

# Educational Trajectories of At-Risk Latino EL Students in Dual Language Programs

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## Purpose

- Examine background and educational trajectories of 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade Latino students who entered school as at-risk EL students
- Implications

## Student Background Information

- 2201 current 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade Latino native Spanish-speaking students who started school as English language learner (EL) and attended a dual language (DL) program for at least the last four years or at least since second grade;
- 49% males, 51% females;
- 48% currently in grades 4-5, 52% in grades 6-8;
- Most (89%) low income and had parents with a high school diploma or less formal schooling;
- 7% special education;
- Program types: all two-way programs – either 90/10 or 50/50 – at one of 23 public elementary or middle schools in 16 school districts;
- All students learned to read first in Spanish and second in English.

## Student English Language Proficiency

- **Measurement** = California English Language Development Test (CELDT) - categorizes students into one of five proficiency groups (Beginning, Early Intermediate, Intermediate, Early Advanced, Advanced). ELs evaluated as English proficient according to scores on the CELDT (and other criteria) reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP).
- For study, students classified into **4 groups** according to **current** proficiency in English
  - 1) BEG=Beginning/Early Intermediate (n=154, 7%)
  - 2) INT=Intermediate (n=590, 27%)
  - 3) ADV=Early Advanced/Advanced (n=513, 23%)
  - 4) FEP (n=944, 43%).

## Other Measurements

- Reading achievement in English (California Standards Test)
- **Low, Mid, or High in *Spanish reading*** achievement using Aprenda or California Standards Test in Spanish
- **Low or High in *Spanish oral*** language proficiency using Language Assessment Scales (LAS) or Stanford Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix (FLOSEM)
- **Bilingual proficiency at entry** (grade K or 1):
  - Low in both languages
  - Low in Spanish, moderate/high in English
  - Low in English, moderate/high in Spanish
  - High in both languages

### Entry Levels of Spanish, English and Bilingual Language Proficiency by Current English Proficiency Level

	BEG Begin/Early Intermediate	INT Intermediate	ADV Early <u>Adv</u> / Advanced	FEP
<b>SPANISH*</b>				
Low Proficiency	64%	45%	28%	27%
High Proficiency	36%	55%	72%	73%
<b>ENGLISH**</b>				
Beg/Early <u>Int</u> Intermediate	78%	54%	39%	34%
Intermediate	18%	30%	28%	25%
Early <u>Adv</u> / <u>Adv</u>	4%	16%	33%	41%
<b>BILINGUAL***</b>				
Low in Both	75%	40%	23%	15%
Low Span, Hi <u>Eng</u>		21%	26%	17%
Low <u>Eng</u> , Hi Span	25%	27%	35%	30%
High in Both		11%	16%	39%

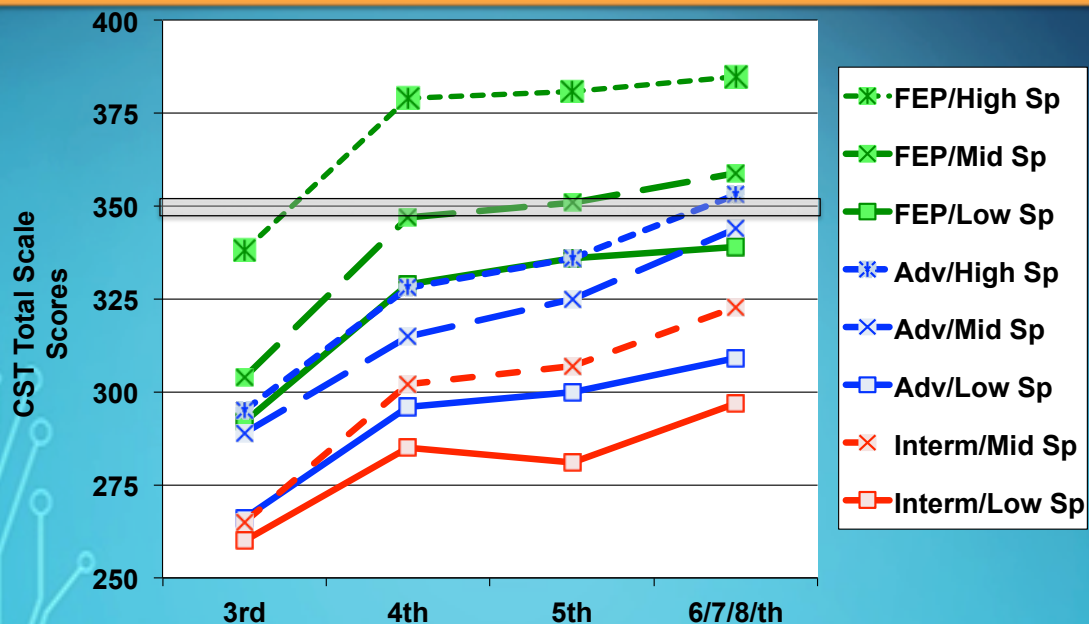
\*  $\chi^2(3, 311) = 14.9, p < .01$ ; \*\*  $\chi^2(3, 574) = 55.8, p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2(9, 234) = 43.5, p < .001$

# Major Findings

- Grades K/1, 3, and 5, **entering Bilingual oral proficiency level** (low-low, low-mod/high, high-high) **significant main effect on English language proficiency**, though its influence diminished across grades;
- Examined impact of Spanish reading achievement at grade 3 on English reading achievement at grades 3 and 5, and impact of Spanish reading at grade 5 on English reading at grades 5 and 6-8 for the four English language proficiency groups. Results showed:
  - Language proficiency group (Beg, Int, Adv, FEP) and Spanish reading achievement level (Low, Mid, High) highly significant main effects, with no significant interaction.
  - Scheffé post-hoc comparisons indicated FEP and ADV scored significantly higher than INT and BEG, and students HIGH in Spanish reading scored significantly higher than those at MID levels who scored higher than those at LOW Spanish reading levels.
  - Spanish reading level has a significant impact on English reading level at grades 3 and 5-8 overall and for each English language proficiency group.**

## Language Arts and Proficiency Level in English By Spanish Reading Level

Spanish reading level has highly significant impact on English reading achievement at grades 4-8 – at all English proficiency levels



# Conclusions & Implications

- Dual language instruction → bilingualism & biliteracy
- Higher Spanish/bilingual proficiency at school entry → higher English proficiency at later grades
- Students entering school with low levels of English proficiency can achieve close to grade level in English reading achievement if they develop mid to high levels of Spanish reading
- Even among highly English proficient (FEP and ADV, former EL) students, higher Spanish reading → higher English reading
- These findings point to the importance of promoting strong language and literacy development in the L1 of ELs