

DUAL EDUCATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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Abstract: Dual language education programs have become extremely popular.

Although these programs share common characteristics, they vary in several respects. Programs use different languages and include students with varying characteristics. For instance, many of these programs include students with fluent English proficiency and those with limited English proficiency; students identified with learning disabilities and those who are gifted; and students who are economically advantaged and those who are disadvantaged. Two basic dual language program models are the 90–10 and 50–50 models. This article describes a unique 50–50 model that divides language of instruction by content area as well as by time.

Keywords: innovation, methods, role play, brainstorm, learning by doing, crossover learning, dual.

The model has been successfully implemented in regions with high concentrations of Latino students. It does not require a 50–50 balance of native English speakers and native Spanish speakers. In addition to describing the model, the authors report results of standardized tests, administered in English, that indicate that students in schools following this model are achieving high levels of academic proficiency in reading and mathematics. Two-way immersion education is a dynamic form of education that holds great promise for developing high levels of academic achievement, bilingualism and biliteracy, and cross-cultural awareness among participating students. Statements like those quoted above come from a variety of sources and reflect the growing interest in and support for a type of bilingual education in which all students develop full proficiency in their first language and high levels of proficiency in a second language. Although this type of program has been given different labels, in this article we use the term dual language education programs. Researchers in literacy, bilingualism, and second language acquisition; teachers; teacher educators; and policymakers have taken an interest in these programs because they promote success for both language-majority and language-minority students. English language learners (ELLs) who have failed in various types of English as a Second Language and transitional bilingual education programs have made phenomenal gains in dual language programs (Lindholm-Leary,

2001; Thomas & Collier, 2002). In addition, native English speakers in these programs, despite learning through two languages, excel in their native English, scoring higher than peers studying only in English (Lindholm-Leary). Dual language programs are based on an orientation toward language that Ruíz (1984) has termed language as resource. Ruíz contrasts this orientation with earlier approaches that viewed language as a problem and then viewed language as a right. Ruíz points out that regarding language as a resource serves as a better orientation for language planning for several reasons: It can have a direct impact on enhancing the language status of subordinate languages; it can help to ease tensions between majority and minority communities; it can serve as a more consistent way of viewing the role of non-English languages in U.S. society; and it highlights the importance of cooperative language planning. (pp. 25–26) Dual language programs have raised the status and importance of languages other than English in many communities across the United States.

In some communities they have eased tensions between groups who speak different languages. The programs have helped build crosscultural school communities and crosscultural friendships among students and parents, relationships that probably would not have developed without the programs.

Dual language programs raise the status of languages other than English because as native English-speaking children become bilingual, parents and students alike see the value of knowing more than one language. Dual language programs are not new in this country. The Spanish–English Coral Way program in Florida and the French–English Ecole Bilingüe in Massachusetts were implemented in the 1960s. However, the interest in dual language education has increased dramatically in the last 15 years. It is extremely difficult to keep track of the number of dual language programs, in part because of their rapid growth. In addition, the CAL listing is a low estimate because the programs self-report. If programs do not register with CAL, then they are not listed on the CAL Web site. Data from other sources indicate that

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Although dual language programs vary widely in design and implementation, they all share certain characteristics. Students in the programs usually include some native English speakers and native speakers of another language. These two groups of students study together most of the day. In their classes, students learn language through academic content instruction in both languages. A central goal is that all students become proficient in using two languages for communication and learning. In addition, in this era of high-stakes testing, researchers have shown that on standardized tests given in English, both groups of students do as well as or better than students learning only in English (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Although dual language programs share certain characteristics and are based on the same orientation, they vary in several ways: (a) They are called by different names, (b) They involve different languages, and (c) They involve different student populations. In addition, there are different program models, and these models are implemented in a variety of ways. For instance, two-way programs are dual language programs in which two language groups learn through two languages, while one-way programs are those in which only one language group learns through two languages

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