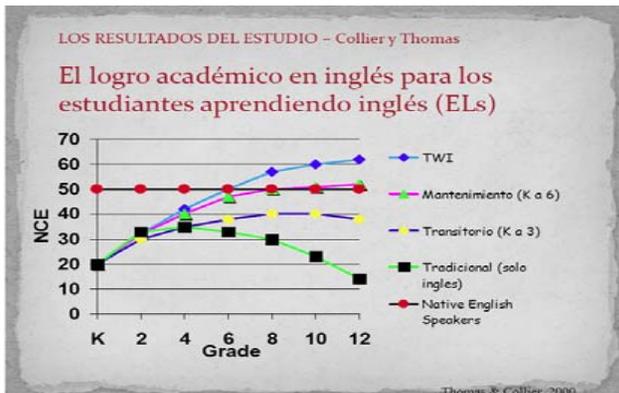


judgment against your child. School districts are judged by their reclassification rate, but your child is not! In many cases, a child who is *not* reclassified gets access to extra support, tutoring, and specially trained teachers

Myth #7: *My child will be an English Learner forever if I enroll him in a bilingual program.*

Fact: Students in the TWI or bilingual program at Thousand Oaks are twice as likely to be reclassified by the time they reach high school as being proficient in English as students in the English Only programs.

Long Term Academic Achievement



This information was provided by "Friends of Berkeley TWI," a group of parents and teachers dedicated to improving and sustaining the TWI program in the Berkeley schools.

Facts and Myths about Learning English through Bilingual Education:

What Latino Families Need to Know



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Facts and Myths about Learning English through Bilingual Education: What Latino Families Need to Know

Myth #1: *Students in English only programs do better on state tests than students in TWI (Two-Way Immersion) or other bilingual programs.*

Fact: . English Learners generally struggle with the state tests for some time, whether they are in an English Only program or not. State testing in English and math starts in second grade for all students, including English Learners (ELs), unless parents request in writing that their child not be tested. Students in English Only programs often do score higher on the state tests *in the early years*. But by the time students who are taught in Spanish and English leave elementary school, they begin to outperform their peers. Many research studies have proven that Spanish or dual immersion programs are some of the most successful programs for reducing the achievement gap and raising the high school graduation rate for native Spanish speakers.

Myth #2: *It only takes children one or two years to learn English, if they are exposed to it.*

Fact: It often takes only one or two years for children to learn *conversational* English. So a child may be able to speak English on the playground or even translate at the store, school, or the doctor's office. But it takes much, much longer for children to perform academically in their second language. On average, it takes six to eight years for a child to learn English well enough to do as well as native English speakers on achievement tests. Many immigrant children (or children of immigrants) will not begin to get passing scores on the state tests until fifth grade or

beyond. Even with excellent teachers and with the child working hard to learn academic English, it takes a substantial amount of time to read and write at grade level in a second language.

Myth # 3: *Immersion in English is the best way to learn English.*

Fact: Many families assume that the best way to learn English is to go to school completely in English (an *English Only* program). And some Latino children do very well being schooled entirely in English. Unfortunately, most Latino students who *only* get taught in English do not go on to college or hold professional jobs, and many do not even graduate from high school. But research shows that Latino students who attend a TWI or other bilingual program for at least 6 years are not only more likely to become proficient in reading, writing, and speaking *Spanish*, but in *English* as well. By learning to read and write in Spanish, students apply what they know to English, and they retain a pride in and connection with their home culture and language that helps them in school and in life. Many students in California who have been taught entirely in English, without developing their Spanish, never become entirely proficient or literate in English *or* Spanish.

Myth #4: *English-speaking children in the TWI program learn Spanish on the backs of the Latino children.*

Fact: It is true that English speakers in TWI programs learn Spanish and many white, black, and other non-Latino parents in Berkeley want their children to learn Spanish. But the TWI program was started in Berkeley to raise the achievement of Latino students, and it has been very successful at doing that. Most Latino students in TWI go on to score better on standardized tests than their peers in other programs, and almost all of them graduate from high school.

Myth #5: *My child will get Spanish at home. She doesn't need to go to school for Spanish.*

Fact: Many young Latinos can handle a fair amount of "kitchen table" Spanish, or may be able to converse in Spanish. But many can never read a newspaper in Spanish, and may struggle to write letters to grandparents or other relatives back home. Even when families are committed to teaching their children to read and write in Spanish, Latino children who grow up here and don't get a chance to be educated in Spanish, often become handicapped in their Spanish. It takes a substantial commitment of time and effort to teach a child literacy without the help of the school setting.

Myth #6: *A child needs to pass the CELDT test as soon as possible.*

Fact: The CELDT (California English Language Development Test) is a relatively new test and was created for teachers and parents to follow their students' progress in English speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It was never meant to be a pass/fail type of test. As your child progresses in school, you should be able to see her moving up from beginning English, to immediate English, to advanced level in English. It will take years for this to happen, however. Highly respected researchers in second language acquisition agree that it takes between 6 and 8 years for students to become academically fluent in a second language. Many school districts, including Berkeley, have begun to use the CELDT as a way to make decisions about how much support an English Learner needs, and whether he/she can be "reclassified" as fluent in English. *Reclassified* means your child no longer needs extra support. If a child does not reach reclassification quickly, it is not a negative