Bilingual Education for All: A Benefits Model for Small Towns

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Abstract

The Benefits Model set forth in this article aims to satisfy the key requirements of an inclusive approach to bilingual education, while taking into consideration the special conditions and challenges faced by small cities and towns. The suggested curriculum, which combines bilingual education based on local languages with multicultural education based on a global perspective, is designed to prepare students to craft their own niche along the local-global frontier. In terms of implementation, the main advantages of the model are (a) its staffing is self-sustaining; (b) the translation of teaching materials would not be required; (c) the funding required is comparable to a regular mainstream program; (d) it would attract extensive involvement in K–12 education by local community members; and (e) it has the potential to strengthen the vitality of small towns and rural communities by building on a distinctive sense of place.

Introduction

At the onset of the 21st century, the bilingual education offered in many parts of the United States remains a special treatment intended for immigrant children. In March 2000, when Education Secretary Richard Riley called for public school districts to create 1,000 new "dual-language schools" over the next five years, his expressed concerns focused on language education for immigrant children (see McQueen, 2000). Although Secretary Riley briefly mentioned the importance of bilingualism for all citizens in a global economy, he did not explicitly include assisting mainstream students to become bilingual as one of the main goals of promoting bilingual education. Such inclusiveness deserves greater attention as a central objective of bilingual education in this

country. The reason is that dual-language education benefits not only immigrants but all children—regardless of social-economic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. If its benefits are universal, bilingual education should be provided to citizens living in every corner of the country, including small towns. In order to extend bilingual education to places other than the major cities that most current programs serve, we must appreciate and address the conditions that hinder the adoption of bilingual education in small communities. This article proposes a bilingual-education model that is specifically designed to overcome entrenched obstacles to implementation that exist in rural and small-town America.

Alternative Perspectives on U.S. Bilingual Education

In the United States, the influential perspectives on bilingual education range from a focus on a single ethnic group to an emphasis on all students. The narrowest perspective views bilingual education as native-language-based education (Amselle, 1996) designed and conducted for the children from a particular ethnic group. Since a large number of bilingual education programs in the United States involve Hispanic-American students, some people equate bilingual education with Spanish-language instruction for Spanish-speaking children (Butler, 1985; Fernandez, 1999). People who assume this connection tend to believe that bilingual education diminishes a sense of Americanism by hindering children from learning English (see Butler, 1985; Chavez, 1996; Gingrich, 1995; Roth, 1996; Ruiz, 1984; Vazsonyi, 1997).

An equally narrow perspective defines bilingual education as English-language instruction for non-native-English-speaking children (Fenton, 1991). The goal of such bilingual programs is to bring the English-language ability of minority students up to the point where they can function independently in regular classrooms. The focus is on teaching English as a second language. The development of children's heritage language is mostly ignored.

A more encompassing definition of U.S. bilingual education involves learning two languages—that is, acquisition of English and language development in the heritage language (Ovando, 1993). Scholars and researchers who hold this perspective typically focus their arguments supporting bilingual education for non-native-English-speakers on one or both of two dimensions: practical and emotional.

Owing to historical association with education for non-native-English-speaking children, bilingual education in the United States is perceived by many as a costly privilege or as a remedy for minorities only. This mindset precludes many U.S. parents and educators from realizing the far-reaching benefits of bilingual education for all children, including native speakers of English.

In this article, the author adopts and applies the most inclusive approach to bilingual education in the United States. That is, bilingual education—defined as teaching of, and in two languages—is presented as a valuable part of the formal education offered to all students. The rationale behind this inclusive perspective is multi-fold. As noted in the Clinton administration's proposed *Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999*, multilingualism is becoming increasingly important because of the growing diversity within the United States and the expanding international connections (Riley, 1999). For society, inclusive bilingual education strengthens the country externally and locally. For individuals, bilingual education enhances intellectual growth and interpersonal-and intercultural-communication competence.

In spite of its societal and personal benefits, bilingual education is not accessible to most children in the United States. In particular, bilingual education has not been introduced in much of rural and small-town America. The reason is partly because many parents, educators, and policy makers hold a narrow perspective on bilingual education and are not aware of its potential far-reaching benefits for native-English-speaking students. In addition, the introduction of bilingual education has been constrained by the lack of a suitable model that accommodates the special conditions that exist in small towns and cities.

This presentation aims to advance two crucial but often overlooked objectives for bilingual education: (a) inclusiveness and (b) feasibility in small towns and cities. The first part of the article demonstrates that bilingual education offers important benefits for all students and society as a whole and not only for minority students. Then, selected bilingual-education models that are popular in the United States are critically evaluated based on the extent to which they advance the inclusiveness objective and are feasible in small towns. The final section proposes and elaborates an alternative termed the Benefits Model, which aims to assist educators and policy makers in visualizing an inclusive bilingual-education program specifically designed for small towns and cities. The ideas developed in this section are intended to provide responsible educators and policy makers with a useful framework for implementing bilingual education as basic education for all children in this country.

The Value of Inclusiveness

Inclusive bilingual education programs are valuable for two basic reasons. First, they benefit both ethnic minority and mainstream students at multiple levels. Second, it is only when all citizens have access to bilingual education that the benefits of such education are optimized. Society as a whole is the

ultimate beneficiary of inclusive bilingual education because it enables the full complement of its members to perform effectively in contemporary social and professional domains.

All Children Benefit

Bilingual education benefits all children, both native-English-speaking and non-native-English speaking, in numerous ways. Apart from gaining the ability to use an additional language, acquiring a second language enriches intellectual growth and promotes development of language-cognitive skills (Baker, 1996; Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994; Cataldi, 1994; Chomsky, 1966; Cummins, 1993; Díaz, 1985; Esquivel, 1992; Fernandez, 1999; Hakuta, 1986; Hakuta, Ferdman, & Díaz, 1986; Hamers & Blanc, 1989; Krashen & Biber, 1988; Lee, 1997; Nieto, 1996; Romaine, 1995; & Vygotsky, 1962), especially when the sociocultural context is such that both L1 and L2 are "sufficiently valued" and "proper motivation and exposure to both languages" are provided (Hamers & Blanc, 1989, pp. 11 & 55). Learning an additional language also enhances interpersonal and intercultural communication competence (Baker, 1996; Cenoz & Genesee, 1998; Dicker, 1996; Esquivel, 1992; Genesee & Cloud, 1998), both of which are essential for a successful and meaningful life in today's diverse U.S. communities and increasingly interconnected world (Padilla, 1990).

The most widely cited practical reason for bilingual education is that the maintenance of a child's first language facilitates his or her acquisition of a second language (see Cummins, 1993; Krashen, 1991). The more convincing and important, yet often overlooked, benefits of maintaining one's heritage language involve the emotional aspects, including pride in one's ethnic group, enhanced self-esteem among bilingual/bicultural individuals (Fernandez, 1990; Ovando & Collier, 1998), and the facilitation of meaningful intergenerational communication within the learner's non-English-speaking family and community (Baker, 1996; Cummins, 1993; Dicker, 1996; Fernandez, 1999; Krashen & Biber, 1988; Reyhner, 1992).

English-speaking students should find a bilingual/bicultural setting particularly enriching both academically and personally (Ovando & Collier, 1998). Unlike their minority peers, most mainstream U.S. students grow up in a homogeneous monolingual family and in a community where their mother tongue and culture are the norms. The interpersonal and intercultural competence required by the multiethnic environment they increasingly cannot avoid would be greatly enhanced by acquiring the language of their neighbors and future colleagues and, at the same time, from learning how non-native speakers from other cultural backgrounds communicate in English (Clyne, 1994). Although the latter goal often is ignored, it is as important as the former in terms of developing intercultural-communication skills and cross-cultural sensitivity. Moreover, bilingual/multilingual capacity and

attained intercultural-communication skills and cultural competency expand the career choices available to individuals and facilitate the complex social identification required for today's increasingly diverse living and working environment (see also Nieto, 1996). In short, bilingual education should be concerned with both the language skills and the multicultural competency (Koehn & Rosenau, 2002) that can be enhanced by second-language proficiency.

Society as a Whole Benefits

When bilingual education prepares people to participate effectively in both social and professional domains, the ultimate beneficiary is the society as a whole. From a macro perspective, inclusive bilingual education "expands a nation's overall language competence by conserving and enhancing the language resources that minority students bring to school and by promoting the learning of other languages by English speakers" (Christian, 1994, overview; Guadarrama, 1996). Such national language competence contributes to the country's productivity, world-wide competitiveness, successful international diplomacy, and national security (Baker, 1996; Nieto, 1996). However, bilingualism not only strengthens the country externally; internally, a bilingual education program based on local cultures and languages would facilitate productive community development. A local language can revitalize a distinctive sense of place or neighborhood that "is often vital to ongoing community mobilization and to activism that extends beyond an immediate crisis" (Sernau, 2000, p. 189).

Furthermore, bilingualism helps to improve social relations in multiethnic communities, and, hence, contributes to national stability and prosperity. Language serves an important symbolic function in intergroup dynamics within a society (see also Hakuta, Ferdman, & Díaz, 1986; Hamers & Blanc, 1989). The language(s) one speaks authorizes membership in a community or multiple communities and can elicit rejection from people who speak a different language (Hamers & Blanc, 1989; Hecht 1984). Sharing a distinct local language is likely to lead to common language identity (Hamers & Blanc, 1989) among community members, regardless of ethnic background. Furthermore, by facilitating cross-cultural understanding, a bilingual-education program that supports learning each other's language can enhance social relations and intergroup empathy in a local community (Hamers & Blanc, 1989; Luchtenberg, 1998). Enabling community members of different ethnic backgrounds to teach each other's children about their culture, communication style, values, and traditions facilitates the transcultural therapeutic process (Hurdle, 1991) in a society historically segregated along racial lines.

Why Not Accessible to All?

The benefits of inclusive bilingual education extend far beyond developing English proficiency in non-native-English-speaking children or providing mainstream students with a taste of foreign languages. Considerable evidence exists that, apart from gaining the ability to use an additional language, all students involved in an inclusive bilingual-education program—both English speakers and non-English speakers—as well as society at large benefit in multiple ways. Why, then, is bilingual education in the United States not accessible to all?

Limitations of Popular Bilingual Education Models

In the United States, bilingual-education programs are found mainly in major cities where the non-English-speaking population is concentrated. Based on the extent to which a non-English language is used for instruction, Carlos J. Ovando and Virginia P. Collier (1998) identify five models that are currently used around the nation. These are (a) bilingual-immersion education (including the 90-10 model and the 50-50 model), (b) two-way bilingual education, (c) developmental bilingual education, (d) transitional bilingual education, and (e) English as a second language (ESL).

Not all of these five models are genuine bilingual-education programs that assist students in developing proficiency in two languages. Transitional bilingual education and ESL focus on advancing English language ability. Only developmental, immersion, and two-way bilingual-education programs aim at developing dual-language competency. The differences among these three are subtle. Developmental bilingual programs are designed for language-minority children who have adequate first language (L1) capacity. Maintenance of learners' L1, many educators and researchers believe, facilitates their acquisition of a second language—English in this case (see Cummins, 1993; Krashen, 1991). On the other hand, one type of immersion program is designed for language-minority children who speak little or none of their heritage language. This bilingual program provides the opportunity for immersion in the lost mother tongue at an early age. Another type of immersion program is the two-way bilingual-education program, where native-English-speaking children are taught (or immersed) in the native language of their non-English-speaking classmates. For these non-English speakers, the two-way program is developmental in nature because it helps maintain students' L1. In other words, the goals of developmental and immersion bilingual education can be fulfilled by the same program.

For instance, the Rock Point Community School on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona offers such a program. Although nearly all of the children enrolled in the program are Navajo, only some speak the heritage language. For those who speak Navajo, this bilingual program is developmental in nature; for the others, it would be an immersion experience; and for the community, it serves to maintain the dying heritage language. Under this bilingual-education program, according to Reyhner (1992),

> In kindergarten about two-thirds of the instruction is in Navajo. The rest of the class time is spent teaching oral English through math and social studies lessons. By second grade students receive half of their instruction in English and half in Navajo. English reading instruction begins in second grade. In the upper grades one-sixth to one-fourth of the instruction is in Navajo and the rest is in English. (Reyhner, 1992, p. 68)

Stephen Krashen and Douglas Biber (1988) advocate a developmental bilingual-education program that a number of schools in California adopted or adapted to in the past. Under this program, enrolled minority students learn all core subjects (except art, music, and PE) in their first language at the beginning level, while developing English-language proficiency in ESL classes. At more advanced levels, students study some core subjects in English with the assistance of ESL teachers in "sheltered" classes. Eventually, minority students are expected to join mainstream classes—first, math and science and, later, social studies and language arts. This model allows for continuous L1 development as an extra-curricula activity for enrichment purposes.

One shortcoming of the two developmental/immersion models of bilingual education—the Navajo model and the Krashen/Biber model—is lack of continuity. If most content subjects are taught in English in upper grades, as in the Navajo model (see Reyhner, 1992) and the one designed by Krashen and Biber (1988), minority-language skills are not likely to develop and eventually will be forgotten. Moreover, most of these bilingual education models are not inclusive in nature. They are designed specifically for non-native-English-speaking children whose primary need is considered to be English-language development for academic purposes. A major barrier to converting a developmental/immersion bilingual program intended for one particular group of non-native-English speakers into a two-way program is that native-English speakers are likely to find the initial total immersion situation too intimidating, unnecessary, or unproductive in terms of helping students develop academic literacy skills.

Moreover, these versions of developmental and immersion models are unlikely to be applicable in most smaller towns around the United States because they require conditions that typically only can be found in large urban areas. First, the non-inclusive program must be supported by a sizable

ethnic group whose members value their heritage language and are able to raise sufficient funding to offer an on-going program. Second, the language of instruction must have the appropriate written form for recording information concerning a wide range of subjects so that it can be used for teaching content areas of the mainstream curriculum. Third, financial and human resources must be available for the production of extra teaching materials not required for regular mainstream schools. In the United States, these conditions are not likely to exist in most small cities and towns. Given the absence of an appropriate and viable model, therefore, it is not surprising that inclusive bilingual education has not been introduced in much of rural and small-town America.

Relevant Conditions in Small Cities and Towns in the United States

Educators in many small towns and cities, where the total population size ranges from less than 1,000 to 100,000 people, typically confront the following conditions:

1. A small non-native English-speaking community (e.g., Indian reservations in Montana or a group of resettled refugees) reside side-by-side or within the dominant English-speaking community. Lack of understanding and distorted information concerning the non-mainstream people and their culture lead to widespread stereotypes and prejudice. Subtle interethnic tensions exist in most venues of interaction, such as school, play, work, etc.
2. The minority community struggles to maintain its culture and linguistic heritage, which serves as an important source of pride and a key component of the cultural identity shared by community members.
3. The minority language is not widely used in other parts of the United States, in contrast, for instance, to Spanish. Often, it is not even used by the younger generation of the minority group. The heritage language is dying.
4. The minority group is too small to support its own school, not to mention operating a developmental bilingual-education program such as the one offered by Rock Point Community School on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona or the Spanish/English programs found across California.
5. Minority children receive their schooling in the nearby mainstream public school. Thus, bilingual education will be offered only if native-English-speaking parents, educators, and policy makers support it.

6. Qualified bilingual teachers who can teach content subjects in the heritage language are in short supply. Elders who have spoken the language as children and fully participated in the ways of the heritage community are the main resource people for the minority language.
7. Few teaching materials in the minority language are available. Funding for translating English-teaching materials into the minority language is lacking.
8. The minority language is principally an oral language. Thus, it is not likely to be appropriate for transmitting certain mainstream content-subject knowledge.
9. Employment opportunities are diminishing in farming, mining, and manufacturing, and increasing in professional specialties and technical and service sectors (Ghelfi, 1991–1992).
10. Scarce employment (Miller, 1991) and lack of educational continuity (Bohrer, 1996) prompt graduates from small-town schools to move away from their communities to metropolitan areas (Walters, 1996; Miller, 1991).
11. Education and community well-being are tightly linked (Miller, 1991). The school often functions as a community center (Miller, 1991), and healthy community development can be achieved through appropriate curriculum development (Bohrer, 1996).
12. Lack of financial resources forms the major obstacle in education as well as community development (Bohrer, 1996; Collins, 1999). Resource scarcity makes it difficulty to attract and retain teachers (Bohrer, 1996).
13. Improving economic competitiveness and diversification (e.g., by promoting tourism, small businesses, and regional development coalitions) constitutes a major strategy for small-city and small-town development (Zuber & Heasley, 1994).
14. Localization often clashes with globalization. Small towns engage in a struggle between maintaining community values and processes and responding/adapting to the intrusions of global society (Allen & Dillman, 1994). In response, small towns are becoming increasingly complex and multi-dimensional (Zuber & Heasley, 1994).
15. The nature of connections between small rural towns and large cities within and beyond the United States is changing. In the past, rural communities were fairly independent. Transportation advances and the arrival of the information era have opened up additional linkages between residents and businesses in rural communities and those in other communities and countries of all sizes. The linkages facilitated by the revolution in information technology play an increasingly crucial role in the success of small-town businesses, including agriculture (Allen & Dillman, 1994).

A Proposed Bilingual Education Model for Small Towns

The Benefits Model proposed here is designed to accommodate the conditions enumerated above that are commonly encountered in small cities and towns in the United States. The title "Benefits Model" is meant to capture the multiple benefits—including linguistic, intellectual, and cultural enrichment—that result for all participants from the proposed inclusive bilingual-education approach.

The principal linked goals of the suggested bilingual-education program are to develop high-level English literacy and to achieve functional fluency in the minority language (see also Littlebear, 1990; Valdés, 1995*).* In this approach, ethnic language instruction is intended to supplement rather than to substitute for English language instruction. A non-mainstream language will survive only in "a diglossic relation" with the mainstream language (Hamers & Blanc, 1989, p. 212). Thus, the proposed program emphasizes helping students develop advanced English literacy, which remains a useful tool for academic and professional success in this country and beyond. At the same time, students would be provided with the opportunity to develop conversational fluency, advanced comprehension ability, and (with the exception of exclusively oral languages) some reading and writing skills in another locally spoken language. The Benefits Model incorporates the Native-American perspective articulated by Dick Littlebear, with "native languages nurturing our spirits and hearts and the English language as sustenance for our bodies" (1990, p. 8). In other words, the ultimate goal of the Benefits Model is to promote English learning for academic and professional purposes and learning the local language for social interactions within the community (see Johnson, 1996). The co-privileged status of the two languages must be reflected in the learning environment throughout the school, and expressed in posters, classroom decorations, school publications, library resources, and the attitudes of teachers and school administrators (Amrein & Peña, 2000; see also Valdés, 1997).

The long-term benefits of inclusive bilingual education extend far deeper than the multiple language abilities that participants gain. Learning about another's culture and values through language acquisition indirectly helps develop sensitivity and openness to other ways of thinking and being (see also Esquivel, 1992; Lee, 1997). Thus, one expected outcome of introducing bilingual education in small towns is deeper understanding and, hence, smoother cooperation among neighboring ethnic communities and nationalities. Through teaching a second language and using a second language to teach about multiple cultures (e.g., world and local art and music), the ultimate goal of the suggested model is to help all students—including ethnic-minority children as well as those from the mainstream

community—develop the cross-cultural awareness, intercultural-communication skills, and multicultural competency required for effective participation in multiethnic communities, increasingly diverse mainstream society, and the globalizing world.

Curriculum

Table 1 suggests a sample curriculum for small-town schools based on primary language(s) of instruction that would be consistent with the goals of the Benefits Model.

Table 1

Sample Curriculum: The Benefits Model

Level	Subject	Language	Participants
K through 12	Science	English	Members of both the minority and the mainstream communities
	Math	English	
	Social Studies	English	
	U.S. and World History	English	
	Ethnic History and Culture	Minority Language	
	Langauge Arts	English and Minority Language	
	World and Local Music	Mainly Minority Language	
	World and Local Art	Mainly Minority Language	
	PE	Minority Language	
	*Nature Studies	English and Minority Language	

Note. *Nature Studies is one example of a specialty subject.

Under the Benefits Model, students would learn most core subjects (i.e., science, math, social studies, and U.S. and world history) in English. Language arts classes would involve both improving English communication skills and development of the selected additional local language. The history and traditions of the ethnic-minority group would constitute a unique

component of the curriculum, which allows for in-depth learning in and of the additional language and culture. Students would study world and local music, world and local art, and physical education mainly in the additional language. The basic L1/L2 curriculum breakdown would continue from kindergarten through the 12th grade. Elective courses available for upper division students might include foreign languages, business classes, technology classes, and AP classes. Advanced L2 should be one of the elective options for students who are interested in developing their L2 ability beyond functional competency. The advantages of the proposed approach in small-town contexts are manifold. The next sections elaborate on the benefits that are likely to be realized.

Allows for gradual development

The suggested approach, which aims to benefit all students in multiple ways, provides for an early start on second-language learning and a lasting bilingual education. In order to achieve proficiency in a second language, students must commit to learning and practicing or using that language through a long-term bilingual education program (see also Hamers & Blanc, 1989). The short-term foreign language classes included in the regular high-school curriculum have not enabled most U.S. students to attain proficiency in an additional language. Since language acquisition is a long-term process and, as some linguists believe, children must acquire a language by an early age in order to achieve native-like proficiency (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1996), a K–12 program would provide maximum opportunities for gradual language-proficiency development and maintenance.

Apart from bringing about proficiency in the target language, moreover, long-term bilingual programs are the most likely to produce benefits that extend beyond the ability to use an additional language. For example, the intellectual growth (Romaine, 1995) and interpersonal and intercultural communication skills enhanced by second-language acquisition also need time to develop.

Produces high-level English literacy, L2 proficiency, and more

Under the Benefits Model program, as in regular mainstream schools, students still would be able to develop the high-level English literacy needed for academic success. They would study core subjects in English so that they can perform competitively in state, national, and international assessments. The language arts class included in the proposed curriculum involves both improving English-communication skills and developing L2 proficiency. Contrary to the belief that learning a second language may hinder progress in L1, linguistics research studies provide evidence showing that L2 acquisition enhances L1 development (Hamers & Blanc, 1989; Kecskes, 1998). The comparison of different communication styles provides an interesting way to link lessons concerning the two languages. Such a comparative perspective

also would raise students' awareness of communication differences across cultures and, hence, sharpen their intercultural communication skills. The communication skills that result from multiple-language acquisition are vital in this information era when business, professional, and social networks extend beyond cultural and national boundaries.

Benefits ethnic-minority students

Although the heritage language used as one of the two vehicles in the Benefits Model may or may not be of functional utility beyond the local community, the beneficial side effects of learning that language are far-reaching for mainstream and ethnic-minority citizens and residents. For ethnic-minority students, learning their heritage language in language arts class, studying the heritage culture in their native language in the ethnic history and culture classes, using the language with classmates in music, art, and physical education classes, and socializing in the language with neighbors and community friends would help revive and revitalize their language and culture. Continuous development of their mother tongue, supported by a long-term (K–12) bilingual education program, would facilitate meaningful communication with their non-English-speaking family members and allow them to tap the intergenerational wisdom of their community (see also Baker, 1996; Cummins, 1993; Dicker, 1996; Fernandez, 1999; Reyhner, 1992). Keeping the heritage culture and language alive is likely to bring about heightened community and individual esteem and healthy social and emotional development among ethnic-minority children.

The suggested inclusive bilingual program, while emphasizing the importance of high academic performance in core-subject classes taught in English, validates the valuable roles played by heritage language and culture. In an academic environment where both English and L2 share privileged status, students can embrace both languages without feeling ashamed. It is unnecessary for ethnic-minority children to choose between focusing on learning English in order to survive in the mainstream U.S. society or committing to maintaining their heritage culture and language at the risk of alienation from the world outside one's ethnic community. Instead, ethnic-minority students would be encouraged to integrate cultural roles learned in their family and community with their needs and fulfilled potential in the mainstream society and to develop the bicultural competency that would allow them to enjoy the best of both heritage and mainstream cultures. The ensuing multiplicity of identities and orientations allows for a high degree of social mobility and for an expanded comfort zone (Hecht, 1984). Graduates will find both outcomes useful in an era in which everyone's social and cultural boundaries are blurred by the advances of information technology (see also Allen & Dillamn, 1994).

Benefits mainstream students

For students from the mainstream community, the Benefits Model facilitates development of functional fluency in a second language through learning in language arts classes and by studying ethnic history and culture in the minority language. A language arts class would function like a foreign language class. Nevertheless, unlike a short-term foreign language class, in which students obtain a shallow grasp of a new language, the proposed long-term bilingual program provides students with opportunities to use the language in the process of studying several subjects with classmates who are native speakers of that language. Music, art, and physical education classes provide appropriate curriculum contexts for developing less formal, easily attained conversational fluency in L2. Mainstream students will be empowered by gaining an in-depth understanding of the past and present of the land where they are rooted through ethnic history and culture class taught in L2. Furthermore, the ability to speak a unique local language, in addition to the language of the larger society, provides one with a distinct sense of place (Sernau, 2000). At the personal level, this sense of neighborhood fulfills one's need to belong.

Benefits local community and society as a whole

From a macro-perspective, the local community and society as a whole benefit from the inclusive bilingual education approach. If members of neighboring communities try to gain an accurate understanding of each other by studying each other's language, history, and culture, their empathy for one another is likely to increase and the stereotypes that often hinder local and regional coalition development are likely to decrease. Moreover, participants of the proposed bilingual-education program are expected to develop a distinct language identity (Hamers & Blanc, 1989). Such a shared language identity is likely to overshadow some of the perceived cross-ethnic incompatibility and, hence, improve future interethnic relations.

Bilingual graduates of the proposed dual-language education program will constitute a pool of effective human resources for the diversifying local economy. As employment decreases in farming, mining, and manufacturing and increases in professional specialties and technical and service sectors, graduates who possess skills for effective interaction with people of different backgrounds will find themselves in increasing demand. Thus, the dual-language-arts classes included in the suggested curriculum and the proposed bilingual/bicultural classroom would serve to cultivate language and communication skills that are vital for the sustainable development of small local communities in the information age.

Facilitates small-town development

The inclusive approach to bilingual education assists not only in unifying local people, but also in strengthening communities. The Benefits Model is designed partly to facilitate local community development. In spite of the intrusions of mass society within and beyond national boundaries, local life remains the primary "habitat of meaning" for most people and "a vehicle of culture production and distribution" (Hannerz, 1996, p. 28). The suggested education program operates to preserve and create diverse local human and cultural resources and a distinctive sense of place (Sernau, 2000) through: (a) maintaining both the mainstream and a special heritage culture and language and (b) producing bilingual/multicultural individuals who "have acutely experienced a contrast between two ongoing cultural traditions and who have thereby been provoked into new understandings—bridging the cultures, synthesizing them, or scrutinizing them" (Hannerz, 1996, p. 62). In a small town, the newly created mixtures of insights, knowledge bases, language and communication skills, and sustained cultural diversity that would result from the Benefits Model would function as a reservoir for solutions to problems, and for improvements, especially in the areas of economic competitiveness and diversification that have been emphasized as strategies for small-town development in the United States (Zuber & Heasley, 1994).

Combines bilingual education with multicultural education

Today, localization co-exists and increasingly intertwines with globalization (Hannerz, 1996; Rosenau, 1997). For instance, many of the most dynamic small-town business enterprises (such as tourism, the exportation of agricultural products and other natural resources, and the importation of technology and merchandise) require interaction with international firms based in the United States or overseas (Allen & Dillman, 1994). Multicultural competency, which includes bilingual/multilingual abilities, cross-cultural knowledge, and intercultural-communication skills, is increasingly necessary even for local employment in small towns. Moreover, shortages of jobs and higher-education opportunities prompt many secondary-school graduates from small-town schools to move to metropolitan areas (Walters, 1996; Miller, 1991) where multicultural competency is a basic requirement for advancement. The Benefits Model is designed to help students attain the multicultural competency that is needed locally and beyond. The emphasis on international content in the proposed curriculum (e.g., world history, world art, world music, and world cultures covered in social studies) serves to enrich students' transnational knowledge and understanding. Second-language acquisition enhances students' intercultural communication skills. In other words, the Benefits Model combines bilingual education based on local languages with multicultural education founded on a global perspective. This approach enables future generations of students to carve out their own local/global niche within and beyond their hometown.

Attracts members of the mainstream community

Furthermore, the suggested curriculum includes a specialty subject of popular interest. The subject selected depends on the expertise and resources available in a particular local area. The addition of this special subject should enhance the attractiveness of the bilingual curriculum among students from the mainstream community. For example, in the Northwest, an inclusive bilingual education program that offers an emphasis in nature studies (see also Kurtz, 1999) would capitalize on the natural splendor of the area and utilize native-science learning strengths (see also Merritt, 1994; Zwick & Miller, 1996). The opportunity to focus on nature studies from an indigenous cultural perspective would appeal to some local mainstream parents who might not otherwise choose to enroll their children in a bilingual education program. Other potentially attractive specialty subjects include environmental studies, vocational training, college-preparation classes, and practical training in technology for agriculture and businesses. A "marketing strategy" is necessary because financial and programmatic support from the public and policy makers often are based on the level of participation of mainstream students (Ovando & Collier, 1998). Thus, the more students the bilingual program serves, the more support the public, school board, and government agencies would provide.

Implementation of the Benefits Model

The main constraints that have hampered implementation of a bilingual education program in small cities and towns are the (a) inflexibility of the current school organization, (b) absence of support from the public and policy makers, (c) shortage of bilingual teachers, (d) lack of bilingual teaching materials, and (e) insufficient funding. The next sections show how the Benefits Model can overcome these constraints.

School organization

The Benefits Model can be implemented as a public school program or as an alternative school within a public school. Public schools are the dominating economic and political institutions in many small communities. Thus, public school bilingual education program personnel are well positioned to act politically on behalf of the selected second language by enlisting the support of community stakeholders and by assisting them in program implementation (McCarty, 1998). Moreover, a public-school program involves most children from the local community. A community-wide educational program is most likely to produce a bilingual/bicultural community in which the second language can be maintained (see also Hale 2000; Hamers & Blanc, 1989; Valdés, 1995).

Nevertheless, the bilingual curriculum might elicit resistance from parents who fail to appreciate the value of learning the heritage language of their community. Non-native-English-speaking students from a linguistic

background other than L2 also might find it disadvantageous to learn in two "foreign" languages. In addition, inflexible school district regulations and union work rules might hinder implementation of the innovative bilingual education program. In such situations, the Benefits Model can be implemented through a charter school. The charter school alternative allows parents to choose whether to enroll their children in the bilingual education program. Moreover, the recruitment of program staff can accommodate the availability of local human resources and the curriculum can be tailored to specific community needs (see Finn & Manno, 1998; Stern & Manno, 1998; Symmes, 1999). For instance, in some states, charter schools can hire qualified, but uncertified, teachers (Stern & Manno, 1998). Tribal elders or other L2-speaking community members, who can play a vital role in the Benefits Model, often fall into the uncertified category of teachers.

Furthermore, the proposed curriculum might require a type of class scheduling that differs from that of mainstream schools. Under the Benefits Model, educators, parents, and community representatives assign each subject a unique scheduling weight based on its role in the local curriculum. The more central the role of a subject is, the greater the weight it is assigned. Criteria for assessing the centrality of each subject would include (a) the priorities of the particular small town or city and (b) the primary goals of the Benefits Model approach (i.e., to achieve high academic standards through development of advanced English literacy and to attain functional competency in L2). When the core subjects taught in English are assigned the greatest weight, they will be allocated the most time in students' class schedules. The ethnic history and culture class and the specialty class might each involve one or two hours of class time per week. The language arts class would be divided into the English portion (perhaps 60–70%) and the L2 portion (perhaps 30–40%). Scheduling would involve innovation, collaboration, and consensus-building among teachers and participating members of the local community. This is another reason for housing the suggested program in a charter school, where decision making basically lies in the hands of educators, parents, and community representatives (Symmes, 1999).

Staffing

One of the strengths of the Benefits Model is the way in which it deals with the persistent shortage of bilingual teachers. The suggested model requires both native-English teachers and native-L2 teachers; bilingual ability is not a necessary qualification. English-speaking teachers would be responsible for teaching core-content areas. Native speakers of L2 would share their history, tradition, beliefs, music, and art through their heritage language and presentation in their own cultural ways. For example, many Native American tribes rely on the oral tradition of storytelling as an important educational method for conveying traditional values, beliefs, and expectations

(see also Garrett, 1996). Elders who have spoken the heritage language as children and fully participated in the ways of the ethnic group could serve effectively in these teaching capacities (see also Shotley, 2000). Under the Benefits Model, therefore, a teaching certification obtained from a mainstream educational institution, which often presents a barrier that prevents non-native-English-speaking people from joining the teaching profession, need not be required for teachers of ethnic history and culture, or the L2 portion of language arts, local art, and local music. Alternatively, one can provide specialized certification, such as the "Class 7" certification implemented in Montana (see Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2001), for these teachers. The certification requirements used to ensure teaching effectiveness and respectable qualifications should include training in teaching techniques for the multi-ethnic classroom and be responsive to specific recommendation by leaders of the ethnic community.

However, university training and state certification typically still would be needed for teaching physical education, world music, and world art. Under the proposed Benefits Model, these subjects would be taught in L2. One solution is to recruit qualified native L2 speakers to teach these subjects. If teachers possessing the required qualification are not immediately available, the school or school district would need to allocate part of its staff-development funding or secure external funds to support the further education of selected members from the ethnic community who are willing to obtain the necessary training for teaching these subjects.[1] A short-term alternative is to provide qualified English-speaking teachers of art, music, and physical education with intensive L2-language lessons from which they can acquire basic L2 proficiency. These short courses could be conducted by elders or other native speakers from the ethnic community. Before reaching full proficiency in L2, English-speaking teachers would have to code-switch between English and L2 in the classroom. This situation presents a short-term limitation of the proposed model.

In the long run, however, staffing would become a diminishing problem because graduates of the proposed bilingual education program would possess functional L1 and L2 competency. After completing university education, they would be recruited to return to their hometown to teach music, art, and PE. Teachers of ethnic history and culture and the L2 part of language arts still would benefit from further training at the local level. Special courses conducted by elders or other ethnic-community members who are knowledgeable regarding the heritage language and culture should be provided for them. In terms of staffing, therefore, the Benefits Model has the potential to become a self-sustaining bilingual education program.

Choice of a second language

In some small towns, the heritage language (e.g., a tribal language) has become extinct or native speakers of the heritage language (e.g., German or Norwegian) no longer can be found in the area. In other cases, a new second language (e.g., Hmong or Spanish) might offer a popular choice. When no indigenous language exists, educators, parents, and community leaders need to select one workable L2 on the basis of the preference of the community and the availability of teachers for the selected language. In the short run, L2 educators might have to be hired from outside of the community. Eventually, as discussed above, graduates of the bilingual program will be able to sustain the Benefits Model.

In some communities, more than one heritage languages exists. One possible criterion for choosing among multiple heritage languages is the number of local speakers. The more speakers of a second language there are living in the area, the more human and cultural resources are likely to be available for supporting the bilingual education program.

Students' language-assistance needs

English is the first language of most children, including most children of Native American parents, in small town and rural America (see also Littlebear, 2000). A small number of non-native-English-speaking students may need help in learning the core subjects that are taught in English. For these children, ESL tutorials conducted by English-speaking teachers and peers may be necessary. In addition, immersion in an English-speaking learning environment at an early age, such as from kindergarten on, should enhance the English language development of the non-native-English speakers through peer interactions and exposure.

Furthermore, cooperative learning allows native-English-speaking children to help the non-native-English speakers in classes conducted in English, while L2 speakers can, in turn, help their English-speaking peers in classes conducted in L2. This educational strategy offers one solution for accommodating students enrolled in the Benefits Model program who possess varying levels of English or L2 competency.

In terms of classroom approaches, further research is needed to answer questions such as the following (see also Valdés, 1995):

1. What levels of L2 development correlate with students' desire to use L2 for social functions?
2. Which classroom activities contribute to students' positive attitudes about their bilingual education?
3. What classroom strategies facilitate cooperative learning among students of various bilingual ranges?[2]
4. What kinds of interaction with L2 speakers within the school context promote an increased interest in learning and using L2 outside of school?

Teaching materials

Translating teaching materials from English into the minority language, which is required for other development/immersion bilingual education programs, is not necessary under the Benefits Model. Under the proposed program, students study all core subjects that are required in the regular mainstream curriculum in English. Their development in English language should be comparable to that of students in mainstream schools. They learn and use L2 primarily to deal with subjects concerning the local heritage. Although world music, world art, and physical education classes are conducted in L2, these subjects generally require less written material and those could be in English. Under the suggested approach, students are provided with adequate opportunities to develop functional competency in L2, which does not require advanced reading and writing skills.[3] Thus, the costly and time-consuming process of translation can be avoided completely under the proposed model.

When choosing and preparing teaching materials, coordination between native-English-speaking teachers and non-native-English-speaking teachers is important for several reasons. First, teachers from both backgrounds can help one another to detect and exclude materials that would perpetuate biases and stereotypes (see also Hahn, Hinch, & Branz-Spall, 1996). Second, they can inform one another of their cultural perspective on issues concerning learning and teaching (e.g., learning/teaching strategies, ways of thinking and reasoning, and criteria for selecting role models) so that materials selected and designed for the bicultural classroom would be appropriate and effective for both ethnic minority and mainstream students. In addition, some classes (e.g., language arts, local and world music, or local and world art) can be co-taught by an English speaker and an L2 speaker. In that case, both teachers need to collaborate in identifying thematic connections among topics for each class and to design teaching materials accordingly in order to ensure the holistic nature of the curriculum.

Funding

Lack of funding for education constitutes the most serious problem in small towns and cities. One advantage of the proposed approach is that it does not involve substantially greater funding than a regular mainstream school. Unlike other popular "bilingual" education programs, the Benefits Model does not require extra sheltered classes, extra textbooks, or extra teaching materials in L2. Moreover, if the Benefits Model is implemented as a charter school, the Public Charter Schools Program described in the *Education Excellence for All Children Act of 1999* would offer a potential source of supplemental funding.

Conclusion

Bilingual education can enhance multicultural education and benefit all children, regardless of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, in multiple ways. An inclusive bilingual education program aimed at improving quality of life for all members of society at the personal, professional, and social levels must involve the long-term participation of both mainstream- and heritage-language groups within the same classroom in order to create a bicultural/bilingual cooperative learning environment. The curriculum should include core subjects taught in L1 and subjects concerning the non-mainstream heritage taught in L2. Teachers should guide students to grow beyond the ability to use two languages in the classroom—in terms of metalinguistic awareness, thinking strategies, intellectual development, ethics, (multicultural) identity formation, cross-cultural awareness, intercultural communication skills, and multicultural competency applied in the local community and beyond.

The Benefits Model set forth in this article is designed to embody the key requirements of an inclusive approach to bilingual education, while taking into consideration the special conditions and challenges faced by small cities and towns. The suggested curriculum, which combines bilingual education based on local languages with multicultural education based on a global perspective, aims to prepare students to craft their own niche along the local-global frontier. In terms of implementation, the main advantages of the model are:

1. It would become self-sustaining in terms of staffing;
2. The translation of teaching materials would not be required;
3. The funding required is comparable to a regular mainstream school;
4. It is likely to attract extensive involvement by culturally diverse community members in K–12 education; and
5. It has the potential to strengthen the vitality of small towns and rural communities by building on a distinctive sense of place.

Although each bilingual education program "must be planned as a function of the many sociocultural, sociostructural and sociopsychological factors relevant to a particular situation" (Hamers & Blanc, 1989), the Benefits Model provides a feasible framework for rural and small towns. If communities that are not wealthy can overcome barriers that have precluded program adoption and implementation in the past, there is no longer reason to deny all children, including those in small towns, the benefits of bilingual education.

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Endnotes

[1] The $10-million program recently instituted by the U.S. Department of Education to train Native American teachers offers one external source of support for this purpose (see Shotley, 1999).

[2] Guadalupe Valdés (1995, p. 316) defines bilingual range as "the continuum of linguistic abilities and communicative strategies that an individual may access in one or the other of his or her two languages at a specific moment, for a particular purpose, in a particular setting, with particular interlocutors." Native students may possess various combinations of English and L2 competencies.

[3] This does not preclude special courses/efforts outside of school to pass on or keep alive the written L2.