SOUTHEAST Comprehensive Center
at American Institutes for Research ■

Information REQUEST

Best Practices for Dual Language Programs in Secondary Schools

Date	March 27, 2017
Request	01270

Request Description

A state education agency (SEA) served by the Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) at American Institutes For Research (AIR) has requested information about the best practices for dual language programs in secondary schools. Specifically, the SEA is interested in the policies and practices that may be effective for developing, implementing, and assessing dual language (DL) programs beyond the elementary grades.

The client SEA plans to use the information provided in this report to inform the development and expansion of DL programs in secondary schools around the state as a part of its global education initiative.

This Information Request (IR) report describes the process for obtaining research articles, reports, and other resources as well as considerations as the SEA moves forward. It is organized into the following sections:

- Procedure
- General Limitations
- Background
- Overview of Resource Review
- References
- Resource Summaries

Procedure

To obtain information for this document, the IR team conducted online searches—through the EBSCO host database, ERIC, Google, and Google Scholar—to look for research studies, articles, reports, and other resources that describe best practices related to DL programs in secondary schools. The terms listed in Table 1 below were included in the resource search to increase the likelihood of locating supplementary information applicable to DL programs in secondary schools.

The IR team reviewed 12 resources and selected 4 for discussion in this report. The documents provide a foundation for understanding best practices for designing, implementing, and assessing DL programs in secondary schools and the associated challenges of such programs.

Table 1. Terms Used for Resource Search	
Best practice in dual language programs	High school immersion programs
Bilingualism	Middle school dual language programs
Dual language programs	Middle school immersion programs
English language learners	Secondary dual language program
English language learners instruction	Two-way bilingual programs
High school dual language programs	Two-way immersion

General Limitations

Due to the limited research base, the IR vetting process yielded a small number of resources on DL programs at the secondary level. Although the research base on the impact of DL programs is growing, most of the studies have focused on the elementary level. The few studies that have examined the effectiveness of DL programs at the secondary level have focused exclusively on English learners (ELs). There is little empirical evidence on the effects of DL programs on secondary students, especially those who are native English speakers (non-English learners).

The studies included in this IR are mostly qualitative in nature; therefore, the IR team does not recommend that inferences be made on the effectiveness of DL programs on secondary students' academic achievement. The studies presented in this IR, however, do include guidance and considerations policymakers should take into account before developing, implementing, and assessing DL programs at the secondary level.

SECC does not offer conclusions regarding the research or practices featured in this report but instead provides information about the above topics and related recommendations from the respective authors. The *Background* section of this IR contains contextual information to aid stakeholders in making informed decisions with respect to the content of this report but does not endorse any of the research or practices that are discussed.

Background

According to a report developed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in 2016:

> It is now clear that bilingualism confers a number of cognitive benefits, including cognitive flexibility and creative thinking, communicative sensitivity, metalinguistic awareness, and enhanced executive function. Once you know another language, it also becomes easier to learn additional languages. Likewise, there is a sizeable body of research on the social benefits of bilingualism at both the individual and societal levels. Individually, bilingualism is associated with stronger identity formation and the development of cross-cultural competence, i.e., the ability to know oneself and how to relate with others. At the societal level, economic benefits such as those created by global business opportunities, accrue, as do political benefits such as support of national defense and conflict resolution (p. 1).

Over the past few decades, there has been increasingly more research focused on instructional programs and practices for educating and preparing students for a linguistically-diverse global economy (Boyle, August, Tabaku, Cole, & Simpson-Baird, 2015; Howard, Sugarman, Christian, Lindholm-Leary, & Rogers, 2007). Numerous research studies (Williams, 2015) have shown that DL programs are effective at helping students become bilingual and fluent in English and another language. Dual language programs have become more popular in school districts across the United States (Boyle, et al., 2015; Montone & Loeb, 2003). Dual language, also referred to as two-way immersion (TWI) programs, are any programs that "provide literacy and content instruction to all students through two languages" (Howard et al., 2007, p.1). Research has demonstrated cognitive and academic benefits of DL programs for participating students (Williams, 2015; Valentino & Reardon, 2014).

Despite the benefits that have been noted based on students' participation in DL programs, the majority of programs operate at the elementary level. There are several factors that may explain why DL programs have been mostly concentrated at the primary grades. One reason is that DL programs enroll students in the program or program strand (cohort) at kindergarten and add additional grade levels each year. Therefore, programs expand to secondary schools as needed and when feasible. Generally, more than one elementary school feeds into a middle school site, and multiple middle schools often feed into high schools. If there are only limited numbers of DL programs in the elementary schools, there may not be adequate numbers of DL students to initiate or maintain a DL program in the secondary schools.

Another explanation for the paucity of DL programs in secondary schools may be that these schools require greater flexibility and variation in courses, thereby creating a different demand level for content courses that would need to be taught in the additional language. In addition, secondary DL programs require trained instructors that have language and content mastery, "a high level of proficiency in the language in which they teach, understanding of second language

acquisition, and skill in supporting language and content development for second language learners" (Tabaku, 2016, p. 4).

Finding qualified staff for DL programs becomes a harder challenge as the content complexity increases (Boyle et al., 2015; Montone & Loeb, 2003). With limited resources to fund education initiatives, many school districts may have the desire to expand their DL programs beyond the elementary level, however, lack the proper funding to successfully implement the programs (Boyle & Tabaku, 2016; Boyle et al., 2015).

This IR will highlight articles regarding DL (two-way immersion) programs operating within secondary schools. This summary can serve as a reference tool that supports SEA decision-making regarding developing, implementing, and assessing DL programs at the secondary level.

Overview of Resource Review

As schools seek to prepare students to compete and work in a global market, interest in DL programs has increased. To aid in the implementation and expansion of DL programs in secondary schools, an SEA served by SECC requested research about the best practices for DL programs beyond the elementary level.

Based on the SEA's request, the IR team selected four resources that are specifically applicable to DL programs in secondary schools. The resources selected provide an overview of the considerations that district and school administrators must address as they seek to develop and/or expand DL programs into middle and high schools.

The first article selected, Montone and Loeb (2000), outlines the benefits of these programs for secondary students as well as nine challenges that school districts must address to operate successful programs. The information in this article was gathered directly from practitioners who had experience working in secondary level DL programs. The second and third articles summarized in this report discuss how the school's organization plays a key factor in the implementation of a TWI program. Jong and Bearse (2014) provide structural considerations and recommendations for educators who want to develop DL programs within middle school settings. This article also includes the perspectives of teachers and students from a DL program within a middle school campus.

The third article, Bearse and Jong (2008), concentrates on student perspectives about their participation in a TWI program. The final article, Valentino and Reardon (2014), examines the differential effects of four different bilingual education program models (English Immersion, Transitional Bilingual, Developmental Bilingual, and Dual Immersion) on English learners' academic performance in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. This article sheds light on the different impacts DL programs can have on EL students and can provide insight on bilingual education models in schools and districts.

In addition to the summarized articles, two documents have been included in the reference list that outline general principles about developing and implementing DL programs from the perspectives of SEAs. Howard et al. (2007) and Massachusetts Department of Education (2016) describe operational steps for designing TWI and transitional bilingual education programs in the states of New Mexico and Massachusetts.

The IR team also has included information in the reference list about a Dual Language Program Directory, which is hosted by the Center For Applied Linguistics (CAL). The CAL directory (http://webapp.cal.org/duallanguage/) allows users to search for programs by name, location, and specific features such as language used in the program; type of school; grade level the program serves (preK, elementary, middle, or high); and the basic model (one-way, two-way, strand within a school, or whole school).

References

Bearse, C., & De Jong, E. (2008, July). Cultural and linguistic investment: Adolescents in a secondary two-way immersion program. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 41*(3), 325–349. Abstract retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ803909

Boyle, A., August, D., Tabaku, L., Cole, S., & Simpson-Baird, A. (2015, December). *Dual language education programs: Current state policies and practices*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/resources.html

Boyle, A., & Tabaku, L. (2016, May 26). *Five ways states can support dual language programs* [Blog]. Washington, DC: American Institutes For Research. Retrieved from http://educationpolicy.air.org/blog/five-ways-states-can-support-dual-language-programs

De Jong, E., & Bearse, C. (2014). Dual language programs as a strand within a secondary school: Dilemmas of school organization and the TWI mission. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *17*(1), 15–31. Abstract retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1025744

Howard, E. R., Sugarman, J., Christian, D., Lindholm-Leary, K. J., & Rogers, D. (2007). *Guiding principles for dual language education* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Center For Applied Linguistics. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266865668_Guiding_Principles_for_Dual_Language_Education

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2016). *Guidance for defining and implementing two-way immersion and transitional bilingual education programs.* Malden, MA: Author. Retrieved from http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/TWI-TBE-Guidance.pdf

Montone, C., & Loeb, M. (2003). *Implementing two-way immersion programs in secondary schools.* Santa Cruz, CA: Center For Research on Education, Diversity, & Excellence. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED439616.pdf

Montone, C., & Loeb, M. (2000). *Implementing two-way immersion programs in secondary schools* (Educational Practices Report 5). Santa Cruz, CA: Center For Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED439616.pdf

Tabaku, L. (2016, October). Current state policies and practices that support recruitment for dual language programs. Presentation at the meeting, *Teacher Sourcing for Dual Language Programs: Policies Supporting Innovative Pathways to Teaching in Dual Language Programs,* George Washington University, Washington, DC.

Valentino, R. A., & Reardon, S. F. (2014, December). Effectiveness of four instructional programs designed to serve English language learners: Variation by ethnicity and initial English proficiency. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *37*(4), 612–637. Retrieved from http://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Valentino_Reardon_EL%20Programs_12_15_14.pdf

Williams, C. (2015). *Better policies for dual language learners: Bridging research, policy, implementation, and classroom practice.* Washington, DC: New America. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED558765.pdf

Resource Summaries

Montone, C. L., & Loeb, M. I. (2000). Implementing Two-Way Immersion Programs in Secondary Schools (Educational Practices Report 5). Center For Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED439616.pdf

This report, released in 2000, provides one of the earliest looks at how two-way immersion programs were being implemented at the secondary level. At the time, fewer than 35 TWI programs were operating successfully in middle and high schools across the United States. There had been research on instructional practices and programs for ELs, however, there was no existing research base on effectiveness or best practices for DL programs. The purposes of this report are to present "1) the challenges that districts faced in operating two-way immersion programs above the elementary school level and 2) options for meeting those challenges based the experiences of programs that have tried to move to the secondary level" (p. 1).

The authors obtained data for this report from interviews conducted with project coordinators from seven schools that were currently operating or had recently operated a TWI program at the secondary level. These schools were representative of urban, suburban, and rural districts located throughout the United States. Five were in middle schools and two were in high schools.

In addition to the benefits TWI programs offer to all students (e.g., developing cognitive flexibility, bilingualism, and positive cross-cultural attitudes; efficiently serving the second language needs of ELs and native English speakers), the authors identify these benefits specific to secondary students (p. 3):

- "Continued development of second language skills
- Preparation to enter advanced language courses in high school or college
- Preparation for International Baccalaureate (IB) programs in high school
- Preparation for additional languages in high school or beyond
- Preparation to earn college credit through Advanced Placement language exams"

The main body of the report focuses on nine challenges school districts experience in either extending elementary TWI programs into middle and high schools or in creating new programs at the secondary level. As documented on page 3, "These challenges are:

- Planning the program
- Language distribution, curriculum and materials
- Student participation and motivation
- Attrition and late entries
- Student scheduling
- Teams, clusters, and houses
- Staffing
- Transportation
- Parent involvement"

Each of the above challenges is summarized in its own separate section of the document. These summaries include experience-based discussions of factors that impact implementation as well as ideas and suggestions for addressing those factors and meeting the challenges. These summaries were compiled from information provided by the program coordinators interviewed for this report. The authors stress that this information is anecdotal, self-reported, and based on the experiences of practitioners and not on research-based findings.

Many of the issues that make implementing TWI programs more challenging at the secondary level than at the elementary level are related to structural differences. Elementary schools tend to be self-contained; whereas most middle and high schools are departmentalized. For example, secondary schools provide multiple course offerings within a discipline, so schools must decide which subjects and which courses within those subjects should be offered in English and the other non-English language. Selected TWI courses must then be scheduled so that they do not conflict with required core classes, popular electives, or other TWI courses within the program.

High school teachers also tend to specialize and teach classes in a single discipline. Offering TWI courses in multiple domains would require hiring bilingual teachers who can teach in more than one subject area and who have additional characteristics related to DL instruction (Tabaku, 2016) or hiring several bilingual teachers. The availability of high-quality, affordable textbooks and other curricular materials, beyond those that are available in Spanish, in selected course offerings also can be a factor in secondary TWI implementation. Advice and ideas for meeting these structurally-related challenges as well as those in each of the other areas of concern are outlined in the report.

The report also provides profiles of the TWI programs at the seven schools selected for this study. Montone and Loeb conclude that although there are similarities in the programs studied, there is no one way to implement TWI at the secondary level, and that more research is needed to expand our knowledge base about how to implement effective middle and high school TWI programs.

De Jong, E., & Bearse, C. (2014). Dual Language Programs as a Strand Within a Secondary School: Dilemmas of School Organization and the TWI Mission. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 17*(1), 15–31. **Abstract retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1025744**

Two-way immersion programs are a "type of dual language (DL) program that support bilingualism and bi-literacy, grade-level academic achievement, and cross-cultural competence for native English speakers and native speakers of a minority language" (p. 16). Most TWI studies have focused on the practices and outcomes of programs at the elementary level. Several studies have documented the effectiveness of TWI programs and their associated classroom-based practices, but few have considered how the structure of middle school affects the implementation of effective DL practices when the program is only a strand within the school.

This qualitative study examined institutional barriers to a secondary TWI program's ability to initiate and sustain its value and benefits of diversity as a strand within a larger school's context. Specifically, the impact of school structure on a middle school's TWI program is examined. In the article, the program discussed is located in a medium-size, linguistically and culturally diverse school district in the Northeast with a large Brazilian and Latino community.

The authors collected and analyzed data between June 2006 and March 2007. Data sources included individual survey data for students in Grades 6–12, focus groups of three or four students across Grades 6 through 12, and interviews of middle- and high-school TWI teachers. The study identified several TWI program challenges within the middle school structure including the following:

- The state's curriculum minimally addresses linguistic and cultural diversity, and TWI teachers are expected to align their instruction to the state's mandated frameworks.
- There is a need to maintain equal status between the two languages (i.e., middle and high school students express the need for additional courses and opportunities to speak Spanish).
- There is a need to maintain bilingual perspectives.
- Professional development was recognized as a need by school administration but was difficult to implement school-wide on a consistent basis.
- TWI teachers lack systemic opportunities to collaborate and co-plan with academic teams during common planning time.
- There is a lack of appropriate, grade-level materials.

The authors make several recommendations including (a) the need for teachers and administrators to reconsider curriculum planning opportunities; (b) acknowledgement of the strengths of having a DL program within the building; (c) pushing students to read more complex texts; (d) providing equitable opportunities for learning complex and challenging material; (e) incorporating cooperative learning strategies; and (f) teaching secondary content area teachers close reading of text, scaffolds for argumentation and discussion, text structure writing frames, and vocabulary expansion.

Bearse, C., & De Jong, E. (2008, July). Cultural and Linguistic Investment: Adolescents in a Secondary Two-Way Immersion Program. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, **41**(3), **325–349. Abstract retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ803909**

This article details the results of a qualitative research study designed to explore participating middle and high school students' perceptions of the Spanish-English two-way immersion program in their district. The district selected has a longstanding K–12 TWI program that graduated its first full cohort in 2002 and serves a community with a large Brazilian and Latino population. This study focuses on the linguistic and cultural aspects of the participants' experiences in the program.

The article includes a review of the current research on TWI programs in general and the limited number of studies that have been conducted specifically at the secondary level. Large-scale studies of TWI programs in elementary schools showed positive results in academic achievement for all student participants (Howard et al., 2007). However, the few studies that have focused on secondary programs showed mixed results, with English proficiency increasing and Spanish achievement declining over time.

For this study, the researchers analyzed information from 166 individual student surveys and 24 small focus groups composed of same-ethnicity students, whenever possible. From an analysis of these data, the researchers identified three common themes and reported findings that emerged within each theme. Findings related to the first theme, *Students' Attitudes Toward the TWI Program*, indicated that both Latino and Anglo students strongly agreed that they liked the TWI program and enjoyed learning in both languages.

Differences between the two groups began to emerge in the second theme, *Students' Attitudes Toward Bilingualism and Biculturalism*. Both ethnic groups strongly agreed that being bilingual would help them get good jobs. However, Anglo students emphasized the economic advantages of learning Spanish, such as preparation for college and career opportunities. Latino students stressed the importance of learning Spanish in maintaining connections to their families and cultural identities. In addition, the students felt that being bilingual helped them bridge the cultural and language gaps between home and school.

Perceptions about biculturalism also varied by ethnicity. Anglo students expressed a greater appreciation for and understanding of other cultures that being in a TWI program gave them, and they valued the Latino friends they made. But they did not consider themselves bicultural. Latinos also valued their friendships with students from other cultures. But they did self-identify as bicultural, primarily because of the daily experiences of balancing their home culture with the culture of the school.

The third theme, *Program Identity and Equity*, captured students' perceptions related to program design as less and less time was devoted to instruction in Spanish with each passing grade level. By the time students reached high school, only one class in the TWI program, Spanish literature, was offered in Spanish. This reduced both groups' opportunities to apply and maintain their skills in Spanish. And as the number of courses offered in Spanish decreased, Spanish was perceived as having a lower status than English. This reduction in status not only resulted in both groups of students opting for English over Spanish as their language of choice, but it also created inequities in learning for Latino students. As Latinos find opportunities to enhance their Spanish literacy skills decreasing, Anglo students have the advantage of learning a new language but then being able to switch to learning primarily in their native language. The authors urge educators to be aware of the above findings and to use them to design and implement secondary TWI programs that strive to provide equitable academic, cultural, and linguistic benefits for all the participants.

Valentino, R. A., & Reardon, S. F. (2014, December). Effectiveness of Four Instructional Programs Designed to Serve English Language Learners: Variation by Ethnicity and Initial English Proficiency. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *37*(4), 612–637. **Retrieved from**
http://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Valentino_Reardon_EL%20Programs_12_15_14.pdf

The population of ELs in schools is growing at a significantly faster pace than that of non-English learners, and their academic performance is usually behind that of non-English learners on academic tests. The long standing debate regarding bilingual education versus English only instruction continues. To inform this debate, this longitudinal study examined the differential effects of four different bilingual education program models (English Immersion, Transitional Bilingual, Developmental Bilingual, and Dual Immersion) on the academic trajectories of ELs.

Although a body of literature exists on the effects of bilingual education, the current study expands the knowledge base in two important ways. First, the study includes both Spanish and Chinese students beyond fourth and fifth grade through the end of middle school, and secondly, the study examines the effects of these four instructional designs on academic performance in core subject areas, ELA and mathematics.

The authors provide an overview of the literature on bilingual education and detail the debate from two perspectives: (a) bilingual education is preferable to English immersion and (b) English immersion is the better approach. The first perspective purposes that EL children who have not developed English proficiency will demonstrate discrepancies between what is taught and what is understood, and the continuation of first language instruction may support learning of a second language. This is consistent with the idea that children should learn to read in their home language first, rather than learning to read in general and reading in a new language simultaneously (Cummins, 1999). The second perspective contends that spending instructional time in a language other than English necessarily detracts from students' exposure to English and delays their opportunity to learn academic material.

The authors used random coefficients growth models with controls that included variables to control for parental preferences for the EL program favored for their children. The sample included 13,750 EL kindergarten students, enrolled between academic year 2001–2002 and 2009–2010. Approximately 1,500 ELs entered the sample each year. Outcome data came from the state standardized tests in ELA and math taken annually from second through eighth grade.

In general, the authors document meaningful differences in three areas: the effects of different models of EL instruction, differences between Latino and Chinese EL students, and differences between math and reading outcomes. Specifically, the findings indicate that two-language programs lead to better academic outcomes than English immersion programs in the long-term,

particularly for Latino EL students. English language arts test scores of ELs in all bilingual programs grow at least as fast as, if not faster than, those in English immersion. The same is generally true of mathematics, with the exception of developmental bilingual programs, where average student scores grow more slowly than those of students in English immersion programs.

Furthermore, Latino ELs perform better longitudinally in both subjects when in bilingual programs than their Chinese EL counterparts. The authors found no differences in program effectiveness by ELs' initial English proficiency.

Jessica Johnson, M.A., Vice President
Beth Howard-Brown, Ed.D., Principal TA Consultant and SECC Director
Tammie Causey-Konaté, Ph.D., Senior TA Consultant and SECC Deputy Director
Chris Times, M.B.A., Senior Communications Specialist

Information Request Team: Beth Howard-Brown, Ed.D., Principal TA Consultant and SECC Director (Management Reviewer); Angelica Herrera, Ph.D., Senior Researcher (Research & Evaluation Reviewer); Lisa Tabaku, M.A.T., Principal Researcher (Quality Assurance Reviewer); Kathy Terry, Ph.D., Senior Researcher; Chris Times, M.B.A., Senior Communications Specialist; and SECC Partner Staff (RMC Research Corporation): Joy Eichelberger, Ed.D., Consultant; and Vicki LaRock, M.Ed., Senior Research Associate

Alabama State Liaison: Heidi Goertzen, Ph.D. (hgoertzen@air.org)
Georgia State Liaison: Glenda Copeland, M.A. (gcopeland@air.org)
Mississippi State Liaison: Debra Meibaum, M.A.T. (dmeibaum@air.org)
North Carolina State Liaison: Kathy Terry, Ph.D. (kterry@air.org)
South Carolina State Liaison: Ursula Hill, Ph.D. (uhill@air.org)