

In the STARlight



Research & Resources for English Learner Achievement

Issue 4

Dual Language Education

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★ Students of Today ★ Achieving ★ Results

"Our nation can only grow stronger if all our children grow up learning two languages. I can assure you when they enter the workforce in several years, we will regret the inability of our children to speak two languages. Our global economy demands it; our children deserve it."

(Richard W. Riley, Former U.S. Secretary of Education)

To have another language is to possess a second soul.

(Charlemagne)

"What is Dual Language Education?"

Definition

There are a variety of dual language education programs, but the most common is TWBI (two-way bilingual immersion). TWBI provides academic instruction through English and a second language (e.g., Spanish, Mandarin); for the program to be a true TWBI program, instruction must be presented through the non-English language (e.g., Spanish, Korean) for at least 50% and up to 90% of the instructional day. Student participants include native speakers of the two languages. Because students are integrated for instruction, they have numerous opportunities to practice language with each other. The major goals of the program include full biliterate proficiencies, content area achievement at or above grade level, and multicultural competencies. There is increasing demand for dual language programs. Presently there are over 200 TWBI programs in California and many more in the US.

Research Basis

There is considerable research in the US and other countries that consistently shows that both English Learners (EL) and native English speakers benefit from instruction through two languages:

- In contrast to what we typically hear in the media, 20 years of scientifically-based research and evaluation studies are consistent in showing that ELs who received extended instruction through their first language (at least through elementary school) were able to catch up to or surpass the achievement levels of EL peers and English-only Latino peers who were educated in English-only mainstream classrooms. These results were based on or taken from a variety of student indicators--standardized achievement tests, course grades, school attendance & dropout rate, and student attitudes.
- Forty years of scientifically-based research and evaluation studies in the US and Canada demonstrate that native English speakers in one-way immersion and TWBI programs develop proficiency in a second language and gain cultural awareness, and they perform as high or higher than English-speaking peers in English-only classes on standardized tests taken in English.

The research shows that simply adding more English instructional time does not yield higher achievement measured in English for English Learners; rather, the students who achieve at the highest levels in English are those who achieve at the highest levels in the home language. Thus, research shows that providing a solid foundation in the home language yields higher achievement in English.

Implementation

High-level achievement for all students is the result of strategic planning and refining over time. There is strong consistency between the factors that define exemplary dual language programs and practices that are found in successful mainstream schools, although different labels may be used. The investigations reviewed point to a set of consistent factors that tend to contribute to successful student outcomes in schools in general and dual language education programs in particular. The importance of these factors is evident from the frequency and consistency with which they are found in programs that produce successful student outcomes. These seven factors form the core guiding principles for dual language education: program structure, curriculum, instructional practices, staff quality and professional development, family and community involvement, support and resources, and assessment and accountability. These principles were developed as a tool to help dual language programs with planning and ongoing implementation. <http://www.cal.org/twi/guidingprinciples.htm>

Summary of Research on Dual Language Education

Who benefits? Research from a variety of studies across the country in different types of high quality dual language programs with several thousand students shows that for the most part, **ALL** students benefit from dual language programs. For every group of students that has been studied (EL, R-FEP, EP, Latino, students on free lunch, students receiving special education services), each group scored equivalent or superior to comparison averages for that group, with the added benefit that the dual language students become bilingual.

Implications for Teachers and Administrators

While research shows that dual language programs can be very successful, a considerable amount of planning is required to produce a high quality program. The Guiding Principles for dual language programs provide an excellent resource for implementing a high quality dual language program and/or continuously moving an existing program toward exemplary program practices. They offer a description of the characteristics associated with successful program practices.

NCLB Implications

NCLB currently drives many important curriculum and instruction decisions. Dual language programs develop full bilingual and biliterate proficiencies in our students. Thus for accountability, we need to assure students achieve in both languages. Educators need to understand that dual language research shows that students will achieve at grade level if the program is developed and implemented correctly. While there's pressure to change program models, evidence from high quality programs shows achievement in English is bolstered by a strong foundation in the home language. Students in early phases of the program are required to be tested before having fully developed biliteracy skills to perform at expected levels. Students who traditionally have lower levels of achievement in school and take longer to move toward grade level, may be pushed toward more English instruction too soon. Therefore, it is absolutely essential for all dual language programs to have a well-designed assessment program to demonstrate program success.

Selected Book List

- Colin Baker (1995). A Parents' and Teachers' Guide to Bilingualism. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. (A translated version in Spanish is also available).
- Margarita Espino Calderón & Liliana Minaya-Rowe (eds.), (2003). Designing and Implementing Two-Way Bilingual Programs. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.
- Donna Christian, Chris Montone, Kathryn Lindholm-Leary, & Isolda Carranza. (1997). Profiles in Two-Way Immersion Education. Washington, D.C.: Delta Systems, Inc.
- Nancy Cloud, Fred Genesee, and Else Hamayan. (2000). Dual Language Instruction. Boston, Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle.
- Sonia White Soltero. (2004). Dual Language: Teaching and Learning In Two Languages. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Fred Genesee, Kathryn Lindholm-Leary, William Saunders, and Donna Christian. (2006). Educating English Language Learners. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Kathryn Lindholm-Leary. (2001). Dual Language Education. Avon, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Potowski, Kim. (in press). Language and Identity in a Dual Immersion School. Avon, England: Multilingual Matters.

On-line Resources

- California Department of Education -- California State Directory, resources, on-line links, Q&A
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/ip/>
- Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) -- Nationwide directory, implementation & assessment toolkits, Q&A, list of publications, Guiding Principles for Dual Language Programs
<http://www.cal.org/twi/index.html>
- Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) -- variety of resources on immersion, foreign language, and dual language programs
<http://www.carla.umn.edu/index.html>
- California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE) -- variety of resources on bilingual education and dual language education
<http://www.bilingualeducation.org/>
- 2-Way CABE -- resources and professional development opportunities for dual language
<http://www.bilingualeducation.org/2waycabe/>
- Dual Language Education of New Mexico -- resources on program development, implementation and improvement, professional development and other resources
<http://www.duallanguagenm.org/>
- Kathryn Lindholm-Leary's website -- resources, research & best practices, publications, copies of presentation on dual language education and bilingual education
<http://www.lindholm-leary.com/>

"Now the only thing that is still Chinese in my mind is the multiplication table. I wish I had kept up with my reading skills in Chinese. It felt as though my Chinese heritage was fading away with my Chinese literacy."
(Chinese-American University Student, Berkeley)

Learning another language is not only learning different words for the same things, but learning another way to think about things.
(Flora Lewis)



STUDENTS OF TODAY ACHIEVING RESULTS

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Questions for Reflection

1. What are the research foundations for dual language programs and why are they important for developing a high quality program? How could you use these to promote a dual language program?
2. How could you or your site use the Guiding Principles for dual language programs to help you develop a high(er) quality program?
3. What rationale could you provide that refutes the notion that simply adding more English to the instructional day does not lead to higher achievement results in English for English Learners?
4. Given the research results on diverse students in dual language programs, what case could you make that an RSP student should not be automatically removed from a dual language program?
5. What is one area you would like to investigate further? What resources did you find that could help you develop or improve your program in this area?

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