

ABSTRACT

An Evaluation of a Policy Implementation for a Bilingual Approach to Literacy Formation for Young Deaf Children

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This research evaluated the efforts of the Jamaica Association for the Deaf (JAD) to implement a bilingual approach in Deaf Education in order to improve literacy formation for young Deaf children. Students attending the JAD cluster of schools experience severe to profound hearing loss and therefore learn visually. This distinctive feature is significant for how they acquire language and develop literacy. The purpose of this evaluation was to examine and describe how bilingual policy demands were being translated into practice to effect implementation. To evaluate implementation, instructional practices of teachers were examined for consistency with sign bilingual policy demands through a multiple case study. Also examined were experiences of teachers that helped to shape their instructional practices and their perceptions of how these practices could be improved. Findings indicated an incomplete implementation process because some critical policy demands had not been fully translated into instructional practices. Implications of this improvement-oriented evaluation include the need to strengthen teachers' bilingual pedagogical competencies, support systems and management of the change process.

Keywords: Iris Soutar; Sign Bilingual Education; Deaf Education; Policy Implementation; Jamaica Association for the Deaf