrooms where instruction was provided by fully qualified, bilingual teachers. It should be noted, however, that these classrooms do not necessarily represent typical bilingual classrooms.

**Research Questions**

Research questions addressed in the study were as follows:

1. Are former DLL students continuing to read in Spanish in second and third grades?
2. How does the performance of discontinued DLL students compare with the performance of random sample students in Spanish reading in second and third grades based on informal measures?
3. How does the performance of DLL students compare with the performance of random sample children on the end-of-year assessment of Text Reading in Spanish?
4. How does the performance of DLL students compare with the performance of random sample children on an end-of-year standardized reading achievement test in Spanish?
5. What proportion of DLL students achieve end-of-the-year scores that are at least within the average band for their grade level in participating schools in the study?
6. What proportion of DLL students and random sample students have been transitioned from reading in Spanish to reading in English? At what grade level did the transition take place?

The following definitions serve to clarify the various categories of children, teachers, and classrooms:

- **Discontinued Descubriendo La Lectura Children**: Children who successfully completed the program and who were officially released from the program during the year or who were identified by the DLL teacher at the end of the year as having reached a performance level satisfactory for discontinuing.
- **Random Sample Children**: Children who are Spanish readers and who were in the same bilingual classrooms as DLL children, but who did not receive the program.
- **Bilingual Classroom**: A classroom where Spanish and English are used for instruction in all content areas and literacy for all or part of the school day. Children in bilingual classrooms receive their literacy instruction in their dominant or strongest language (in this case Spanish).

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Native Spanish</th>
<th>Bilingual Endorsement</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection and Procedures**

All students (DLL Program and Random Sample) who participated in the study were given two separate measures to assess Spanish reading achievement: (a) the SABE-2 Spanish Reading Achievement Test (CTB Macmillan/McGraw-Hill, 1994). In addition, schools that had transitioned children from reading in Spanish to reading in English were asked to administer two additional measures. These were: (a) the English Text Level Reading (developed for use with Read 180 students and former Reading Recovery students); and (b) the Gates-MacGinitie Standardized English Reading Test. All subjects were given some or all of these measures at the end of the 1997 school year (the end of the school year varied by state and ranged from mid-May until mid-June). Both English and Spanish Text Level Reading measures were administered by certified DLL teachers. The SABE-2 Spanish reading achievement test and the Gates-MacGinitie English reading achievement tests were administered by classroom bilingual teachers.

In addition to the above, the research team created a survey for use in collecting information relating to student reading performance in bilingual classrooms. The Student Information Survey is included in Appendix B. The survey was designed to gather additional information related to classroom reading behaviors of Spanish speaking students. This survey provided information such as, which children were reading in Spanish, which were reading in both Spanish and English, and which had been transitioned to English reading. Information about other program interventions such as ESL, special education, Title I, and other programs was...
Results and Analysis

Research Question 1: Are former DLL students continuing to read in Spanish in second and third grades?

Data to address research question 1 were gathered from two sources. The first source was the data base established for all project sites using all four reading measures. Subjects who took the two Spanish reading measures were counted as being students who were continuing to read in Spanish. Students who took all four measures (two in Spanish and two in English) were counted as students who had either transitioned from Spanish reading to English reading or had added English reading to Spanish reading. From this data base, it was noted that all 264 children in the study were continuing to read in Spanish in the second and third grades. It was also noted that 62 students (23%) had been given the English language assessment measures as well as the Spanish language assessment measures. Further, all of the students who were assessed both in Spanish and English came from the same school district in Texas. Therefore, from these data, it would appear that the majority of students are continuing to read in Spanish and thus complying with the DLL collaborative agreements (please refer to the collaborative agreements explained earlier). Table 2 presents a breakdown of students for whom data on reading achievement in both Spanish and English were collected.

The second source of data to examine continuing opportunities to read in Spanish was taken from questions 1 and 3 from the follow-up Student Survey (see Appendix B). These questions asked classroom teachers to report in which languages students were reading and in which reading groups they were participating. Student Survey data were collected for 259 of 264 subjects. Classroom teachers did not know who the random sample and DLL students were when they completed the teacher survey forms. These data serve to verify further that the vast majority of students (both DLL and random sample) are continuing to read in Spanish in the second and third grades. Further, most of the students who were reported to be reading in English were also reading in Spanish. However, it is noteworthy that a very small number of students in both second (n = 6) and third (n = 8) grades have been transitioned to reading only in English. Table 3 presents summary results of these sections of the Student Survey.

Research Question 2: How does the performance of discontinued DLL students compare with the performance of random sample students in Spanish reading in second and third grades based on informal measures?

To address this question, results of the Student Survey were compared across groups (DLL and Random). Informal measures consisted of obtaining teacher judgments regarding student classroom reading performance with respect to a variety of issues including: (a) special services students were receiving; (b) reading group participation; and (c) teacher judgment to predict future student performance, and to assess current attitudes toward reading and writing. To collect these informal data, classroom teachers completed a survey for each student in their classroom who was a part of the study. Student surveys were completed on 259 of the 264 total study subjects. Results of the informal assessment of student progress are presented below.

Special Services Received by Students

Data were collected to determine whether former DLL students needed or were referred to more special services than random sample students. Data presented below indicate there are no major differences in the participation of DLL students and random sample students in special programs. More than half of DLL and random sample students receive ESL as a service. This is to be expected since both groups of students are still learning English, and ESL is a basic part of a bilingual education program. All other special services such as Title I and Special Education have minimal participation by either group of subjects. From these criteria, presented in Table 4, former DLL stu-
Sustaining Effects in DLL Programs

Students are doing as well as random sample students.

Reading Group Participation

An interesting finding from the survey was that the vast majority of bilingual classroom teachers in the study continue to use ability grouping as the predominate means of grouping students for instruction. However, they use a variety of assessment techniques to make group placement decisions. Survey information indicated that bilingual classroom teachers used the following information to place students in reading groups, and that these methods were the same for both former DLL students and random sample students. Techniques used in order of their frequency were: (a) teacher observation, 66%; (b) informal reading inventory, including Running Records, 54%; (c) other information (e.g. previous teacher recommendation), 27%; (d) placement test from a basal reader series, 23%; (e) information from a student’s previous report card, 15%; and (f) standardized reading test, 3%.

Using the above information, teachers reported the data presented in Table 5 with regard to student grouping for Spanish reading instruction.

These data provide further evidence that DLL students are faring well in bilingual education classrooms in Spanish reading. These data indicate that over 1/2 of the former DLL students are in the high reading groups in their second and third grade classrooms, and that DLL and random sample students are found in the high reading group in roughly equal percentages. The same can be said for the average and low groups. Again, using the criteria of reading group assignment, former DLL students are faring as well as random sample students.

Table 4 Special Services Received by Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>DLL Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Random Sample Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title 1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Reading Group Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>DLL Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Random Sample Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Class does not group for instruction

Table 6 Teacher Prediction Regarding Future Reading Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prediction</th>
<th>DLL Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Random Sample Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Well</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Need Extra Help</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prediction Regarding Future Reading Performance

Bilingual classroom teachers were also asked to predict how well they thought their students would do in reading in subsequent school years. These data are presented in Table 6.

Once again, these data suggest that classroom teachers predict DLL students will fare very well or satisfactorily at even higher rates than random sample students. They also predict that fewer DLL students will require supplementary assistance.

Reading and Writing Attributes

Finally, bilingual classroom teachers were asked to rank, on a scale of 1-5, each one of the students in the study using the following attributes relative to reading and writing. The data presented in Table 7 indicate the mean ranking for DLL and random sample students on each attribute.

Drawn from teachers’ perspectives, these data suggest there are no major differences in student reading and writing attitudes and abilities between for-
Sustaining Effects in DLL Programs

Compared with the performance of random sample children on the end-of-year assessment of Text Reading in Spanish?

Research Questions 3 and 4: How does the performance of DLL students compare with the performance of random sample children on an end-of-year standardized reading achievement test in Spanish?

For research questions 3 and 4, data were collected by administering the Spanish Text Level Reading assessments to all second and third grade subjects. These reading assessments have been especially developed for use with students in Descubriendo La Lectura programs. The text level reading measure was administered individually to children by a certified DLL teacher. Children were asked to read stories aloud while the DLL teacher took a Running Record of reading behavior and calculated an accuracy level. Children continued reading at higher levels until they reached a level where they read below 90% accuracy. The score on text level reading is the highest level read with at least 90% accuracy. Levels range from A-30.

All subjects also took the SABE-2 Spanish achievement test in reading. These tests were group administered by classroom bilingual teachers. Scores obtained were from the Total Reading score of the test. For the Spanish Text

Table 7 Reading and Writing Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>DLL Mean</th>
<th>Random Sample Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Ability</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Ability</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Toward Reading</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Toward Writing</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chooses to Read</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selects Books at his/her Level</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent in Class Work</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tries Hard</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completes Work</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attends Well In Class</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responds in Group Discussion</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 Results of Spanish Text Level Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Status</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second DLL</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third DLL</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 Results of SABE-2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Status</th>
<th>Mean Raw Score</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean Stanine</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second DLL</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third DLL</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sustaining Effects in DLL Programs

Level Reading, mean reading levels were calculated for each group and each grade. For the SABE-2 test, mean reading levels were calculated for each group and each grade two times—one time using raw scores and a second using percentiles. A two-tailed \( t \) test was used to test for significant differences between group means. Tables 8 and 9 present results for the Spanish Text Level Reading measure and the SABE-2 test measures.

From the calculated means of Spanish Text Level Reading, it is noted that the DLL students were above their random sample counterparts in both second and third grades. For both second and third graders, \( t \) test results indicated that the differences were statistically significant for second graders (\( t = 1.87, p < .001 \)) and for third graders (\( t = 2.44, p < .001 \)). These findings provide support for the notion of sustaining effects. Former DLL students are continuing to progress in their acquisition of literacy without additional special program support.

It is further significant to note that, at the second grade level, mean percentile scores for both DLL and random sample students are above the 50th percentile (54.2 for DLL; 55.5 for the random sample). This is an indication that DLL students are not only keeping pace with random sample students in the study, but also are achieving on par with national norms. At the third grade level, mean percentiles for DLL and random students are also similar (23.8 for DLL; 26.7 for the random sample). However, scores for both groups are below the 27th percentile. Achievement levels for both groups are well below national norms and represent a significant decrease in achievement from the second grade.

The exact causes of this decline in scores cannot be determined from the data presented in this study. However, it might be important to consider the role played by language status differences between English and Spanish. It has been well documented that, in most bilingual programs in the U.S., there is an unequal status between English and Spanish (Escamilla, 1994b; Shannon, 1995). English is the high status lan-

guage, while Spanish has a lower status. As a result, after several years in U.S. schools, students begin to think there is no value in knowing Spanish. As a result, they begin to reject Spanish and resist learning in Spanish. This resistance develops at the same time that schools are putting pressure on teachers to transfer students from Spanish to English reading, and to exit them from bilingual programs.

Given this situation, it may be that the decline in Spanish reading achievement is a reaction to the message that learning in Spanish is not as important as learning in English. As Shannon (1995) reports, children and teachers respond in real ways to the "hegemony of English." It is important that any report on student achievement in Spanish in bilingual programs in the U.S. consider language status differences and the context in which bilingual education programs are implemented as they undertake studies such as this one.

### Table 10: Numbers and Percentages of DLL Children in End-of-Year Average Band on Spanish Text Reading and SABE-2 Spanish Reading Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Average Band</th>
<th>Met Average Band Number Percent</th>
<th>Exceeded Average Band Number Percent</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Spanish Text Reading</td>
<td>20.45-27.48</td>
<td>39 43.8%</td>
<td>43 48.3%</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>SABE-2 Raw Scores</td>
<td>27.62-36.21</td>
<td>37 45.6%</td>
<td>24 29.4%</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Spanish Text Reading</td>
<td>20.93-29.01</td>
<td>6 14.4%</td>
<td>33 78.6%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>SABE-2 Raw Scores</td>
<td>33.13-42.93</td>
<td>17 50.0%</td>
<td>10 29.2%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sustaining Effects in DLL Programs

The vast majority of DLL students both in second and third grades achieved or exceeded average band performance on both measures (Spanish Text Reading and SABE-2 Raw Scores). These data provide further support for the notion that the initial positive impact of Descubriendo La Lectura Programs is sustained across grade levels.

Research Question 6: What proportion of DLL students and random sample students have been transitioned from reading in Spanish to reading in English? At what grade level did the transition take place?

Research question 6 was meant to investigate whether or not sustaining effects of DLL in Spanish may have transfer effects as Spanish speaking students begin to learn to read in English. To address the question, data were collected on DLL program students and random sample students who had been transitioned from reading in Spanish to reading in English. Transitioned students were given the Gates MacGinitie English Achievement Test to assess their progress in English reading.

Of the 39 schools participating in the study, only one school in one school district reported transitioning students from Spanish to English reading in either the second or the third grade. In this district, transition data were reported in second grade for 20 DLL students and 21 random sample students. The same district reported transition data in third grade for 11 DLL students and 11 random sample students.

With only one district and one school reporting transition data, it was not appropriate to do extensive data analysis, as data reported were not representative of the larger group of DLL and random sample students. Further, in this particular school district, all Spanish speaking children transition to English reading in the second grade and thus the proportion of DLL students making the transition is exactly the same as English language students. The policy is applied to all Spanish speaking students regardless of special program category.

The fact that only one district and school reported data on transition from Spanish to English and on English language achievement it is not viewed as a problem in this study. In fact, according to the guidelines for participating in the study, only one school in one school district reported transitioning students from Spanish to English reading in either the second or the third grade. In this district, transition data were reported in second grade for 20 DLL students and 21 random sample students. The same district reported transition data in third grade for 11 DLL students and 11 random sample students.

Research Question 6: What proportion of DLL students and random sample students have been transitioned from reading in Spanish to reading in English? At what grade level did the transition take place?

Table 11: English Reading Achievement of DLL and Random Sample Students Transitioned from Spanish to English Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean/ sd Vocabulary</th>
<th>Mean/ sd Comprehension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>DLL</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28.05/28.06</td>
<td>27.55/28.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Random</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30.29/22.11</td>
<td>28.70/22.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>DLL</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21.46/28.13</td>
<td>21.36/24.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Random</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.3/13.73</td>
<td>9.90/13.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

The data reported here establish that the DLL program achieved sustaining effects with Spanish speaking students who had been in DLL programs in first grade, who had been discontinued from these programs, and who were continuing to read in Spanish in second and third grades. Results of this study, considered collectively with research on acceleration of Spanish speaking students in DLL programs (Escamilla, 1994a), establish that Descubriendo La Lectura is having a positive impact on Spanish speaking students in much the same way that Reading Recovery is impacting English speaking students.

DLL children could be considered as ones in need of long-term interventions beyond DLL. As second language learners of English, they will need continued support in both their first and second languages to insure their long-term success in U.S. schools. Aside from language, children who participate in DLL have other social needs. They are often among the poorest of all school-aged children in the United States. They most likely attend large urban schools that are overcrowded and lacking in resources, and they are likely to be in classrooms with teachers who have no preparation in how to teach them. DLL is having a positive impact on these students, however, issues affecting their academic success may extend far beyond literacy instruction. DLL is helping these children become literate, but this program cannot solve the social and societal issues that are part and parcel of growing up in the United States as members of a cultural and linguistic group that is marginal-
Evidence of sustaining effects presented in this study include both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data indicate that former DLL students in both second and third grades do not require special services such as Title I, gifted or special education services. Their teachers report that their achievement in and attitude toward reading and writing are very similar to random sample students. Their teachers perceive them just as likely to be successful in reading and writing as they perceive other Spanish speaking students.

Quantitative data gathered on Spanish reading achievement on the SABE-2 Spanish Reading Achievement Test. Again, DLL students were achieving at higher rates than randomly selected students both in the second and third grades and that these differences were statistically significant in favor of former DLL students. Mean scores for the former DLL students in second grade were at or above their random sample counterparts in both second and third grades. For these measures, achievement differences between DLL and random sample students were not statistically significant, providing support for the notion of sustaining effects since the achievement of DLL students is similar to that of randomly sampled students. This is true because when first selected to participate in DLL, this group’s achievement was far below that of all other students. The goals of DLL are to have children reach the average of their class in reading and writing, while at the same time to develop independent learning strategies. Results of this study indicate the children are achieving these goals.

Further evidence of sustaining effects is apparent in second graders’ achievement on the SABE-2 where their mean was at the 54th percentile. The third graders’ mean percentile on the SABE-2 was only at the 23rd percentile, representing a significant decrease from the second grade. However, this decline occurred in the third grade for both DLL and random sample students. When interpreting these data for Spanish speaking students, it is important to consider the role that language status may play in both student and teacher beliefs about the importance of literacy in Spanish. Achievement of discontinued DLL students in second and third grades was further examined by calculating the number and percentage of former DLL students who were achieving within or above the average band of reading on the Spanish Text Level Reading measure and on the SABE-2 Test. In second grade, 92% of the former DLL students were achieving within or above the average band on Spanish Text Level Reading and 75% were achieving within or above the average band on the SABE-2 Spanish Reading Achievement Test. In third grade, 93% of the former DLL students were achieving within or above the average band on Spanish Text Level Reading and 79% were achieving within or above the average band on the SABE-2 Spanish Reading Achievement Test.

A very small number of former DLL students in the study, who were from the same school district, were transitioned from Spanish reading to English reading during the course of the study (n = 20 second graders and n = 10 third graders). These low numbers indicate that school districts participating in the implementation of Descubriendo La Lectura are following implementation guidelines and not transitioning students before the end of the third grade. Data on English reading achievement were presented herein, however, no statistical analyses were conducted. Collecting and analyzing data on former DLL students as they transition from Spanish to English reading is of critical importance to future longitudinal studies dealing with the impact of DLL on students. However, such data should not start being collected until fourth grade, and must include only students who have had consistent and continuous instruction in Spanish reading until the fourth grade or until they have met academic criteria for transition.

Summary

In summary, results presented herein indicate that DLL programs are affecting former students in a positive way after they are successfully discontinued from program services. Data presented here establish that the DLL program has sustaining effects in much the same manner as Reading Recovery programs in English. It must be noted that this study is the first of its kind, and there is a crucial need for further studies addressing these issues for Spanish speaking students.

Finally, it is important to state, once again, that research on Descubriendo La Lectura programs and children cannot and should not consist of simple replications of studies conducted on English Reading Recovery programs. The implementation of Spanish DLL programs has a political and social reality that is quite different from English Reading Recovery. This unique political and social reality must be considered in future research studies, in order to insure valid and reliable interpretation of study results.

As an example, in all likelihood, students who participate in and are discontinued from English Reading Recovery will continue to receive English reading instruction throughout their school careers. Such is not the case for Spanish speaking students. In many cases, basic literacy instruction for Spanish speaking students is inconsistent and often interrupted. For example, it is not unusual to find school and bilingual programs where students receive literacy instruction in Spanish one year, in English the next year, and then Spanish the following year. It is also not unusual to find programs where students are prematurely transitioned into English (Cziko, 1992; Escamilla, 1994c).

In addition, the overwhelming majority (95%) of Spanish/English
bilingual programs in the United States are transitional in nature (Fraddl & Tikunoff, 1987). This means that Spanish speaking students will receive Spanish reading for only three or four years or until they are transitioned into English reading. There is strong evidence that literacy skills and strategies transfer from one language to another (Escamilla, 1987; Krashen & Biber, 1988; Lesher-Madrid & García, 1985; Rodriguez, 1988). However, this research base must be extended to include students who were former DLL students. Future studies in this area that look at former DLL students as they begin to read in English must consider both the quantity and quality of Spanish reading instruction after students were discontinued from DLL programs. While English Reading Recovery programs will not likely be scrutinized to see if former students are applying reading skills and strategies in a second language, Descubriendo La Lectura programs most assuredly will be studied vis-a-vis transfer to the students' second language. Moreover, it is important that future studies investigate former DLL students in the upper elementary grades and examine their English reading achievement as well as their Spanish achievement.

Research in the area of Descubriendo La Lectura is promising, but must be considered to be in its infancy. Much remains to be studied. However, if basic bilingual programs are inconsistently implemented or are not operating using sound pedagogy, then the efficacy of Descubriendo La Lectura programs will also most likely be affected. It is critical, therefore, for future research to  

References


Sustaining Effects in DLL Programs

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Cajon Valley School District
Chula Vista School District
Corcoran Unified School District
Delano School District
Fresno Unified School District
Hilmar Unified School District
Lindsay Unified School District
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Long Beach Unified School District
Los Nitos School District
Madera Unified School District

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Appendix A

Descubriendo La Lectura Follow-Up Study 1996-97
Teacher Information Form

DLL Teacher Leader: Please complete the following information for each classroom teacher from whom you have taken children for this study. This includes teachers who teach former DLL students and randomly selected students.

Teacher Name: __________________________________________________________
Grade: _____________ District: ______________________________
Address: 
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
State Bilingual Endorsements:  __________Yes     _________ No
Native Spanish Speaker:  __________ Y es   ___________ No
Number of Years Experience as a Bilingual Teacher _____________
Comments:_________________________________________________________

Biographies

Kathy Escamilla earned a Ph.D. in curriculum and the study of schooling with an emphasis in bilingual education from UCLA. She is an associate professor in language, literacy, and culture at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Dr. Escamilla has been involved in research related to Descubriendo La Lectura since its inception.

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Yvonne Rodriguez is a doctoral candidate at Texas Woman’s University. She will soon be the Descubriendo La Lectura trainer of teacher leaders. She has been involved with Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura since its inception.

Olivia Ruiz is affiliated with the Tucson Unified School District in Tucson, Arizona, and Celebration Press. She is a Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura teacher leader, and was one of the creators of the Descubriendo La Lectura program.

Texas

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Kathy Escamilla earned a Ph.D. in curriculum and the study of schooling with an emphasis in bilingual education from UCLA. She is an associate professor in language, literacy, and culture at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Dr. Escamilla has been involved in research related to Descubriendo La Lectura since its inception.

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Appendix B

Descubriendo La Lectura
Follow-Up Study
1996-97
Student Survey

Complete for each student in the DLL study (former DLL and random sample students).

Child’s Name: _______________________________________________________

Grade: __________________ School: ________________________________

District: ____________________________

1. Student is currently reading in:
   ____ Spanish ______ English ______ Both

2. What special services are currently being received by the student:
   ___ ESL
   ___ Title 1
   ___ Speech
   ___ Special Education
   ___ Other (Please specify)
   ___ None

3. In what reading group is the student currently participating?
   Spanish        English (if applicable)
   ___ High       ___ High
   ___ High Average ___ High Average
   ___ Average    ___ Average
   ___ Low Average ___ Low Average
   ___ Low        ___ Low
   ___ Other (e.g., no ability groups) ___ Other (e.g., no ability groups)

4. What information did you use to place students in these reading groups?
   Spanish        English (if applicable)
   ___ Basal Reader Test ___ Basal Reader Test
   ___ Standardized Reading Test ___ Standardized Reading Test
   ___ Informal Reading Inventory ___ Informal Reading Inventory
   ___ Teacher Observation ___ Teacher Observation
   ___ Previous Student Report ___ Previous Student Report
   ___ Other (Please describe) ___ Other (Please describe)

5. What grade did the child receive in reading on the last report card? (Explain your assessment system if it is other than grades?)

6. In what basal reader is the child currently reading? (Indicate grade level)
   If no basal reader is used, approximately what grade level is the child reading?
   How did you determine this?

7. How do you predict the child will perform in reading next school year?
   ___ very well
   ___ satisfactory
   ___ will need extra help

8. Rate the attributes that best describe this child by rating him/her on a scale of 1-5 (1=weak; 5 = strong).

   Spanish
   ___ Reading Ability
   ___ Writing Ability
   ___ Attitude Toward Reading
   ___ Attitude Toward Writing
   ___ Chooses to Read When Time

   English (if applicable)
   ___ Reading Ability
   ___ Writing Ability
   ___ Attitude Toward Reading
   ___ Attitude Toward Writing
   ___ Chooses to Read When Time

   Allows
   ___ Selects Books on His/Her Own
   ___ Independent in Class Work
   ___ Tries Hard
   ___ Completes Work
   ___ Attends Well in Class Work
   ___ Responds in Group Discussions

9. Other comments about the student as a learner of two languages: