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RESEARCH ARTICLE



The link between standards and dual language teachers' Spanish literacy instruction and use of formative assessments

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ABSTRACT

This three-year qualitative study examined how district personnel interpreted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts for bilingual teachers' Spanish literacy instruction and the changes that four dual-language (DL) teachers (K-2) made in their Spanish literacy instruction in response to their participation in professional staff development (PSD) on formative assessments tied to the CCSS. Although the district personnel showed ideological and political clarity when they implemented a DL program and rejected CCSS inappropriate for bilingual students, they showed a lack of clarity when they failed to provide Spanish literacy and DL standards. In response to the socio-culturally oriented PSD, two of the DL teachers, who previously had taught Spanish reading, effectively implemented formative assessments, which led to teacher and student goal setting and sharing, student self-assessment, peer assessment, and instructional differentiation. However, it took two-three years, scaffolded support, and teacher sharing and collaboration for them to implement the formative assessments. The lack of Spanish literacy and DL standards meant that other changes in their Spanish literacy instruction were limited. In response to the PSD, the veteran kindergarten teacher made a change in her writing instruction, but never understood formative assessments and didn't implement them. The learning curve for the teacher without teaching experience in Spanish reading was too steep for her to benefit from the PSD on formative assessments. To improve DL teachers' Spanish literacy instruction, the development and implementation of Spanish language arts and DL standards, along with socio-cultural PSD on formative assessments, were recommended.

Introduction

Recent federal educational reforms in the United States have focused on the English literacy instruction and assessment of bilingual students, not on their bilingual or Spanish literacy instruction and assessment (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 [NCLB], 2002; U. S Department of Education, 2016). When policy makers do not confront the English-only bias in federal legislation, it often is difficult for school district personnel to support the implementation of bilingual education programs (Gándara & Baca, 2008; Menken & Solorza, 2014). Between 2010 and 2015, states that applied for federal funding received competitive points when they agreed to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices [NGA

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Center], & Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2014). The CCSS are a set of grade-level expectations in English language arts and mathematics that identify what K–12 students in the United States “should know and be able to do at the end of each grade” (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2014, p. 2).

As part of the CCSS reform movement, teachers are encouraged to implement formative assessments linked to the CCSS so that they differentiate and adjust their instruction with the goal of every student attaining the CCSS (Heritage, 2010). Formative assessments differ from summative assessments because the former evaluate student progress in process rather than evaluating and comparing students’ end performance (Álvarez, Ananda, Walqui, Sato, & Rabinowitz, 2014). They are supposed to be integrated into teachers’ instruction so that the relationship between instruction and assessment is seamless (Osmundson, 2011; Shepard, 2009). An aim of formative assessment is to inform teachers’ instruction by providing them with information to individually diagnose and monitor student progress (Perin, Marion, & Gong, 2009). Further, formative assessments are supposed to include student self-evaluation so that students set goals for their learning and evaluate their own performance, as well as peer assessments so that students collaborate with their peers (Osmundson, 2011).

Purpose of the study and research questions

Although the implementation of the CCSS is no longer a requirement for federal funding in the United States, states are still required to develop and use college and career-ready standards, with many of them using the CCSS for guidance, along with formative assessments (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Whether bilingual teachers’ use of formative assessments tied to the CCSS in English language arts can lead to positive instructional change merits investigation because the CCSS do not provide guidance for Spanish literacy instruction or address the bilingual teaching context (G. E. García, 2012; O. García & Flores, 2013).

This qualitative study addressed the literature gap in two ways: First, we examined how school district personnel supported the Spanish literacy instruction of bilingual students when CCSS standards in English language arts were emphasized. Secondly, we investigated the responses of K–2 dual language (DL) teachers to professional staff development (PSD) on formative assessments tied to the CCSS, which the first author had designed and implemented. In DL programs, students who speak the same minority language are taught with English speakers in the same classrooms, in which at least 50% of their instruction is in the minority language throughout elementary school (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Two research questions are addressed:

RQ1: To what extent did district personnel support bilingual teachers’ Spanish literacy instruction and implementation of the CCSS?

RQ2: What types of changes, if any, did the DL teachers make in their Spanish literacy instruction and use of formative assessments related to their PSD participation?

Theoretical framework

Critical pedagogy and sociocultural views of literacy informed our work. Critical pedagogy requires the examination of dominant ideologies or beliefs that adversely affect the education of marginalized groups (Freire, 1970). Darder, Torres, and Baltadano (2002) explained that we need to be aware of the dominant ideologies that govern educational decision making before we can effectively challenge or change them. Bartolomé (2008) called the latter “ideological and political clarity.” DeNicolo (2016) advised that after attaining such clarity, participants should combine theory and action to bring about change. We employed critical pedagogy to analyze the district bilingual coordinators’ responses to the CCSS.

Sociocultural perspectives on literacy and learning influenced how we wanted the teachers to work with their students and the PSD we provided (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Street, 2003;

Vygotsky, 1978). For example, we did not support a hegemonic definition of literacy. Our view of literacy is that it involves social practices, embedded in the participants' languages and cultures (Street, 2003). We drew on Vygotsky's sociohistorical, psychological view of learning (1978), in which learning is viewed as relational, not autonomous, and mediated through social interactions with more expert peers or leaders. We rejected a transmission model of instruction, in which scripted instruction and/or common formative assessments are implemented (i.e., all teachers at the same grade level employ the same assessments), in favor of teacher and student collaboration and problem solving. We followed Rueda's (1998) sociocultural guidelines for PSD, which supports "joint productive activity among leaders and participants ... [and] professional relevant discourse," in which those with more expertise support teachers' efforts; participants' collaboration and shared thinking; and the development of shared language and knowledge to problem solve classroom issues and practices (pp. 1–2).

The literacy instruction and assessment of emergent bilinguals

The instruction of emergent bilinguals in low-income schools typically has been whole class and teacher directed, with very little student collaboration or small-group work, regardless of the language of instruction (Cummins, 2007; G. E. García et al., 2006; Moss & Puma, 1995). One reason for this type of instruction is the shortage of certified bilingual teachers (Barron & Menken, 2002). Another reason is that teachers in low-income schools often are confronted with large classes and overly concerned about student discipline. In a qualitative study that examined how bilingual teachers in low-income schools responded to PSD on literacy instruction that involved small-group work, G. E. García et al. (2006) reported that the teachers initially held stereotypes about their students, such as that they cannot work independently and will not benefit from small-group work. The stereotypes were not dispelled until the teachers saw improvements in their students' literacy participation and performance as they shifted from whole-class, teacher-directed instruction to small-group, student-directed work.

Several researchers (Cummins, 2007; Teale, Paciga, & Hoffman, 2007) argued that the reading instruction of low-income, emergent bilinguals in English or Spanish was adversely affected by Reading First, a federal reform effort (U. S. Department of Education, 2009). Reading First emphasized "scientifically based reading research" drawn from the National Reading Panel's findings on the early reading of native English speakers (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000). Teale et al. (2007) complained that the implementation of Reading First tended to narrow students' instruction and overemphasize foundational skills (e.g., phonological awareness, phonics, and fluency) at the expense of vocabulary and comprehension instruction. They examined the type of instruction being implemented in a sample of Reading First schools and warned that comprehension instruction was being postponed. Cummins (2007) claimed that the implementation of Reading First resulted in low-income students having "less opportunity to read extensively and ... to engage in inquiry-oriented learning" than higher-income students [whose instruction did not have to meet Reading First requirements]" (p. 564). An evaluation of Reading First showed that Reading First students learned to decode in the language of instruction but did not improve their reading comprehension (Gamse, Jacob, Horst, Boulay, & Unlu, 2008).

In contrast to Reading First, the CCSS in English language arts emphasize students' reading comprehension and writing (Stahl & García, 2017). However, the only explicit discussion of emergent bilinguals in the CCSS is in a supplement (two and one-third pages), entitled *Application of Common Core State Standards for English Language Learners [Application]* (n.d.). The authors of the supplement present several findings related to emergent bilinguals (e.g., they can use what they learned in their home language to develop conceptual knowledge in English) but ignore others. For example, the supplement does not report findings from a meta-analysis of emergent bilinguals' reading instruction and performance, which concluded that Spanish-speaking students who were taught to read in Spanish and English over two to three years outperformed those

who were only taught to read in English (Francis, Lesaux, & August, 2006). Similarly, the supplement does not point out that Spanish-speaking students enrolled in DL programs in the United States performed higher on Spanish and English reading tests than Spanish-speaking students enrolled in other types of bilingual and ESL programs (Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005). When the authors state that educators who work with emergent bilinguals “should diagnos[e] each student instructionally, adjust . . . instruction accordingly, and closely monitor . . . student progress” (*Application*, n. d., p. 1), they ignore bilingual instructional practices.

Whether the implementation of formative assessments linked to the CCSS with bilingual students will result in quality changes in their Spanish literacy instruction is unknown. Most of the publications and research on formative assessments and bilingual students focused on their English literacy instruction, not their Spanish literacy instruction (Álvarez et al., 2014).

Methods

The research design was informed by the interpretive/constructivist paradigm because our aim was to present the “lived experience[s]” of the participants from their points of view (Mertens, 2015, pp. 16–17). We used qualitative methods to document the district decision making regarding the CCSS, to create case studies of the teachers, and to conduct a cross-case analysis of the teacher data (Stake, 2005). Data were collected across three school years (2012–2013, 2013–2014, and 2014–2015). Pseudonyms were used for all schools and participants.

Research context

In Fall 2012, the district moved from providing a K–5 late-exit transitional bilingual education (TBE) program at Lyons School for all the district’s Spanish-speaking emergent bilinguals to a 90/10 DL program, beginning with those in kindergarten and first grade at Lyons School and at another district school. In the DL program, bilingual teachers taught Spanish-speaking and English-speaking students together in the same self-contained classrooms. Spanish-speaking emergent bilinguals in Grades 2–5 in the district still attended the late-exit TBE program at Lyons School. One-third of the students at Lyons School participated in the DL or TBE program, while two-thirds were in all-English classrooms. The DL program at both schools expanded to include second grade in 2013–2014 and third grade in 2014–2015.

The DL kindergartners received 90% of their instruction in Spanish, with 10% in English, while the DL first graders received 80% of their instruction in Spanish, with 20% in English. The TBE and DL second graders received 70% of their instruction in Spanish, with 30% in English. Third graders received 40% of their instruction in Spanish, with 60% in English, while the fourth and fifth graders received 50% of their instruction in Spanish, with 50% in English. K–3 students in the DL and TBE programs received explicit literacy instruction only in Spanish. All the students received instruction through English in the specials—art, dance/drama, library, music, and physical education—and, starting in first grade, in mathematics, science, and social studies.

Participants

Primary participants

All the K–2 DL teachers at Lyons School in 2013–2014 ($n = 4$) participated in the study: one kindergarten teacher (Olivia), two first-grade teachers (Elena and Ana), and a second-grade teacher (Cindy). Olivia and Cindy previously had participated in PSD on formative assessments at Lyons School during Spring 2013, when Cindy had taught first grade. They were experienced bilingual teachers, fluent in Spanish and English, and had their state certificates in elementary and bilingual education. Olivia is Hispanic and from South America, while Cindy is Anglo (non-Hispanic White) and from the United States. The other DL teachers (Elena and Ana) began teaching at Lyons School

in Fall 2013 as part of a teacher exchange program with a Spanish-speaking country. Both are Hispanic, fluent in Spanish and English proficient, but neither was a certified bilingual teacher or had previously taught in the United States.

Secondary participants

The two district bilingual coordinators were secondary participants. One of them is Anglo, while the other is Latina. Both are fluent in Spanish and English. They had been bilingual teachers in the school district, were certified at their respective grade levels (middle school and elementary), and had their bilingual endorsements.

The other secondary participants were the two bilingual Hispanic teachers (K–2) who participated in the Spring 2013 PSD sessions but who no longer were teaching at the school in 2013–2014. Hilda taught kindergarten in the DL program, while Susana taught second grade in the TBE program. Hilda had been hired as part of a teacher exchange program with a Spanish-speaking country. Susana was a veteran teacher at the school, had been born in South America, and was certified in bilingual education and early childhood education.

Researchers' positionality

The first author was the PSD provider. She is Anglo of European-American heritage and has lived in Mexico, Spain, and Uruguay. The second author is a Hispanic woman from Mexico. Both authors are bilingual in Spanish and English and have expertise in bilingual education and teacher education.

Professional staff development sessions

The first author provided four PSD sessions on formative assessments linked to the CCSS at Lyons School for the DL and bilingual teachers (K–2) for 120 minutes each during Spring 2013 and four PSD sessions for 65 minutes each for the DL and bilingual teachers and staff (K–5) at Lyons School during Spring 2014. The district bilingual coordinators determined the amount of time spent in the PSD sessions and requested that all the DL and bilingual staff at Lyons School ($n = 9$) be included in the Spring 2014 PSD. The focus of the PSD sessions over the two years was similar. Definitions of formative assessment were reviewed, and the CCSS standards that the district personnel had selected and approved for the school report cards were highlighted. New information on formative assessments was presented, and videos of other teachers' (bilingual and all-English) literacy instruction and assessment use were shown. Throughout the sessions, the teachers were asked to comment on whether they implemented or could implement similar assessments and instruction. The first author modeled and had the teachers participate in formative assessments. At the end of each session, she asked the teachers to identify something they wanted to try related to the PSD, to implement it in their classrooms, and to report on it during the next PSD session. Content agendas for the Spring 2013 and Spring 2014 PSD sessions are in [Appendix A](#).

Data sources and collection procedures

To understand how the district was interpreting the CCSS and guiding the bilingual teachers' implementation of formative assessments and Spanish literacy instruction (research question #1), the first author attended and took field notes during district meetings on the CCSS and formative assessments and collected and copied relevant written documents. She conducted two joint semi-structured, open-ended interviews (60 minutes each, audio-recorded and transcribed) with the two district bilingual coordinators at the beginning and end of the 2012–2013 school year. In 2013–2014 and 2014–2015, one of the bilingual coordinators was put in charge of Lyons School, and the first author conducted two semistructured, open-ended interviews (60 minutes each, audio-recorded and transcribed) with this person at the beginning and end of each school year. Annually, the bilingual

coordinator(s) provided information about the language arts instruction and assessments used with the bilingual students at Lyons School.

To understand the teachers' responses to the PSD, use of formative assessments, and any changes in their Spanish literacy instruction (research question #2), the 2013 and 2014 PSD sessions were audio-recorded (later transcribed) and documented through field notes. We observed each teacher's language arts instruction and use of assessments five times for 90 minutes each during the Spring 2013 semester and two to three times for 90 minutes each during the Spring 2014 semester. Field notes documented the classroom observations. There were fewer classroom observations per teacher during 2013–2014 than 2012–2013 because all the K–5 bilingual staff were included in the 2014 PSD sessions, reducing the amount of data collected from each participant. The first author conducted two to three semistructured, open-ended interviews (60–90 minutes each, audio-recorded and later transcribed) with each teacher before and after the PSD sessions. Informal observations and conversations (documented through retrospective notes) and the collection and copying of formative assessments and student work also occurred in 2012–2013 and 2013–2014.

During 2014–2015, we conducted one to two formal classroom observations (documented through field notes) and informal observations and conversations (documented through retrospective notes) about any instructional changes and uses of formative assessments that the teachers had made. We also collected copies of formative assessments and student work. Each teacher participated in one to two semistructured, open-ended interviews (audio-recorded and transcribed, 60–90 minutes each) about their instruction and use of formative assessments.

Data analysis

We used open-ended coding and the constant-comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to identify codes in the data (e.g., features of individual teacher's literacy instruction; types of assessments used; teacher attitudes and concerns about instruction, assessments, the PSD, and CCSS; changes in teacher's instruction and assessments; reasons for the changes). We triangulated the data across the observations, interviews, PSD sessions, and artifacts to identify themes and create case studies of the district bilingual coordinators' efforts and each teacher's literacy instruction, assessment use, and responses to the PSD and CCSS.

In the following, we discuss how the district bilingual coordinators responded to federal assessment requirements and interpreted the CCSS (research question #1). Next, we address research question #2 by presenting a thematic portrayal of each of the experienced K–2 DL teachers' Spanish literacy instruction, PSD responses, and use of formative assessments followed by a thematic portrayal of each of the new teachers at the school.

Bilingual coordinators' responses to federal assessments and CCSS interpretation

Although the NCLB (2002) legislation and regulations emphasized the English acquisition and assessment of emergent bilinguals, a year prior to the study, the district bilingual coordinators demonstrated considerable political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2008) when they advocated for the district to move from a late-exit TBE program for its Spanish-speaking emergent bilinguals to a 90/10 DL program. Across the three years of the study, they were steadfast in their insistence that the bilingual and DL teachers adhere to the language percentage guidelines, in which Spanish was the dominant language of instruction until fourth grade, when instructional time in the two languages was 50/50.

The two district bilingual coordinators were members of the district committee that was responsible for selecting the CCSS to be taught and assessed in the district. In selecting standards, the committee tried to include standards that would work for all the students in the district, including

those from diverse language backgrounds. For example, they emphasized the CCSS speaking-listening standard for multiple grades: “Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners ... in small ... groups.”

When the bilingual coordinators opposed inappropriate CCSS standards for emergent bilinguals, they then combined political and ideological clarity with action (DeNicolò, 2016). For example, they rejected one of the CCSS standards in language arts, which reads: “Blend and segment onsets and rimes of single-syllable spoken words (/g/-/oat/)” (RF.K.2c) because its focus on onset-rimes is inappropriate for a syllabic language like Spanish (Herrera, Pérez, & Escamilla, 2010). One of the bilingual coordinators explained, “We didn’t want to put an English standard that didn’t make sense for Spanish.” They also chose standards that would not adversely impact the evaluation of emergent bilinguals’ oral English reading due to their status as second-language readers. They rejected RF1.4b—“Read grade-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression ...”—because it potentially could penalize emergent bilinguals who read with an accent. Instead, they emphasized RF1.4: “Read with sufficient accuracy & fluency to support comprehension.” In addition, the bilingual coordinators included the bilingual teachers in the decision-making process when they asked them to translate the CCSS rubrics for the Spanish grade-level report cards only when the standards were relevant to emergent bilinguals.

However, the bilingual coordinators showed a lack of political and ideological clarity when they failed to address the omission of Spanish language arts standards in the CCSS or provide DL standards. Instead, they asked the bilingual teachers to use the Spanish version (*Senderos*) of an English basal reading series (*Journeys*, Houghton Mifflin Hartcourt), which was designed to address the CCSS in English and employed in the monolingual English classrooms.

Experienced teachers’ Spanish literacy instruction, PSD responses, and use of formative assessments

Olivia: The traditional, whole-class, teacher-directed kindergarten teacher

Olivia had spent the past 20 years teaching literacy to Spanish-speaking students in the district, first in a part-time TBE program and later in a full-time late-exit TBE program. Trained as a teacher in a Spanish-speaking country in South America, she used the methods and materials (e.g., songs, chants, and rhymes) that she had learned in her home country to teach her children the Spanish alphabet and use of a syllabic approach to decode Spanish words. For her writing instruction, she asked her students to complete dictations. At the beginning of every school year, her literacy instruction was whole class and teacher directed. Once her students learned how to break down Spanish words into syllables, she had them chorally and individually read phonetically consistent booklets that she had written for them.

PSD 2013: Misunderstanding of formative assessments

In response to the definitions of formative assessment (Heritage, 2010; Osmundson, 2011) presented in the first and second 2013 PSD sessions, Olivia stated that she thought she already was conducting formative assessments. She explained that when her students accomplished a task or answered a question during her whole-class instruction, she quickly wrote their names on the white board, which she later recorded on a class list. Toward the end of each school day, she had her students line up and individually pass by her desk, where she checked the correctness of each child’s work. If a child made a mistake, s/he had to correct it immediately. When two or more children made a mistake, Olivia retaught the concept to the entire group the following school day. Although Olivia’s instructional approach emphasized skill mastery, it did not emphasize differentiated instruction, a key characteristic of formative assessments.

Instructional change but not student agency

In PSD 3 (2013) the novice kindergarten teacher, Hilda, whom Olivia had mentored, complained that her students could break words into syllables, but she didn't think they knew what the words meant: "*Ellos saben lo que leen, pero no saben que quieren decir*" ("They know how to read, but they don't know what [the words] mean"). The PSD director recommended that she employ a formative assessment to find out what her kindergartners knew by letting them do a drawing and use invented spelling to write about the drawing. During PSD 4 (2013), the novice teacher shared examples of what her students had written. For example, one child had drawn a rainbow and used invented spelling to write about his drawing in Spanish. (Ellipsis [...] indicates indecipherable printing.)

Le bonito arco iris se lebanto i tamien le sol se lebanto i luego un nino se lebanto de su cama i lo ... pergato su mama si pue di ... afuera su mama sí pero no ... salo ... ("The pretty rainbow rose and also the sun rose and later a boy rose from his bed and ... asked his mother if he could [go] outside his mother [said] yes but he ... didn't go").

Olivia was impressed by what the students wrote and commented positively: "*Pero, está muy bien. ... Escribieron cantidades!*" ("But, it is very good. ... They wrote a lot!") Later, in an interview toward the end of the school year, Olivia explained that after hearing what the PSD director had said about invented spelling, she had decided to let her students use invented spelling to write in journals twice per week but that she always gave them an idea to write about because: "I don't want them to start to spend, *gastar* ('waste'), five, ten minutes [thinking] about what they are going to write about."

Importance of Spanish forms for use of formative assessments

A problem with the examples of formative assessments shared in the early 2013 PSD sessions was that they were written in English, not Spanish. Several teachers reported that they were not comfortable using forms in English to record their students' Spanish literacy performance, and the teachers didn't have time to do the translations themselves. It wasn't until the fourth 2013 PSD session that we had translated the forms into Spanish and distributed them to the teachers.

When the PSD director interviewed Olivia in Fall 2013, she reported using some of the formative assessment forms that had been translated into Spanish. One of the assessment forms was a sheet where the teachers could record their students' names on the vertical axis and enter the CCSS standards from the students' report cards for their respective grade levels on the horizontal axis (example 1 in [Appendix B](#)). Although Olivia didn't differentiate her instruction, she explained that she liked using the assessment form because she could record the dates when she observed her kindergartners attain a standard, and it did not require additional time: "*Y no me quita tiempo. Y yo puedo hacerlo frecuentemente*" ("It doesn't use up my time. And I can use it frequently").

PSD 2014: Other DL kindergartners' performance resulted in some student agency

In the first 2014 PSD session, the PSD director shared some of the instructional changes and formative assessments that the previous teachers had implemented. For example, after the last PSD in Spring 2013, Hilda, the novice kindergarten teacher, had transferred what she had learned about her students' writing and literacy development to her mathematics instruction. She had the children work in pairs to write, draw, and solve arithmetic problems. When the PSD director showed slides of the children's work (see example 2 in [Appendix B](#)), Olivia voiced her surprise at the kindergartners' creation of arithmetic problems, remarking: "This is amazing because this is incredible for kindergartners." Cindy, the previous first-grade teacher, who now taught second grade, also commented on the quality of the work: "It is interesting to see what they are able to do once they [rely on] their own devices."

After seeing the other kindergartners' arithmetic writing performance and hearing Cindy's comments, Olivia decided to let her kindergartners do their own drawings and write about them using invented spelling. Given her previous complaint that her students always wrote about the same

topics—“*Todos me hablan ‘yo quiero a mi familia’*” (“Everyone tells me ‘I love my family’”), she was pleased with the range of topics that the children wrote about. However, she didn’t use the invented spelling information to differentiate her instruction.

Post PSD 2014: Credited improved reading test scores to invented spelling in open-ended journals

When the teachers were interviewed during the 2014–2015 academic year, Olivia reported that in the past she always had been disappointed in her kindergartners’ performance on *Logramos*, a Spanish standardized reading assessment (Riverside, 2002). She remarked that her kindergartners did well when they read the booklets she had created for them, but when they encountered new words that she had not taught them to read, they did not do well. She was very pleased to report that the kindergartners who had been in her class during Spring 2014 had scored on average at the 92nd percentile on reading comprehension on *Logramos*. She credited their improved test performance to her assignment of open-ended journals and the children’s use of invented spelling for words they had not been taught to read or write.

Cindy: The experienced first- and second-grade bilingual teacher

The bilingual teachers who taught Grades 1–5 were supposed to implement a Spanish version of the “Daily Five” (Boushey & Moser, 2006). Per the Daily 5, students participated in guided reading groups and in reading, writing, and word study centers. For example, approximately every 15–20 minutes within a 90-minute block, a small group of students participated in a guided reading group with Cindy, while others chose the center they wanted to attend and with whom they wanted to work, giving them some choice and autonomy. The centers included a vocabulary/word study center, read to yourself, read to another child, and a writing center. Sometimes students participated in a computer center, in which they used headphones to listen to Spanish or English stories that scrolled across the computer screens. Cindy used the Spanish version of the Houghton Mifflin basal reading series (*Senderos*) for her guided reading instruction, in which three to five students mumble-read short books in Spanish at their instructional reading level and worked on reading comprehension. Cindy complained that it was difficult to use basal materials developed for native Spanish speakers with the English speakers.

Instructional activities that had formative assessment potential

Cindy did not implement formative assessments prior to the first (2013) PSD session, but there were instructional activities in her class that could be turned into formative assessments. For example, in the first PSD, Cindy mentioned that she already was conferencing with her students about their reading once per week for 5 minutes each. During the conferences, students brought her a book to read. If they couldn’t read the book, they looked at the pictures and told her a story about the book. The PSD director recommended that she turn the conferences into formative assessments by teaching her students how to choose books that they could orally read and comprehend, keeping reading logs to document what they were reading, and by bringing books they could orally read and comprehend with them to the conferences. She also encouraged Cindy to include student goal setting in the conferences (i.e., they could say that their goal was to pick a “just-right book” to read).

Cindy also held a writer’s workshop. She explained: “I try to see three kids a day, and I take notes. I try to give them compliments and something to improve.” Although she kept her notes in file folders, she did not use the information to improve her writing instruction.

By the second PSD, Cindy had established reading logs, in which students kept track of the books that they had read independently. However, she did not follow the PSD director’s recommendations regarding the reading conferences. She responded to the latter idea by saying, “That is something I will try next year.”

Influenced by another bilingual teacher's use of formative assessment

In one of the PSD (2013) sessions, the second-grade teacher (Susana) shared that she became aware of some of her students' low writing goals when she had them participate in a formative writing assessment in preparation for writing conferences. The students completed a form on which they wrote what they thought their teacher's individual writing goals were for them, their own writing goals, and what the teacher and student needed to do so that the student could attain both goals. In one case, a child wrote that the teacher needed to use a red pen to help him improve his punctuation, which Susana explained was not her goal for his writing instruction. Before the next PSD session, Cindy had her students orally share their writing goals with her, although neither she nor her students wrote down the goals. Cindy remarked that she was surprised by some of her students' low writing goals, which focused on handwriting.

Overcoming organizational problems and concerns about students seeing her evaluation

One of the problems that Cindy faced in Spring 2013 was that she was not organized and generally could not locate the notes she had kept for each student during her guided reading instruction or reading and writing conferences. Cindy also was concerned about her students seeing her notes. She commented: "They might be struggling, and I would like to make note of that, but I don't want them to feel bad, and I don't want them to see my comments." However, when she saw how Susana was able to redirect her writing instruction and work with individual students when she became aware of her students' writing goals, and they became aware of her goals, she reported that she and her students would write down and share their writing goals during the subsequent year (when she would be teaching the same students in second grade).

Post PSD 2013: Use of Spanish assessments to record student performance

In Fall 2013, we observed that Cindy used the same form as Olivia to keep track of when her students met the CCSS standards listed on the Spanish quarterly report cards (example 1 in [Appendix B](#)). In addition, Cindy reported a change in her Spanish reading instruction when during her guided reading she employed running records, which the PSD director had modeled in the last 2013 PSD session. Running records keep track of individual students' oral reading errors. Rather than follow the phonics instruction in the basal reading series, Cindy now used the running records to inform part of her guided reading instruction based on her individual students' needs.

PSD 2014: Implementation of goal-sharing formative assessments

During the second 2014 PSD session, Cindy explained that she now asked her students to identify their own writing goals, which she documented along with her own goals, on a writing conference guide that she shared with them and used to differentiate her instruction (see example 4 in [Appendix B](#)). In addition, she reported that she had created a sheet on which she kept track of each student's reading and language performance (see example 3 in [Appendix B](#)), which she shared with them during the guided reading sessions and used to individualize her instruction.

Post PSD 2014: Continued and expanded use of formative assessments

When we spoke with Cindy in Fall 2014, she was continuing to use the formative assessments that she had implemented during Spring 2014. In addition, she had her students keep science notebooks in English as a formative assessment to indicate what they were learning in science taught in English. She conferenced with each of the students to provide them with feedback and individualize their science instruction. She also had her students use exit slips, which had been introduced in the 2014 PSD, to identify what they understood and needed more help with in mathematics and guided reading.

New teachers' Spanish literacy instruction, PSD responses, and use of formative assessments

In 2013–2014, Elena and Ana, the two new first-grade teachers, appeared to be overwhelmed by their first year of teaching at the school and weren't using any type of formative assessment. Like Cindy, they were supposed to implement a Spanish version of the Daily 5 approach (Boushey & Moser, 2006). However, instead of having their students circulate through five literacy centers, they had them circulate through eight to 12 centers, some of which did not deal with literacy (e.g., art). One reason they had nonliteracy centers was that they both reported difficulties implementing the DL program. We noticed that English-speaking students, who toward the end of the previous school year in kindergarten had spoken to their teachers in Spanish, now were speaking in English to Elisa and Ana and their English-speaking peers.

Elena: I don't know how to teach Spanish reading or writing

Elena had spent eight years teaching mathematics and foreign languages to elementary-age children in her home country. She observed that as a classroom teacher in the United States, she was being asked to do things, such as provide reading instruction in Spanish, that she had never done in her home country: “*Eso [grupos de leer] en [mi país] no existe. Entonces yo no estoy acostumbrada para nada*” (“That [reading groups] in [my country] doesn't exist. So, I'm not used to doing anything like it”).

PSD 2014: No apparent PSD benefits

The short amount of time scheduled for the 2014 PSD (65 minutes each) and the large number of participants ($n = 9$) appeared to result in Elena's limited participation. Because Elena didn't know how to teach reading, she reported rarely holding guided reading groups during her first year of teaching at the school. For writing, she had her students dictate to her what they wanted to say: “*Ellos me van diciendo y yo lo copia y luego decidimos cuál es el más importante*” (“They tell me and I copy it, and later we decide what is the most important”).

Post PSD 2014: Still struggling to teach reading

When we interviewed Elena during the Fall of 2014, she still was struggling to teach Spanish reading and was not employing any formative assessments. The district had asked one of the Title 1 teachers to help her with her guided reading instruction. However, Elena complained that the guided reading instruction she was observing was in English, not Spanish, and she did not know how to adapt what she was observing in English to Spanish.

Ana: Comfortable teaching Spanish reading but problems with DL program and cultural differences

Ana had taught kindergarten in her home country and said that she knew how to teach Spanish reading in first grade. However, she had problems implementing the DL program. She needed help finding resources for teaching Spanish literacy to English speakers and for teaching Spanish speakers science and social studies in English. She also thought the U.S. focus on differentiation or individualization was very different from instruction in her home country. To her, it was “*mas extremo*” (“most extreme”).

PSD 2014: Developing a formative assessment to address CCSS writing standards

During the second 2014 PSD, Ana shared an instructional problem that she faced, which later resulted in her using a formative assessment to inform her instruction. During 2013–2014, the district emphasized CCSS writing standards that required the students to participate in different

writing genres. Ana complained that although she had worked with her students on writing personal narratives, they were not capable of stating an opinion and writing three sentences to support their opinion. In the PSD, we counseled her on how to provide her students with opportunities to address the standard in their writing and how to view the students' initial writing as a formative assessment that could inform her instruction and improve their performance. She later voiced her surprise that her first graders could do this type of writing.

Post PSD 2014: Comfortable with self-evaluation and peer evaluation

As an early childhood teacher, Ana reported that she viewed student self-evaluation and peer evaluation positively but didn't have time to implement them in her first year of instruction. When we observed her second year of instruction in spring 2015, she was successfully using exit slips to discover what her students had learned or wanted to know. She also had incorporated a peer assessment into her instruction that she reported seeing in the 2014 PSD. When Ana's students needed help or thought they could provide it, she had them place their name magnets on a poster under headings, such as, "*Puedes ayudarme?*" ("Can you help me?") and "*Necesitas ayuda?*" ("Do you need help?") (see example 5 in [Appendix A](#)). In addition, she posted self-assessment rubrics to guide her students' writing and had borrowed the reading and language formative assessment that Cindy had developed and employed it to record, inform, and differentiate her students' guided reading instruction (see example 3 in [Appendix A](#)).

Conclusion, discussion, and implications

Our study examined whether PSD on the use of formative assessments tied to the CCSS in English language arts led to positive instructional change in DL teachers' Spanish literacy instruction. In response to the PSD, two of the four DL teachers (Cindy and Ana) effectively used formative assessments in their Spanish literacy instruction. Given that the relationship between instruction and formative assessment is supposed to be seamless (Osmundson, 2011; Shepard, 2009), we consider their use of formative assessments—with teacher and student goal setting and sharing, student self-assessment, peer assessment, and instructional differentiation—to represent positive instructional change. However, apart from the use of formative assessments (such as running records), the changes that the DL teachers made in their actual Spanish literacy instruction tied to the CCSS were limited. The lack of specific standards for the teachers' Spanish literacy instruction and the DL instructional context meant that they were not provided with the information needed to improve specific aspects of their Spanish literacy instruction and to address the instructional needs of the Spanish and English speakers in the DL classrooms.

In terms of research question #1, unlike the school districts in California (Gándara & Baca, 2008) and New York City (Menken & Solorza, 2014), who eliminated their bilingual education programs in response to the NCLB (2002) English emphasis, the district bilingual coordinators in this study demonstrated considerable political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2008; Darder et al., 2002; DeNicolò, 2016) when they advocated for and implemented a DL program. They also showed political and ideological clarity when they opposed CCSS in English language arts that would not work with emergent bilinguals from varied linguistic backgrounds and when they emphasized those that would work. Whether other bilingual coordinators have the necessary political status and literacy knowledge to identify CCSS that can work with emergent bilingual students has to be questioned.

Several of the district bilingual coordinators' efforts did not demonstrate much political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2008; Darder et al., 2002). The most egregious was not providing the DL teachers with standards specific to Spanish literacy and to the DL instructional context. Asking the bilingual teachers to translate the English report cards into Spanish only when the CCSS made sense for emergent bilinguals might have been empowering, but it was an additional task for which the teachers were not paid. Also, this action did not acknowledge that teachers from another country might not have the expertise to determine the appropriateness of the English standards for the DL teaching context. Similar to other districts, this district encountered a shortage of credentialed bilingual teachers (Barron & Menken, 2002). Hiring teachers who were bilingual, but not certified,

and who did not know how to teach Spanish reading and/or shelter instruction in another language could have led to a failed DL program.

Our longitudinal findings indicated that it took time, scaffolded support, and teacher sharing and collaboration for the DL teachers, who previously had taught Spanish reading, to develop and implement formative assessments linked to the CCSS in their Spanish literacy instruction. The learning curve of the first-grade teacher not trained in Spanish reading appeared to be too steep for her to benefit from the PSD on formative assessments.

The similarities between the teachers' initial literacy instruction and the instruction promoted in the CCSS appeared to affect the teachers' implementation of formative assessments and the changes they made in their Spanish literacy instruction. For example, there was considerable distance between the literacy instruction of the veteran kindergarten teacher, Olivia, and the literacy instruction emphasized in the CCSS. Olivia's Spanish reading instruction shared several features with Reading First (Cummins, 2007; Teale et al., 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2009)—both emphasized Spanish word recognition strategies and the reading of phonetically consistent and pretaught words in little books. The only instructional changes that Olivia made over the course of the study were in her Spanish writing instruction, in which she moved from dictated writing with an emphasis on correct spelling to the use of invented spelling in assigned journal writing and open-ended journal writing. Similar to findings with other bilingual teachers (García et al., 2006), factors that motivated Olivia to make instructional changes were seeing what another teacher's kindergartners could do, as well as witnessing the increased performance of her own students. However, Olivia never really understood the role of formative assessment and differentiated instruction. Without continued PSD from a sociocultural perspective (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Rueda, 1998), we question whether Olivia will maintain the writing instructional changes or make other improvements in her Spanish reading instruction.

The Daily Five instruction appeared to provide the veteran bilingual teacher with the organizational structures needed for the small-group work. However, as Cindy's experience showed, just implementing the Daily 5 did not result in the effective use of formative assessments. To do the latter, Cindy had to understand the importance of recording students' ongoing performance and the necessity of documenting both her and the individual student's goals for learning and of sharing with the individual students how each student was meeting the combined goals (Osmundson, 2011). Participating in the PSD from a sociocultural perspective allowed her to see how this type of formative assessment worked in another teacher's classroom, which appeared to give her the confidence she needed to try it in her own classroom.

When the veteran and novice teachers had some expertise in the grade level and topics they were teaching, then they appeared to benefit from PSD informed by a sociocultural perspective (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Rueda, 1998). During her second year at the school, the new teacher with an early childhood background (Ana) implemented several formative assessments tied to the CCSS, which she had learned about during the previous spring's PSD. Seeing assessments developed by other teachers, along with examples of other students' work, seemed to be motivating factors for her and the veteran teachers.

In some ways, the PSD shaped by sociocultural theory (Rueda, 1998; Street, 2003) resulted in a type of formative assessment for the teachers. As the PSD director provided new information, she evaluated the teachers' responses and differentiated her support according to the teachers' individual and collective responses (Heritage, 2010; Perin et al., 2009). At the end of each PSD, the teachers were asked to set goals for the subsequent PSD, and during the subsequent PSD, they were asked to explain what they tried and how they thought it worked (a type of self-evaluation). As they responded to what each of them was doing, they also were supporting each other through collaboration and a form of peer evaluation (Osmundson, 2011).

The PSD we provided did not emphasize common formative assessments because this requirement was antithetical to how we interpreted a sociocultural perspective on teacher and student learning (Rueda, 1998; Street, 2003). How the CCSS focus on common formative assessments affects

the instruction of bilingual teachers and bilingual students' performance in Spanish and English is a significant question that certainly merits investigation. We encourage other researchers to investigate how states and districts are interpreting and implementing the CCSS in English language arts for diverse student populations and bilingual instructional programs. We also call for the development and implementation of bilingual language arts standards in Spanish, English, and other languages that are relevant for bilingual teachers and students in different types of bilingual instructional contexts, including those in DL programs.

Limitations

Determining how long to conduct a longitudinal study is problematic. We followed the veteran teachers for three years and the novice teachers for two years. Yet continued work at the school revealed that two of the teachers (Cindy and Anna) continued to collaborate and implement formative assessments and instructional changes in their Spanish literacy instruction linked to the PSD more than a year after the study had ended.

Also, there were other influences on the teachers' use of assessments and instruction that were beyond the scope of this article. For example, we did not discuss how district personnel introduced the CCSS and formative assessments to teachers by initially focusing on mathematics. We also did not investigate how the teachers' identity construction affected their attitudes toward the PSD. For example, two of the teachers voiced concerns that the PSD sessions reduced the time they had available to meet with other grade-level teachers who were not bilingual teachers. Lastly, an outside evaluator might have interpreted the teachers' responses to the PSD in a manner different from our own.

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Appendix A

Agendas for professional staff development sessions in Spring 2013 and Spring 2014 (provided to teachers in Spanish and English)

Spring 2013 (four sessions for 120 min. each)

Agenda: PSD 1

1. Aims and definitions of formative assessment re: to CCSS.
2. Teachers' current understanding and use of formative assessments.
3. Share and discuss DVD clip of literacy assessment in dual-language kindergarten.
4. Review and discuss summary of article on second-grade literacy portfolios (Bauer & García, 2002).
5. Reflection on what could be tried out in current classrooms (look at Progress Report Items per grade level for ideas).
6. Teachers specify what they might try before next PSD.

Agenda: PSD 2

1. Review ppt. handout on CCSS & formative assessments (from Heritage, 2010; Osmundson, 2011).
2. Hilda (K) and Susana (2nd) share what they tried.
3. Show and discuss DVD of first-grade dual language classroom. Pay attention to the following: Think-pair-share; peer support and peer assessment; organization of small groups (Center map); classroom assessments: use of interactive journals.
4. Olivia (K) and Cindy (1st) share what they are doing or tried.
5. Think about the data you currently are using for the report cards. Could you turn some of your instructional activities into formative assessments to give you some of these data? If so, where could you start?

Agenda: PSD 3

1. Olivia and Hilda (K teachers) and Susana (2nd) share what they tried and/or where they need more support.
2. Review and discuss first-grade SIOP video on student interaction (take notes).
3. Discussion of SIOP (sheltering techniques: content & language objectives; gestures; realia; integrating reading, writing, listening, speaking; partners; simultaneous small groups).
4. Discuss content and language objectives:
5. Kindergarten: Content Objective: Today your job is to point to words and say them out loud. Language Objective: You and your partner say the words out loud together when you point to the words.
6. Second-grade: Content Objective: Tell the difference between complete and incomplete sentences. Language Objective: Turn an incomplete sentence into a complete sentence.
7. Cindy (1st) shares what she tried and/or where she needed more support.
8. Sharing of books on formative assessments—which book would they like to have.

Agenda: PSD 4

1. Cindy (1st) and Susana (2nd) share what was tried, any questions, and where more support is needed.
2. Review Assessment Tools sheet (front & back).
3. Distribute and review article on running records (read when have time).
4. Show DVD on assessment (learner.org; teaching reading k-2: Assessment driven instruction—first grade); stop at choral reading of poem; <http://www.learner.org/resources/series162.html?pop=yes&pid=1728#>
5. Follow-up discussion of DVD = what did you notice about how she uses running records; graphs the performance, uses portfolios.
6. Olivia (K) and Hilda (K) share what was tried, any questions, and where more support is needed.
7. Show DVD on *Thalia Learning the Details*.
8. Follow-up discussion of DVD = observations and questions re: how students' writing (invented spelling) leads to decoding/reading for meaning.
9. Distribute books, share checklists/forms in Spanish (e-mailed as an attachment).
10. Complete Semantic Maps on Assessment—what they are using/would like to use).
11. Discuss differences between formative and summative assessments.

Spring 2014 (four sessions for 65 min. each)**Agenda: PSD 1**

1. Current understanding of formative assessments.
2. Past and current uses of formative assessments (show Hilda's journals with invented spelling).
3. Share and discuss DVD clips of literacy assessments in dual-language kindergarten and first-grade classrooms.
4. Reflection on what could be tried out in current classrooms.
5. Goals for next PSD.

Agenda: PSD 2

1. Questions re: formative assessments?
2. Show and discuss YouTube clip of formative assessment in primary classroom (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxAXJEK-qk> [3 min.]).
3. Share teachers' past and current uses of formative assessments.
4. Reflection on what could be tried out in current classrooms.
5. Goals for next PSD: Send me questions, topics for more info, try out formative assessments.

Agenda: PSD 3

1. Any questions? Any topics for more information?
2. Review ppt on formative assessment.
3. Third-grade bilingual teacher's discussion of her use of charts for English Language and Math formative assessments.
4. Rubric: Examine "*Mi escritura*," story-writing rubric, report-writing rubric.
5. View and discuss video clip: Informal writing conferences (#9, about 4:33–10:35).
6. Complete exit slip 1: What concerns or questions do you have about using formative assessments with your students? If you don't have any concerns/questions, what do you like/not like about being asked to use formative assessments?

Agenda: PSD 4

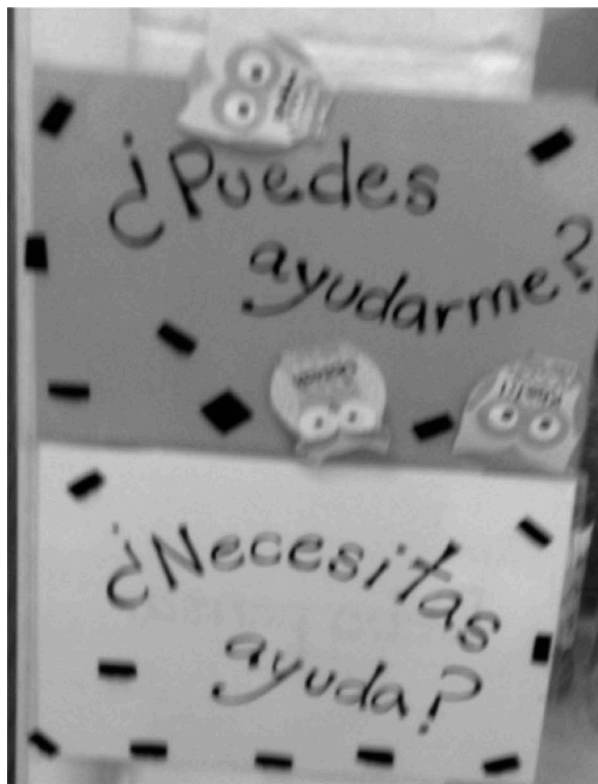
1. Videos on self-assessment and discussion.
2. Daily 5 Formative Assessment Opportunities (Writing: Writing rubric, teacher-student evaluation, conference).
3. Share Susana's writing conference rubric from year 1; Cindy shares hers.
4. Speech-language pathologist shares story retelling checklist.
5. Discussion of how you are using formative assessments (to decide who needs your attention, if you need a different instructional approach, who needs to be challenged?).
6. Provide answers re: exit slips turned in for PSD 3.
7. Review peer assessment and distribute other forms (identify which ones to be translated into Spanish).
8. Complete exit slip 2: What concerns or questions do you have about using formative assessments with your students? If you don't have any concerns/questions, what do you like/not like about being asked to use formative assessments?

Semana de:		Nivel del grupo:		Libro:		
Inferencias	Predicciones	Secuencia	Elementos de la historia			Language Goals
Compara/contrasta	Visualizaciones	Características texto no ficción				
Estudiante						
Estrategia?	Sí No	Sí No	Sí No	Sí No		
Frustraciones						
Running Record Data						
Vocabulary Practice?						
Enjoyment	Sí No	Sí No	Sí No	Sí No		

Example 3: Reading and language formative assessment used by Cindy (2nd) during and after PSD 2014 and by Ana (2nd) after PSD 2014.

Name	
Discussion Points:	Date:
Student Goal:	
Teacher Goal:	
Revisit Discussion:	

Example 4: Writing conference formative assessment used by Cindy (2nd) during 2014 PSD.



Example 5: Peer assessment used by Ana (2nd) after PSD 2014. ("Can you help me? Do you need help?")