ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Indiana Education: English Learner Instruction at the Primary Level

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The number of students enrolled in United States public schools speaking a language other than English in their homes doubled over the last decade. In Indiana more than 60% of all public school districts reported having at least one English Learner student enrolled. It is projected that Indiana EL enrollment will increase 21% by the year 2021 (National Center for Education, 2009). These statistics make EL students, those students whose native language is not English, the fastest growing demographic in the Indiana public school system. As such, there is a need to know, and adhere to, the numerous laws that govern EL education in America.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) allows for state-specific guidelines concerning EL education, but it monitors the states’ progress of the EL student federally. Schools that do not have EL students who show adequate progress are subject to a loss of funding or closure for failing to serve all of their enrolled student population. This has caused many Indiana schools to review their EL practices and procedures when considering instructional strategies. This study examined the history of EL education and what Indiana schools at the elementary level are doing enough to prepare EL students.