Apr 15th, 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

A Replication Study of the Effects of Test Language and Mathematical Skills Assessed on the Scores of Bilingual Hispanic Students

Alison Whittington
Illinois Wesleyan University

Christina Isabelli, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc

Whittington, Alison and Isabelli, Faculty Advisor, Christina, "A Replication Study of the Effects of Test Language and Mathematical Skills Assessed on the Scores of Bilingual Hispanic Students" (2000). John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference. 1.
http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/2000/oralpres5/1

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by The Ames Library, the Andrew W. Mellon Center for Curricular and Faculty Development, the Office of the Provost and the Office of the President. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Commons @ IWU by the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.
Oral Presentation 5.4

A REPLICATION STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF TEST LANGUAGE AND MATHEMATICAL SKILLS ASSESSED ON THE SCORES OF BILINGUAL HISPANIC STUDENTS

Alison Whittington and Christina Isabelli*
Hispanic Studies Department, Illinois Wesleyan University

In 1983, Gilberto Cuevas and Maria Llabre researched the effects of test language and mathematical skills assessed on the scores of bilingual Hispanic students. This study investigated the extent to which the language of standardized tests influenced the performance of bilingual students of differing levels of English proficiency. Two versions, Spanish and English, of the same Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills were administered to 408 bilingual Hispanic students in fourth and fifth grade, and the students were asked to complete both tests. Cuevas and Llabre found that the students performed better on the English version of this test than on the Spanish version.

For this study, I have tried to replicate Llabre and Cuevas' work. This replication study was guided primarily by the following research question: to what extent does the language of the test influence the mathematical performance of bilingual students? My methodology followed closely that of Cuevas and Llabre, however, a few adaptations were made. First, the students I worked with were slightly older than the ones in the original study (sixth, seventh and eighth grade), and the tests were altered accordingly. Additionally, my student sample was limited to approximately thirty students. The third, and perhaps most influential adaptation to the study was that the students in the replication study all received at least some mathematics instruction in Spanish. In the original study, most of the students had only received mathematics instruction in English.

While this was a replication study, I did not anticipate my results mirroring those of Cuevas and Llabre. I did not expect the students in my study to perform significantly higher in English than in Spanish as the students in the original study did. I hypothesized that the exposure these students have had to mathematical instruction and vocabulary in the Spanish language would raise their Spanish language performance to or above the level of their English language performance.