Improving Bilingual Service Delivery in Catholic Schools through Two-Way Immersion

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Catholic elementary schools underserve Latino students, especially those who are bilingual. This paper presents a conceptual argument for Catholic elementary schools to improve this by pursuing the two-way immersion model of bilingual service delivery in Spanish and English. The argument is presented in three stages. First, we show that Catholic elementary schools underserve Latino families in general, and bilingual Latino students with limited proficiency in English in particular. Next, we present evidence from research literature and a case study that the two-way immersion approach to bilingual service delivery is philosophically and functionally well suited for Catholic schooling. We conclude by suggesting the implications of this argument for Catholic as well as other private sector schools.

This article presents a conceptual argument for Catholic elementary schools to pursue two-way immersion models of bilingual service delivery in Spanish and English. The thesis is that Catholic schools need to recruit and retain Latino students more effectively, especially those who are bilingual in Spanish and English, and that an effective educational model is a necessary (though not sufficient) component toward this end. The two-way immersion model provides one such model. First, we describe how Catholic elementary schools underserve Latino families in general, and native Spanish speaking students who are English language learners (ELL) in particular. We argue that many Catholic elementary schools have not articulated coherent approaches to service delivery for these bilingual students. Next, we present an analysis of the two-way immersion approach to bilingual service delivery, examining how this model fits with the philosophical and functional demands of Catholic schooling. We present supporting evidence from a case study of one such school. We conclude by suggesting the implications of this argument for Catholic schools as well as other religious and secular schools in the private sector.

The Context: Service Delivery for Linguistically Diverse Students

The linguistic diversity in schools is rapidly rising. According to the United States Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (2004), among youth ages 5 to 24 "the percentage who were language minorities increased from 9% in 1979 to 17% in 1999" (p. iii). Approximately 1 in 5 children in the United States are first- or second-generation immigrants (Hernandez, Denton, & Macartney, 2009), the majority of whom are Latino (Portes & Hao, 2004). Latinos are pluralistic, ranging in many dimensions, including race, national origin, and linguistic proficiency (Hernandez et al., 2009). This article focuses on Latino students in general, and Latino students who are ELL in particular. Students who are ELL have been and will continue to be the fastest-growing population in public schools (Hernandez et al., 2009; U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). In fact, since 1990, the number of students who are ELL has risen by 150%, while the overall student population rose by 20% (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2006). In actual numbers, this translates into more than 5 million children who were not proficient in English in American public schools. This phenomenon is not isolated to port of entry and/or border states such as California, Texas, and Florida. States all across the country report record high numbers of ELLs in their public schools (Capps et al., 2005; Kohler & Larzarin, 2007).

Both quantitative and qualitative research tells us that bilingual students with limited proficiency in English lag behind academically and may struggle with other emotional concerns as well (Kohler & Larzarin, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). Schools in the United States struggle to educate Latino students effectively who are ELL (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2005). Latino families, both native-born and immigrant, are much more likely than native-born White families to face barriers to educational success, such as elevated levels of poverty and familial mobility (Hernandez et al., 2009). Limited cultural responsiveness on the part of school communities to students with various ethnic, racial, and national heritages is another barrier many schools present to Latino families. In addition, for many of these families English is a second language. They depend on schools to have an articulated and effective approach to educating bilingual students. Thus, Latino children often face socioeconomic, sociocultural, and linguistic barriers to effective schooling.

Schools attempt to ameliorate barriers to students by delivering specific services, such as English as a second language and linguistic supports for students who are ELL, and Title I services for students in poverty. Looking at these services broadly, an important consideration is how they are organized.

Delivery of these services tends to be organized in manners that are either integrated into general education classrooms or delivered to individuals or small groups of students outside the classroom. In other words, an important aspect to consider with all service delivery is whether it is "pushed in" to the class, or involves pulling students out of class. Models to deliver services in integrated, inclusive settings are more effective, efficient, and equitable (Frattura & Capper, 2007), and well suited for Catholic school communities (Scanlan, 2009c).

Looking more narrowly at service delivery approaches for bilingual students, other distinctions emerge. While all approaches share the goal of supporting English language development, some seek to foster bilingualism—in this case in Spanish—as well (Brisk, 2006; Ovando, 2003). Thus, approaches to service delivery for these students exist on a monolingual-bilingual spectrum. At one end of the spectrum, monolingual approaches focus exclusively on English language development, not utilizing native languages whatsoever. At the other end of the spectrum, bilingual approaches focus on both English and Spanish language development. Monolingual approaches are subtractive and compensatory, viewing a native language other than English as a liability. In contrast, bilingual approaches are additive, viewing a native language as a strength. As Brisk (2006) states, "A successful bilingual program develops students' language and literacy proficiency, leads them to successful academic achievement, and nurtures sociocultural integration" (p. 10). Thus, while bilingual education approaches languages other than English as an asset upon which to build, monolingual education approaches a home language other than English as a deficit to be overcome. In addition to varying in terms of the linguistic goals (fostering bilingualism or not), these different approaches also range in the degree to which linguistically diverse students are integrated or separated from native English speakers.

This article analyzes one bilingual service delivery model: the two-way immersion model (TWI; also called dual immersion). TWI promotes bilingualism, cross-cultural competency, and academic excellence (Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003; Senesac, 2002). TWI schools cultivate strong communities across linguistically heterogeneous student bodies (Howard et al., 2003) and are growing in popularity across educational sectors (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2008).

This paper presents an analysis of TWI for one specific school sector: Catholic elementary schools. The conceptual framework grounding this analysis of TWI considers the philosophical and functional dimensions of Catholic schooling. Catholic social teaching provides a foundational philosophical orientation for Catholic schools (Scanlan, 2008a; Storz & Nestor, 2007; United

States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], 1998). Emphasizing human dignity, the common good, and a preferential option for the marginalized, this philosophical orientation compels Catholic schools to strive to educate traditionally marginalized students inclusively, including students with limited English proficiency. Balancing this philosophy are functional constraints. As private institutions, Catholic schools face market pressures to recruit and retain students and to maintain fiscal viability. These functional pressures affect Catholic schools' pursuit of service delivery systems that allow them to fulfill their philosophical mission. These two dimensions—the philosophical and the functional—provide the lens through which we approach this analysis.

We divide our article into three main sections. First, we draw upon published empirical literature to examine enrollment trends and bilingual service delivery models for Latino students in Catholic elementary schools. Next, we analyze the fit of the TWI model with the philosophical and functional dimensions of Catholic schooling, presenting data from a case study of Juan Diego (a pseudonym), a Catholic TWI elementary school. Finally, we present implications of the argument that the TWI model provides a viable philosophical and functional option for bilingual service delivery in this sector.

Enrollment Trends and Bilingual Service Delivery Models

Enrollment of Latino Students in Catholic Schools

Determining whether the TWI model is a good fit for Catholic elementary schools demands some analysis of both enrollment trends and bilingual service delivery models for Latino students in Catholic elementary schools. As discussed above, demographic trends show this population to be growing in the country. Catholic elementary schools in the United States, which historically have effectively recruited and retained immigrant populations, currently underserve Latino families (Gray & Gautier, 2006; Greene & O'Keefe, 2001). Despite the fact that Latinos comprise a significant portion of the U.S. Catholic population, less than 3% of Latino families send their children to Catholic schools (Notre Dame Task Force on Catholic Education, 2006). The United States Bishop's Committee on Education recognized this as well and said, "Catholic parishes and schools must reflect this reality and reach out and welcome Hispanics and Latinos into the Catholic faith communities in the United States" (USCCB, 2005, p. 9). As Stevens-Arroyo & Pantoja (2003) describe, this has direct consequences for the Catholic Church: "The Latino population represents an increasingly large segment of the United States' Catholic Church. In a certain measure, the future of the Church as the largest

in the United States depends upon the Catholic convictions of the Latinos" (p. 268).

This is not a new issue in Catholic schools. Responding to the shifting demographics over 2 decades ago, the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) published a report (Hall & Reck, 1987) calling for Catholic schools to respond to Hispanics in an integral manner. This prescient report outlined a comprehensive approach to reforming service delivery in Catholic schools, including replacing assimilationist approaches with multicultural ones, "[W]hereby cultural behavior and cultural differences are regarded as teaching and learning tools, used to create a fair system that may ensure all students an equal chance to acquire social, academic, and spiritual skills" (p. 39).

Enrollment in Catholic schools in general has been rising since 1995 (Stevens-Arroyo & Pantoja, 2003), though over this period Catholic schools have been inconsistent in their ability to recruit and retain Latinos. While some Latino immigrants, such as Cubans in Miami, attend Catholic schools in high numbers, others do not (Lawrence, 2000). For instance, Lawrence reports that Mexican-Americans, "far and away the largest U.S. immigrant group, also have the lowest rate of Catholic school utilization" (p. 197). Moreover, Lawrence points out that "obstacles or opportunities afforded by local school and parish environments seem just as important [as family income] in shaping their school-choice preferences and decisions" (p. 197). Obstacles to Latino students include the perception of schools as unwelcoming to Latinos, lacking bilingual programming, including minimal numbers of Latino teachers and administrators, and not reflecting a multicultural community (Hall & Reck, 1987). A fundamental obstacle in many Catholic schools is the lack of a well-articulated service delivery plan for students who are ELL (Hall & Reck, 1987; Scanlan, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c). Catholic schools are more effective in recruiting and retaining Latinos when they provide welcoming school communities to these families. Given these enrollment patterns, we turn to discuss options for service delivery for Catholic schools striving to serve Latino ELLs more effectively.

Service Delivery Models for Bilingual Students

Empirical research directs school communities toward effective educational approaches to service delivery. Goldenberg (2008) summarizes key lessons from reviews of research by the National Literacy Panel and the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence regarding this. The most fundamental finding is that native language literacy promotes English acquisition. Literacy skills and knowledge transfer across language, and native

Spanish speakers who develop their skills at reading, writing, and speaking in Spanish attain higher scores in English than native Spanish speakers whose education focuses solely on learning to read, write, and speak English. In other words, when the native language of students is recognized as an asset, and policies and practices in the school community build from this perspective, students benefit.

Another key lesson that Goldenberg (2008) describes is that while they benefit from the same types of effective pedagogical strategies and curricular approaches as other students, students who are ELL tend to need specific instructional modifications as well. Goldenberg explains this point:

> Learners who have the basic reading skills and know the language can concentrate on the academic content. But learners who do not know the language, or do not know it well enough, must devote part of their attention to learning and understanding the language in which that content is taught. It's an enormous challenge that most ELLs probably have difficulty meeting without additional instructional supports. (p. 19)

Such instructional modifications include using texts with content familiar to students, concentrating on vocabulary instruction, and drawing connections between English and Spanish. In addition, students who are ELL benefit from general teaching strategies known to provide scaffolds to all students who are struggling, such as predictable and consistent classroom routines, graphic organizers, and additional time for practice (alone, with peers, and with tutors). While financial barriers to enrollment are considerable for many students who are ELL, an established service delivery model for students who are ELL can be a key catalyst for attracting funds to Catholic school communities. One key opportunity for Catholic schools, thus, is to articulate service delivery with an asset orientation to linguistic diversity for students who are ELL.

TWI: Approaching linguistic diversity as an asset. Two-way immersion (TWI) education (alternately referenced as dual immersion) is one particular model of bilingual service delivery that views language as a resource and bilingualism as an asset (Ruiz, 1984). The three core goals of TWI are to promote bilingualism, academic success, and cross-cultural appreciation (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003; Howard & Christian, 2002). In TWI classrooms, curriculum is delivered in both English and the minority language and students who are dominant in English join classmates who are dominant in a minority language (typically Spanish). Alanis (2000) reports that schools implementing the TWI model "try to achieve balanced numbers of language

majority and ELLs in the classroom so that each group can serve as a linguistic resource and peer model for the other" (p. 230). In this manner, the two-way immersion model depends upon linguistically heterogeneous groupings (i.e., the students with limited English proficiency are integrated with students who are proficient; Ovando, 2003).

By making bilingualism for all students a core goal, the TWI affirms and cultivates linguistic diversity. Other approaches to service delivery for students who are ELL treat the home language as a deficit in need of compensation. Zentella (1997) describes this subtractive approach that is typical in school communities:

> The diverse linguistic abilities that Latinos learn in their communities are not tapped by the educational system, which adopts a subtractive instead of an additive approach; that is, the standard English dialect is viewed as a substitute for all the varieties of Spanish and other nonstandard dialects of English that children bring to school, not as an important addition to their verbal repertoire. (p. 123)

English-only and English as a second language approaches are the most extreme in subtractive approaches. These approaches tend not to provide any support for students who are developing English proficiency to maintain their home language concurrently.

Other approaches straddle the line between seeing the home language as an asset or a liability. For instance, transitional bilingual programs provide some support for students in their native language. These tend to employ bilingual methods solely for the purpose of acquiring English (Crawford, 2004), and they vary in terms of how long they last and in how much they support bilingualism (Ovando, 2003). Functionally, transitional programs typically cluster students who are ELL separately from native English-speaking peers, isolating them from both model speakers of English and the mainstream curriculum. While the individual educators working within such programs may be excellent instructors and the students participating in the programs may be receiving positive benefits, our critique is that these models are fundamentally weakened by treating linguistic diversity from a deficit perspective. These models, by design, pressure native Spanish-speaking students to varying degrees away from maintaining their home language in an assimilationist manner. In addition, these models do not encourage native English-speaking students to develop bilingualism.

In contrast, the TWI model is unique in stressing the value for *all* children in building language and literacy skills in two languages (Garcia & Jensen, 2007; Scanlan, 2007; Zentella, 1997). Additive bilingual models such as TWI

can also mitigate intergenerational tensions among immigrant families. Some tension is a result of parents and children disagreeing about new and old cultural norms. Other tension can be created when children lose the ability or simply refuse to communicate in the parents' dominate language (Kibria, 1993; Stepick, Stepick, Eugene, Teed, & Labissiere, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). This type of conflict is rife among Latinos, many of whom are immigrants themselves or come from immigrant families. The TWI model can reduce such tensions.

The focus on bilingualism works hand in hand with the second goal of TWI schools: academic excellence. Evidence abounds supporting the academic and linguistic outcomes of well-designed TWI educational communities (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003; Collier, 1992; de Jong, 2002a, 2002b; Howard & Sugarman, 2007; Howard et al., 2003; Lindholm-Leary, 2001, 2003; McGuire, 1998; Pérez, 2004; Thomas & Collier, 2002, 2003), and that these types of programs in no way retard the development of English (Castillo, 2001; Christian, Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, & Howard, 2004; Lucido & McEachern, 2000; Sera, 2000). In fact, numerous studies demonstrate that students who develop high levels of bilingualism actually benefit from enhanced cognitive abilities (Diaz, 1983; Lambert, 1978; Peal & Lambert, 1962).

The third goal of TWI programs is cross-cultural appreciation. TWI seeks to achieve this in multiple ways. By design, classes in TWI schools are linguistically heterogeneous. This contributes to positive relations cross culturally, as the native Spanish-speaking students (overwhelmingly Latino) and the native English-speaking students (a mix of races and ethnicities) serve as resources to one another in the common quest of bilingualism. In addition, while Latino families often experience schools as unwelcoming (Flores & Murillo, 2001; Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991; Rolon, 2003; Rolón-Dow, 2005), TWI approaches typically foster strong levels of parent/caregiver engagement (Rubio, 1995), especially with families that have historically been marginalized by educational institutions (Zehrbach, 2006).

TWI schools pursue these three goals of bilingualism, academic excellence, and cross-cultural appreciation through several specific approaches (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003; Howard, Sugarman, Christian, Lindholm-Leary, & Rogers, 2005). Successful approaches are led by principals who are grounded in the research on this model and tailor it to their own school community's needs. These approaches are characterized by gradually phasing the model into a community, utilizing high-quality materials, and supporting teachers in ongoing professional development in bilingual/bicultural

education (Montague, 1997). Some features are consistent across models. For instance, all TWI approaches emphasize the importance of continuity in enrollment. Only young students are typically allowed to join TWI schools (most do not accept students into the program after first grade), and families are typically counseled from the start on the importance of continuing with the model for a minimum of 6 years in order to achieve the three goals. Also consistent across the approaches to TWI is that only one language is used at a given time in the classroom. Students are immersed in the language of instruction, learning content and language simultaneously. For instance, if math class is being taught in Spanish, the teacher will teach concepts in Spanish using strategies to scaffold students who have limited proficiency in this language (e.g., employing visual supports, modeling).

Other features vary across different approaches to TWI. One of the most prominent of these is the balance of the language of instruction (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Senesac, 2002). Some TWI schools spend the majority of time (80-90%) in the kindergarten and first grade in Spanish, tapering down to 50% Spanish/50% English by fourth and fifth grades. Other schools equally balance Spanish and English from the start. Still others separate students by native language and provide initial literacy development in native language for both groups (de Jong, 2002a, 2002b). Clearly defining this approach to the language of instruction is important to the success of the TWI model (Montague, 1997).

It is important to acknowledge that TWI programs are neither panaceas nor silver bullets (Valdes, 1997). Several shortcomings of the model exist. For instance, TWI schools are only appropriate in contexts where the second language—here Spanish—is desired. Moreover, TWI schools rely on relatively equal numbers of students who are native Spanish speakers and students who are native English speakers. This model does not work in areas that are linguistically homogenous (e.g., few native Spanish speakers) or linguistically heterogeneous (e.g., schools with significant numbers of students from multiple different language backgrounds). Lack of fidelity in implementing the model significantly weakens the student learning outcomes (Montague, 1997; Mora, Wink, & Wink, 2001). In addition, the model requires a population of highly qualified teachers with bilingual certification, which is in short supply in many locales.

In sum, TWI is an asset-oriented approach to bilingual service delivery that seeks to foster students who are bilingual, academically successful, and culturally competent. We now turn to examine this model in the context of Catholic schools.

TWI as a fit for Catholic schools. Philosophically, TWI reflects the values of Catholic social teaching, emphasizing human dignity, the common good, and a preferential option for the marginalized (Martin & Litton, 2004; Storz & Nestor, 2007). As Martin and Litton (2004) state, "While the Church continues to engage in dialogue on diversity issues, there has been a clear message that has gone forward in terms of what it means to be Catholic—to embrace unity in diversity" (p. 211). First, Catholic social teaching values human dignity. This is the understanding that all people are made in the image and likeness of God, and, therefore, endowed with intrinsic value. Second, Catholic social teaching values the common good. Individuals, intrinsically sacred, are also inherently social. Our human dignity is instantiated through community and in relationship with others. Third, Catholic social teaching places a preferential option for the marginalized. Our pursuit of the common good is achieved first and foremost by attending to those with special needs, outcast, and marginalized.

The goals of TWI—academic excellence, bilingualism, and cross-cultural relationships—are congruent with these values. By promoting academic growth and bilingualism, TWI places value on the dignity of each individual learner. By helping students develop skills to navigate and build relationships across culturally and linguistically diverse communities, TWI promotes the common good. By effectively serving a population of students who have traditionally been marginalized in schools, namely students with limited English proficiency, TWI demonstrates a preferential option for the marginalized.

Functionally, TWI is an efficient approach to bilingual service delivery for Catholic schools. In terms of bilingual services, TWI schools eschew a programmatic approach to service delivery, which would require additional resources (personnel, curriculum, classroom space) for subgroups of students. Instead, the TWI design integrates services for bilingual students. Typically, TWI faculty are bilingual, and students are purposefully grouped in linguistically balanced manners and taught a common curriculum, making the model operationally less resource intensive than programmatic approaches to bilingual education. Hence, TWI is a bilingual service delivery model that is both philosophically and functionally aligned with Catholic schooling.

Worth noting, the argument that an approach to service delivery for students who are ELL that builds on a sociocultural approach to learning and sees bilingualism as an asset is not new. Indeed, the NCEA report from 20 years ago made many of these same points (Hall & Reck, 1987). In addition to describing a multicultural approach to linguistically heterogeneous students, building on the home cultures of Hispanic students, Hall and Reck called for an explicitly bilingual approach, pointing out that "At this time in

United States history, it seems especially important to encourage fluency in Spanish for both Hispanic and other students" (p. 56). After reviewing the range of language programming options, Hall and Reck called for a "majority language bilingual immersion" model, with the goals of bilingualism, strong academic learning, positive self-concepts and commitments to education, and a strong sense of history, culture, and religiosity. This model, including the emphasis it places on seeking a linguistically balanced setting of native English and native Spanish speakers, shares many similarities with the TWI model described above. Having set the context of TWI as a service delivery model for Catholic schools to serve Latino students, we now turn to provide a case in point illustrative of this philosophical and functional alignment.

Methods

Juan Diego School (JDS) is a TWI Catholic elementary school located in a metropolitan area in the western United States. In this section we provide a brief case study of JDS, focusing on the school's approach to implementing the TWI model in a Catholic context. The data show that the implementation at JDS is philosophically and functionally aligned with Catholic schooling.

For the case study reported here, data were gathered through qualitative methodologies of interviews, observations, and archival documentation (Guba & Lincoln, 2001; Maxwell, 1998). This case study design (Yin, 2003) was employed to be holistic, empirical, interpretive, and empathetic (Toma, 2006). Twenty-one semistructured interviews were conducted with administrators, teachers, parents, and caregivers. An interview protocol guided these interviews. Some questions focused on the three espoused goals of the TWI model (e.g., What are your academic outcomes and language acquisition outcomes across different dimensions of diversity, such as home language, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status? How do you know whether you are effectively fostering positive cross-cultural relationships within your school community? How successful is the cross-linguistic integration of students?). Other questions honed in on how students across multiple dimensions were experiencing the TWI community (e.g., How are you able to serve students with disabilities?). These interviews were supplemented by multiple contacts with school administrators via phone and e-mail over the course of one school year. All interviews were transcribed and coded using constant comparative methodology (Maxwell, 1998, 2001; Wolcott, 1990).

Observations were made during three site visits to JDS. Observations took place throughout the school day, including whole-lesson instruction, school ceremonies (e.g., Mass), informal time (lunch and recess), faculty meetings and discussion groups, parent meetings, and fundraising presentations. The

focus of these observations was to gain a sense of the school culture. This included looking for evidence of the formal implementation of the three goals of the model (e.g., Is bilingualism emphasized? Are academic expectations high? Is cross-cultural competence manifest?). This also included looking at how other dimensions of diversity were being addressed (e.g., How are differences beyond language, such as race and exceptionality, experienced in the school?).

In addition, archival documentation was gathered regarding five dimensions of the school: (a) accounts of the school history; (b) demographic enrollment data on gender, race, and ethnicity; home language; socioeconomic status; and disability; (c) student attendance and academic achievement data; (d) school mission and vision statements; and (e) school long-term/strategic planning. These five dimensions were chosen to provide balance to the perspective on the stability of the school community. Specifically, these documents were used to corroborate the evidence of the three goals of the TWI model and to determine whether the school appeared to be sustainable. We analyzed these data using constant comparative methodology (Glesne, 1999).

Juan Diego School

JDS is an elementary school serving 100 students from kindergarten through fifth grade. Situated in a major metropolitan area, over four-fifths (85%) of the students in the school identify as Latino and three-fifths (62%) qualify for free or reduced price lunch. JDS is able to serve students of low socioeconomic status because its financing model is not tuition driven. The vast majority (86%) of revenues are from fundraising efforts. JDS primarily serves Latino students (85%). The remainder identify as Anglo (14%) and African American (1%). By contrast, less than 1 in 5 (17%) students in other Catholic schools in the region identify as Latino. Regarding teachers, the vast majority (10 of 13) identify as Latino and all are bilingual.

The implementation of the TWI model at JDS mirrors what is typically called a "90-10" model, in that students in the younger grades spend approximately 90% of their instructional day in Spanish and 10% in English. This proportion becomes more balanced over the years to arrive at a 50/50 split by fourth grade. Students are heterogeneously grouped by language for the majority of the day, but are separated for a language and literacy block in their target language (i.e., home language) each morning for an hour and a half.

For the purpose of this article, we focused our analysis on the philosophical and functional alignment of the TWI model with a Catholic school community as evidenced in JDS. Other dimensions of this case study have been presented elsewhere (Scanlan, 2008b; Scanlan & Palmer, 2009).

Findings

Mission to Serve Latino Students

As described earlier, three core values of Catholic social teaching emphasize human dignity, the common good, and a preferential option for the marginalized. All three of these values are woven into the core fabric of the JDS community in very deliberate ways. This school was founded for the express purpose of educating Latinos underserved in other Catholic schools. "In response to the dearth of quality educational options," starts the official history of JDS, "[Catholic and neighborhood residents] set out to provide children of limited economic resources a high-quality education so that they may become leaders in our community." Students were recruited from a Latino parish and the neighboring community.

Four years of regular planning meetings by what one board member described as "a motley crew" culminated in the launching of the school in 1999. The founders saw bilingualism as an asset; as a board member described it, "The whole philosophy was that neither one is better—that they both are valuable and you have to learn both and retain both." This drove the founders toward the TWI model. Yet in their accounts of the early years, teachers and administrators describe JDS as focusing more on creating a welcoming school atmosphere than on linguistic or academic aspects.

The structural independence of JDS allows it to attempt to implement these values in ways that depart from other Catholic schools regionally and nationally. While most Catholic schools operate in relationship with a parish community and within a diocesan system of Catholic schools (Gray & Gautier, 2006), JDS operates as a private nonprofit organization. With no parish affiliation, JDS is functionally independent of the diocese and overseen by an independent board of directors. As one of the founding board members described it, "Having the board of directors in charge gave us tremendous independence." The governing board is responsible for hiring and firing administration, budgeting, fundraising and development, and long-range planning.

This structural independence allowed JDS to reduce three key barriers many Latino families experience in Catholic school communities: financial, linguistic, and cultural. Most private schools, Catholic and otherwise, depend significantly on tuition for financing (Alt & Peter, 2002), which creates an inherent financial barrier to access. Many private schools reduce this barrier by offering scholarship and financial aid as assistance, but few structurally depart from this basic financial premise that tuition will provide a core revenue stream. Because they are overrepresented in low socioeconomic

status, Latino families disproportionately experience these financial barriers (Hernandez et al., 2009).

Alongside this financial barrier, many Latino families experience linguistic and cultural barriers to Catholic school communities. At the most fundamental level, the linguistic barrier is manifest in the lack of a clearly defined approach to serving students who are ELL. As discussed above, schools have various options for approaching service delivery for students who are ELL. Yet in the Catholic school context, data on the numbers of students who are ELL and the service delivery systems used with them is seldom available (Bimonte, 2006; Gray & Gautier, 2006; McDonald & Schultz, 2008). Compounding this are barriers created when the teaching and learning community is not culturally relevant and responsive (Delpit, 1995; Flores & Murillo, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2007). When they do not pay attention to the number of students who are ELL and how they are educating them, Catholic school communities ignore these linguistic and cultural barriers. We will now examine how the school community of JDS addressed these three financial, linguistic, and cultural barriers.

Ameliorating Financial Barriers

Functionally, JDS has created an effective TWI model for a Catholic school community because it has adopted a non-tuition-based financial model from its inception. This is critical because the tuition in Catholic schools creates an insurmountable barrier to many Latino families who are native Spanish speakers. For JDS to succeed, it needed another financial model. The vast majority (over 85%) of financing comes from fundraising and development efforts while only 14% comes from tuition. This allows JDS to serve significantly more students of low socioeconomic status than most Catholic schools. Two in 3 students qualify for free- and reduced-price lunch. All families pay tuition, but the amount is based on their financial means, as determined by an independent third party. A small number of families pay the full tuition, and the average amount paid by families is under $1,400. At the time of this study, per pupil costs were at $6,500.

JDS promotes itself as being "community supported." While Catholic schools often supplement tuition funds with subsidies from their parishes, JDS is not directly affiliated with a parish and thus received no such assistance. Another revenue stream that has become more common for Catholic schools in recent years is financial assistance from the diocese. JDS did not benefit from this assistance either. Instead, JDS operated much like other nonprofit organizations, relying on the combination of concerted development

efforts from personnel alongside fundraising assistance from the board. JDS employs both a development director and operates on a president/principal administration model. The president is primarily responsible for long-range planning, board development, and fundraising, while the principal is in charge of instructional leadership in the school.

The message that the school delivers to attract investments focuses on JDS providing excellent education to students who are underserved in other school sectors, both public and private. Its primary focus, however, is providing an affordable alternative for students who otherwise would be attending a public school. Catholic schools do not tend to serve Latino students. Nationally, nearly three-quarters (73%) of Catholic school students are White, non-Hispanic, while 13% are Hispanic (Broughman, Swaim, & Keaton, 2009). Yet, as the JDS principal states, parents "are not choosing between us and another Catholic school." As mentioned above, fewer than 1 in 5 students in other area Catholic schools identifies as Latino. Rather, JDS depends upon recruiting families who would often otherwise send their students to the public schools. The fact that parents are not sending their children to other Catholic schools is reinforced by the comparisons that JDS makes when promoting student academic outcomes. The comparison is not made between JDS students and those in other Catholic schools, but rather between JDS and the city at large. This is critical to ameliorating financial barriers because it allows JDS to attract funders who see it legitimately serving the common good. JDS can show that it does not exclude students by income, but instead serves a majority of students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Moreover, it can compare its student learning outcomes (specifically on standardized achievement tests, parental involvement rates, and attendance) directly with area public schools. This provides an attractive pitch to funders who are interested in improving educational opportunities for Latino students who are living in urban areas, of low socioeconomic status, and disproportionately underserved in public schools.

The non-tuition-based financial model is both central to the success of JDS as a Catholic school serving Latinos and also the most vexing barrier to the school's ongoing sustainability. In the year following this research, the school experienced a crisis in fundraising and was threatened with closing. The school still struggles to build full enrollment. While the capacity of JDS is 120, the school has hovered around 100 students for years. Even though the school does not rely significantly on the tuition of these students, fundraising efforts are impeded when the school is underenrolled. While the financial situation has been stabilized, and enrollment is on the rise, this remains a fundamental struggle. Lack of transportation services and strong expectations

for family involvement are cited as two barriers to attracting more students to the school.

Ameliorating Linguistic and Cultural Barriers

In addition to financial barriers, Catholic school communities can present themselves as linguistically and culturally inhospitable to Latino families. Linguistic and cultural barriers, while distinct, are so interrelated in the case of JDS that we present them together. As described earlier, the school was envisioned to create an option for a quality Catholic education for Latino students. Parents and board members described the first principal, who stayed at the school through the first half decade, as an extremely effective community builder. Critical to the success of the TWI model, the school maintains a linguistically balanced population (half native in Spanish, half native in English). However, it is not balanced in terms of ethnicity. JDS focused primarily on serving Latino families—to the point that it made 85% Latino the target for enrollment. Many of the Latino families have lived in the United States for several generations and are native English speakers.

Hiring Latino teachers and support staff, as well as bilingual personnel, were key ways that they built this welcoming community. By eliminating the language divide, the school was able to engage families effectively fluent in Spanish, English, or both. While this established the foundation for attracting families, positive student outcomes were needed to maintain this support. Having established a school welcoming to Latinos by being bilingual and culturally relevant, JDS found itself needing to refocus its emphasis on academics.

Shifting Emphasis to a Culture of Academic Excellence

Evidence that JDS needed to raise academic performance came when its first classes of students began graduating from fifth grade and found themselves struggling academically in middle school. While the school had been implementing a TWI model from the start, it was not achieving one of the core goals: academic excellence. A new principal was hired with the intention of helping the school improve this aspect and build a culture of high academic expectations for the students. At the time of this research, the school was in the midst of this transition. As the principal described it, "In the last few years we've really changed the expectations for parents and students—and we've increased these a lot…In the last 3 years we've gone through a shift."

Thus, the TWI focus became secondary to academic excellence in JDS, as the president stated: "We used to communicate dual language—which is

an exciting aspect of the school but for some people it's off-putting. There's no controversy around academic excellence….We wanted to focus on that's what we're about first." A culture of holding high expectations for all students—which means, in JDS, mostly Latino students, many of whom come to school from Spanish-speaking homes—now trumps TWI as the central value. A parent of students in JDS contrasted this expectation with other schools in which she had worked:

> I [have] seen lot of teachers in their meetings would comment on Hispanic kids or ESL students, you know. It was a real negative atmosphere. So I just thought, these teachers already have their minds set what the outcomes for these kids are going to be, what kind of students, you know.

Significantly, the TWI model was a tool in fostering a culture of high academic expectations. Under the guidance of the new principal, the staff spent a year building a curriculum around dual-language acquisition and began to focus data gathering around benchmarks in this curriculum. The emphasis on using data to guide instructional decisions was supported by extensive professional development through a number of avenues, including regional conferences, subsidized courses at a local Catholic university, and internal efforts to observe one another and discuss practice. The partnership with the local university, partially facilitated by a board member, is particularly noteworthy in that it provided an extremely cost-effective way for the school to cultivate professional growth. In addition, JDS paid particular attention to out-of-school supports for this culture of high academic expectations. An extended learning day provided after-school arts and athletics, creating longer windows for academic focus during the school day.

Another example of this was the significant pressure from the principal compelling parents to be engaged. She described her efforts to cultivate linguistically heterogeneous groupings of parents to support one another:

> I had to make the initial meetings mandatory…because the first few ones, no one would show up…and then people would turn up, and we'd have pretty good turn-out, but it didn't feel like it was building community. There was no chance for dialogue because we'd break it up into both languages…they were separated by language. It never felt right.

Even with the high number of Latino and bilingual teachers, parents remained separated from one another by language. The principal finally succeeded by creating informal coffee groups for parents. These accomplished the goal of

engaging parents in dialogue about supporting their children in their home-work. These gatherings were not optional ("I expect every parent to be in a group," she said), but also were more intimate and inviting. Significantly, they were different from previous parent meetings in that these were bilin-gual. The principal explained the importance of this: "The one factor that seems to change how children develop friendships…is when parents develop cross-cultural friendships. If parents develop cross-cultural friendships, the kids really do."

The evidence gathered during this case study suggested that these efforts to cultivate a culture of strong academic achievement were beginning to show signs of success. Teachers spent time analyzing data on student achievement in reading and math, both in English and Spanish, and across grade levels. A full-time administrator who worked with graduates of the school continued to provide teachers feedback from the middle schools where JDS alumni were attending. While less than 45% of Latino fifth grade students in the state were scoring proficient or advanced in reading and math, over 90% of these stu-dents were doing so at JDS. Moreover, they were also scoring at these levels in Spanish.

In these ways, JDS strives to meet the three core goals of the TWI model: bilingualism, academic excellence, and cross-cultural connections. The bilin-gual service delivery and Catholic identity, along with the evidence of strong academic outcomes, provided the JDS community with an effective man-ner to improve recruitment and retention of Latino students. The non-tuition-based financing model allowed the school to pursue this model. In the third and final section of this paper, we discuss the strengths and limitations of this model for other Catholic school communities.

Future Directions for Catholic Schools Serving Latinos

The TWI model for bilingual service delivery has significant implications for Catholic schools in particular and private sector schools in general. Catholic schools (as well as other private sector schools) complement public schools by providing an array of educational approaches in our increasingly plural-istic society (Youniss & McLellan, 1999). While inherent tendencies push private schools to be exclusionary by selectively recruiting and retaining stu-dents (Alt & Peter, 2002), the analysis presented here suggests that TWI pro-vides Catholic schools with an inclusive-oriented service delivery model that effectively reduces barriers to Latino students who have been traditionally marginalized. The argument we present demonstrating that the TWI model is philosophically consistent and functionally pragmatic for Catholic schools

could apply to other private sector schools as well that embrace a mission to serve linguistically heterogeneous students effectively. Private schools effectively implementing TWI have an advantage over public sector schools in that they can more explicitly arrange for a linguistically balanced enrollment, a dimension that can be quite variable in these schools in the public sector (e.g., Alanis, 2000; Senesac, 2002).

As we have argued, Catholic elementary schools underserve Latino students, especially those who are ELL. This is a problem that is neither new (Hall & Reck, 1987) nor insurmountable. Catholic schools are philosophically and functionally positioned to embrace Latino students. We assert that one path toward this is implementing the TWI model of bilingual service delivery. The case of JDS illustrates how one Catholic school community implemented the TWI model. By reducing financial, linguistic, and cultural barriers, this school was able to create a robust school community with impressive student outcomes. While Latino students were, on the whole, being underserved by neighboring Catholic and public sector schools, they were thriving in this context.

Future directions for Catholic elementary schools may learn from this in several ways, three of which we will briefly discuss. First, individual Catholic elementary schools located in communities with significant numbers of Latino students should explore the possibility of adapting the TWI model. As described above, this model has many educational advantages, including promoting bilingualism, strong academic outcomes for learners, and cross-cultural appreciation amongst students. This model may provide a practical way for Catholic elementary schools both effectively to attract Latino families who are ELL to the school, and may also serve to draw other families into the community who are seeking these educational advantages. This model may be a particularly attractive model in areas where no other additive bilingual educational options are available, since growing numbers of people are demanding language-based education programs. Bilingual models may be especially attractive to Latino families as they, more than other immigrant groups, place a premium on the ability to speak Spanish (Garcia & Jensen, 2007).

Second, diocesan and archdiocesan Catholic school offices should explore ways to incubate TWI models within their school systems. TWI can serve as a fundamental component to a system-wide approach to linguistically diverse populations. This allows systems of schools several advantages. By supporting TWI or modified versions of TWI, such as paired bilingual programs (e.g., within select school communities; Slavin & Cheung, 2005), systems of schools demonstrate their commitment to an asset-based approach

to linguistic diversity. This commitment must be manifest in other dimensions as well, as TWI is neither the most practical nor appropriate for all students who are ELL. In many situations, insufficient numbers of students who are ELL may undermine the viability of the TWI model. In other cases, insufficient numbers of students attracted to the second language may pose a barrier to the successful implementation of this model. However, by approaching the TWI model as one example of its orientation, systems of schools cultivate a culture where linguistic diversity is recognized as an asset. This can help attract bilingual educators and linguistically diverse families to the Catholic school system. It can also lead to forums where non-TWI schools collaborate to learn with and from TWI schools.

This leads to our third and final point: All Catholic schools can more effectively serve Latino students. A TWI model is a practical and appropriate but by no means exclusive mechanism for this pursuit. Many Catholic school communities might determine that the TWI model is not a fit for their circumstances. These Catholic school communities can still adopt key lessons from the TWI model. Such lessons include (a) taking an asset-based approach to linguistic diversity, (b) proactively reducing the financial and cultural barriers that many Latinos face, and (c) building the capacity of teachers to teach students who are ELL more effectively. By adopting these lessons from the TWI model, Catholic school communities improve their service to Latino students. This serves the public interest because it reduces stratification across educational sectors. More fundamentally, this enacts the values of Catholic social teaching.

In sum, we propose that the TWI model can play an integral role in building the capacity of systems of Catholic schools to serve Latino students effectively. Within a diocese, some schools might follow the TWI model while others implement an alternate approach to bilingual service delivery, such as a transitional model. However, grounded in the common overarching values of human dignity, the common good, and a preferential option for the marginalized, these TWI and non-TWI schools can find opportunities to help one another. Professional development opportunities supporting teaching methods for students who are ELL and culturally responsive teaching, outreach efforts for linguistically diverse families, and marketing and development strategies for non-tuition-based funding of Catholic schools are practical areas of common interest they would share.

An important cautionary note regarding these three points is that they all depend on strengthening the pool of qualified bilingual teachers and principals interested in serving Catholic schools. This pool is shallow for schools across sectors (public and private). Many school communities struggle to

meet the growing demand for bilingual personnel. Moreover, the pipeline of such teachers is not robust. This is not a new challenge or concern for Catholic schools serving Latino students (Hall & Reck, 1987). It is a critical area of focus, since the efficacy of TWI programs is tightly connected to the fidelity of implementation, and effective implementation is dependent upon the quality of the educators.

Catholic schools and dioceses can build their human resource capacity through multiple avenues. For instance, partnerships with Catholic universities provide an attractive avenue strategically to building the human resource capacity of Catholic elementary and secondary schools. Such partnerships might focus on professional development for current teachers and administrators to receive bilingual/bicultural certification as well as incentivizing such certification for pre-service teachers and administrators. In the case of JDS, a partnership with a local Catholic university provided teachers access to ongoing professional development courses. This allowed the school to supplement the salary offerings with a tangible benefit, and as a result several JDS teachers were pursuing advanced degrees. Whipp and Scanlan (2009) assert that partnerships with Catholic universities show promise in providing resources (human, material, and professional development). Another route to building this human resource capacity is partnering with religious orders in native Spanish-speaking countries. For instance, a Chicago elementary school serving a predominantly Hispanic population partnered with the Daughters of Immaculate Mary of Guadalupe in Monterrey, Mexico, to attract bilingual educators of Hispanic heritage (Archdiocese of Chicago, 2002).

The pipeline of qualified bilingual educators interested in serving in Catholic schools is limited. Schools and dioceses can expand this by creating incentives for Hispanic Catholics to pursue educational degrees and work in local Catholic schools. Forgivable loan programs are one such incentive. Forgivable loans, common in many dioceses and colleges, offer financial support to recipients in exchange for a commitment to work in a certain agency or system for a given period of time. For instance, in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis a "Total Catholic Education Fund" finances educators in local Catholic schools who are pursuing advanced degrees. Recipients are obliged to continue teaching in Catholic schools for 5 years after completing their degree, with one-fifth of their loans forgiven each year (Evans, 2005). A forgivable loan program could be tailored specifically to support Hispanic Catholic educators, including traditional (i.e., undergraduate) and nontraditional (i.e., second-career) pre-service teachers.

Conclusions

The history of Catholic schools in the United States illustrates a strong tradition of effective learning communities for student bodies diverse in many dimensions: race, ethnicity, linguistic heritage, national origin, and socioeconomic status (Baker, 1999; Jacobs, 1998a, 1998b; Moore, 2003; Walch, 1988, 1996). In the post-Vatican II era schools have struggled to continue this legacy (Baker & Riordan, 1998, 1999; Hamilton, 2008; O'Keefe et al., 2004). As a result, many Catholic schools serving these diverse communities have been forced in one of two directions: either to innovate dramatically in their models of financing and governance or to close.

In the field of Catholic education scholars and practitioners are investing extensive efforts in supporting innovations (Staud, 2008) that will allow Catholic schools to meet the call to be accessible and affordable (USCCB, 2005). These efforts affect multiple dimensions of diversity, such as students with special needs (Blackett, 2001; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006) and students of low socioeconomic status (Owens, 2005; Powell, 2006). We focus in this article on another dimension: Latino students, especially those who are English language learners.

Catholic schools that effectively improve access to bilingual Latino students are the vanguard of this field. The two-way immersion model of bilingual service delivery is an effective means toward this end. This specific model, however, is part of the wider umbrella of viewing diversity as an asset. Catholic schools embracing linguistic diversity clearly are deepening their application of Catholic social teaching. Moreover, given the demographic trends, such schools are wisely investing in a viable strategy to thrive in our increasingly pluralistic society.

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