

**THE STATE OF DUAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN THE U.S.
IN THE CONTEXT OF EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Robert Slater, PhD
American Councils Research Center

Richard Brecht, PhD
American Councils Research Center

Donna Christian, PhD
Center for Applied Linguistics

Gregg Roberts
American Councils Research Center

Introduction

Dual Language Immersion (DLI)¹ represents an education strategy that offers the promise of access to quality education for students from all backgrounds, especially for marginalized ethnic and language populations. At the same time, DLI offers the promise, for the first time, of developing a new generation of bilinguals as measured by proficiency in two languages and of promoting maintenance of the heritage language of English learners (ELs). And, DLI also offers the promise of transforming schools and school districts, through “purposeful integration” of partner language speakers (immigrant and U.S.-born) and English speakers (Arias and Markos, 2018, p. 13), perhaps even shifting populations that might help reverse emerging trends that include increased segregation of Latinx and immigrant populations.

As the successes of DLI are documented, concerns about practices and contexts for different groups of students are also being raised. It is important to focus our attention on the

¹ For definitional clarity, we use the term Dual Language Immersion (DLI) not Dual Language Education (DLE) for this discussion. DLE is inclusive of all approaches to developing language proficiency and literacy in English and a partner language. DLI, and particularly two-way programs whose goal is to enroll roughly equal numbers of students from English and partner language backgrounds, is the major focus of this paper and of the discussion on equity at this meeting.

relationship between DLI and social justice at this point in the evolution of these programs: by its very nature, DLI attracts and interfaces a diverse set of learners by ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, and other factors, with students from marginalized and privileged circumstances seeking the hoped-for educational and economic advantages the program may bring. There are potentially significant educational achievement opportunities afforded by DLI programs as research evidence has demonstrated based on established correlations between DLI and educational achievement in programs around the country. However, there is significant risk to achieving the promise of DLI when students and families with different language experiences, cultures, socioeconomic statuses, and other demographic and personal history characteristics do not realize the full benefits of DLI.

As we expand our understanding of DLI's impact and limitations, there is a need for extending the research and discussion on how DLI policy and practice can advance to serve all students and how we can better address the issues that arise in the full range of DLI contexts. The growth of DLI programs across the U.S. has been dramatic. We don't have any precise or reliable assessments of the number of DLI programs in existence today but it is likely the number of two-way programs alone exceeds 2,500 (Arias, 2018). States like Delaware, Georgia, North Carolina and Utah are expanding programs across school districts in their respective states. Growth is both urban and rural. New York City lists 192 DLI programs; Boise, Idaho recently expanded from one to two Spanish DLI programs. California with the passage of Proposition 58 and the rollout of Global California 2030 promises to be a hotbed for DLI expansion.

With all the promises of DLI come significant risks stemming from this rapid growth and expansion. Many of these risks are associated with the aspirations of a strategy that has emerged so quickly and in so many ways pushed the boundaries of curricular innovation, teacher and administrator development and preparation, along with the capacity of school districts to make effective decisions regarding DLI school placement and rules of enrollment. In addition, in a program grounded in diversity of students and communities, we confront shifting demographics and political environments that can affect the structure and success of programs.

It is important to remind ourselves that dual language programs, like all education programs, function in an environment of changing and evolving education and language policies at every level of government. As we continue to argue for the relevance and importance of DLI as an intervention strategy for building equal opportunity for quality education, we note that DLI should be seen from the perspective of education in general, and not as some “boutique” program that is overlaid on an existing education structure. As Christian (2018, p. 115) points out, “Dual language programs are in a unique intersection of policy areas. All education programs must respond to many levels and types of policies related to education, in the form of compulsory schooling for children of certain ages, graduation requirements, and teacher qualifications, to name a few – but dual language education, by involving multiple languages, is also heavily influenced by the language policies and politics, overt or covert, in the sociolinguistic context of the program that are embedded in views of immigration, diverse cultures, and other social issues.” It is in this framework that we must understand the implementation of DLI and how equity enters into the equation at virtually every stage and level.

Our effort in this paper is to lay a foundation for the discussion of equity issues in DLI by summarizing some of the more recent research (and identifying some critical gaps) that might inform our understanding of these issues. The intent here is to establish general agreement on common understandings of what we know and what we do not, so that we may engage in creative dialogue on concrete strategies and actions aimed at ensuring social justice in DLI education. Given the current nationwide expansion of DLI programs as well as recent studies on its potential and vulnerabilities with regard to social justice, we consider the time to be ripe for a summary discussion of where we are and where we need to go. We focus on three key areas of DLI: (1) Academic outcomes; (2) Biliteracy and bilingualism; (3) Social and behavioral development. We end the paper with a report on the results of an unscientific survey of DLI administrators undertaken in September and October 2018. The goal of this survey was to identify issues and areas of concern across school districts that would help guide the equity conversation.

Academic Outcomes

There is reasonable cognitive science rationale for the academic goals of DLI grounded in laboratory evidence that bilinguals outperform monolinguals on numerous verbal and non-verbal tasks, including working memory and executive function tasks, where the latter include attention control and task switching (Bialystok & Craik, 2010; Luk & Bialystok, 2014). There is also evidence that familiarity with bilingual environments improves young children's social perspective-taking skills (Fan et al, 2016; Greenberg et al., 2013) which may help them work more effectively with teachers and peers. Bilingualism also appears to improve students' metalinguistic skills such as lexical and semantic awareness (which may be helpful in developing their literacy skills in both languages), as well as their ability to acquire additional languages (Cenoz, 2003; Keshavarz & Astaneh, 2004). This suggests that bilingual students may have advantages in understanding language structures and components in ways that make them better readers and writers in both languages.

The academic rationale follows logically from the cognitive evidence based on the notion that instruction in two languages from early grades (fostering bilingualism) produces higher academic achievement in core academic content (e.g., language arts, mathematics, and science) tested in English. In the absence of evidence about the cognitive rationale, this notion might seem counterintuitive. Conventional wisdom suggests that there may be efficiency losses when the language of instruction and the language of academic testing are not well-aligned. On the other hand, the academic rationale has empirical backing. There is limited but growing evidence that supports the argument that higher achievement based on such testing is positively related to enrollment in DLI. A recent study of one-way and two-way immersion programs in Utah used propensity score matching and found greater mathematics gains from third to fourth grade for immersion students as compared to non-immersion students, but students were matched on post-treatment performance, meaning that cumulative immersion effects between first and third grade were not captured (Watzinger-Tharp, Swenson, & Mayne, 2016). In another recent study, Bibler (2017) used randomized lottery data from North Carolina to estimate causal effects of cumulative DLI dosage; he found benefits for native English speakers of 0.09 of a standard deviation per year in math, and 0.05 of a standard deviation per

year in reading, with benefits of 0.06 of a standard deviation per year in both math and reading for ELs.

An important caution to note, however, is that many studies are unable to implement designs that adjust for students' selection into programs. Also, since most testing is carried out in English, it is hard to assess the role of proficiency in the partner language, other than by assuming a degree of bilingualism based on the curriculum offered.

In the U.S., most studies of academic outcomes among DLI students have focused on English learners (ELs) and native English speakers enrolled in two-way programs. Again, a number of studies (Collier & Thomas, 2004; Thomas & Collier, 2015; Martin et al, 2013) did not adjust for selection bias. A few recent studies have taken steps to mitigate selection bias. Umansky and Reardon (2014) employed a longitudinal analysis with extensive statistical controls, finding that Latinx ELs placed in two-way Spanish immersion classrooms were reclassified from English learner to English-proficient status more slowly in elementary school but at higher rates by high school. And Valentino and Reardon (2015), using baseline controls and adjusting for parental preferences, found that ELs placed in dual-language immersion in kindergarten initially performed lower in English language arts than those placed in short-term or long-term bilingual education or in monolingual English classrooms, but they showed much stronger growth in English language arts performance between second and seventh grade than those placed in the other types of programs. The authors found lower growth over time in math for students in long-term bilingual education, but no statistically significant differences in math growth for the other three program types.

It is also important to understand whether benefits hold across racial/ethnic groups. Notably, African American student populations have been absent from most research, perhaps because many DLI programs struggle to include them. Dual language education researchers have called for such research to examine the effects of demographic factors and ways of providing effective and equitable DLI for all students (Parkes, Ruth, Anberg-Espinoza, & de Jong, 2009). However, while numerous studies have focused on DLI's effects on ELs, and others have documented effects on native English speakers, only a few studies have examined differential effects by race/ethnicity.

Focusing on achievement trends for ELs between second and seventh grade in a large, urban district, Valentino and Reardon (2015) found that the long-term benefits of dual-language immersion relative to English-only education in English Language Arts and math were statistically significant for Latinx ELs but not for Chinese ELs, though modest long-term English Language Arts benefits were observable for Chinese ELs in the sample. Their study used extensive statistical controls but focused only on ELs and thus did not address racial/ethnic differences for native English speakers.

Thomas and Collier (2014) examined test scores in six North Carolina districts for students who were and were not enrolled in two-way dual-language immersion programs, disaggregating outcomes for native English speakers by students' race/ethnicity. African American native English speakers in two-way DLI outperformed their non-immersion peers by 0.36 to 1.12 standard deviations in reading and by 0.54 to 1.17 standard deviations in math; the corresponding relative performance among white native English speakers were -0.11 to 0.55 in reading and 0.10 to 0.68 in math. The limitation of these estimates is that they are observational and unadjusted for baseline differences, making them vulnerable to selection bias, and they are cross-sectional, making it difficult to precisely estimate effects over time. Still, because they suggest that African American students whose families choose DLI outperform their same-race peers to an even greater extent than white students whose families do the same, they suggest a need for further study.

A recently completed major study examined the differential effects of immersion using data from a lottery-based, randomized study of dual language immersion education conducted in Portland, Oregon. Steele, Slater et al. (2017) leveraged random-assignment lottery data for immersion program applicants in the Portland Public Schools to examine the effects of DLI on students' reading, math, and science achievement through grade 8. Using data from seven cohorts of students who were randomly assigned to DLI or business-as-usual before kindergarten in 2004-05 through 2010-11, the study found positive intent-to-treat effects in reading in English of about 7 months of learning in fifth grade (0.13 SD) and 9 months of learning in eighth grade (0.22 SD). Using a quadratic grade specification instead of differential effects by grade, the estimated overall effect of winning an immersion lottery was a statistically

significant 9 percent of a standard deviation in ELA ($p < .05$). Moreover, these effects were statistically similar regardless of the classroom language (Spanish versus Chinese, Japanese, and Russian); students' native language (English versus the classroom partner language); and program type (one-way versus two-way). In addition, ELs randomly assigned to immersion had higher rates of English proficiency by sixth grade. The study found no statistically significant positive effects in mathematics or science, but also no detrimental effects.

The gaps.

There is still a lot we do not know about the relationship between enrollment in DLI and academic outcomes. As we pointed out earlier, we have very limited research that is able to control for the differential effects by race, ethnicity, or other factors such as poverty. In order to advance the research agenda, we will need more cooperation and collaboration from school districts and states across the U.S. who are willing to provide comprehensive longitudinal data on DLI and non-DLI students. We need studies that examine student populations across school districts, not just case studies of specific districts or states. Unfortunately, most school districts across the U.S. do not “flag” a student as enrolled in DLI; it is therefore impossible to identify students by enrollment. Selection bias continues to threaten the validity of DLI research particularly as these programs become more popular among English speaking and higher SES communities.

Bilingualism and Biliteracy

At this stage, the impact of DLI on educational achievement is purely correlational, operating principally, as noted above, on the assumption that DLI produces a bilingualism that enhances cognitive abilities and impacts educational achievement. However, while evidence for the achievement part of the correlation is growing, the notion of ‘bilingualism’ itself is under intense scrutiny. Earlier cognitive research shifted from viewing bilingualism as a unitary variable to one comprising proficiency and active usage/exposure ((Hakuta & Diaz 1985, Luk & Bialystok 2013). More recent studies elaborate the degrees of bilingualism as well as other significant variables like code switching, SES, and even leisure activity use (e.g. Gaming) (De Cat, Gusnanto & Serratrice 2017; von Bastian, Souza, Gade 2016; Fricke, Zirnstein, Mavarro-Torres).

Most recently, research has begun to tackle the contexts in which the languages are used (Kroll, Dussias, Bajo 2018).

This much broader cognitive understanding of bilingualism is particularly relevant to DLI education, where students enter the program either as monolingual speakers of standard or African American English with no second language or as students from a background where languages other than English are spoken in all their variation. This latter group itself is clearly complex, representing indigenous communities as well as different waves of immigration with a broad range of language experiences and cultural affinities: (1) students with a level of home language proficiency but who are fluent English speakers; (2) students constituting what Kathy Escamilla calls “the new normal”--“simultaneous bilinguals” with significant abilities in two languages, one of which is English (Escamilla, Genesee, Arias, Arteagoitia 2018); and (3) students with a native language other than English and with a need to learn English. As Kroll, Dussias & Bajo indicate, there is much to explore before we understand how this combination of skills and natural use experiences should affect DLI programming (assessment, admittance, placement, curriculum, and teaching) and the social and emotional care of its students.

Another reanalysis of bilingualism revolves around the form of L1 and the targeted form of L2 ability. Echoing work by Flores and Schissel (2014) on “dynamic bilingualism” and heteroglossia, Valdes (2018), in her “interactive mechanisms in the process of curricularizing of language,” discusses ‘theories of bilingualism’ where translanguaging, code switching and additional varieties of named languages (p. 19) are accommodated as legitimate goals of DLI, especially given its students’ different backgrounds, attitudes and aspirations. Kroll & Dussias (2105) cite evidence that all bilinguals use modified versions of their named languages. Valdés (2018) lays out the case for research and curricularization based on this revised understanding of bi/multilingualism and how this view “must inform what we do in classrooms, how we curricularize language and how we understand the limitation of these process.” Her discussion of the issues with students with standard English and African-American English is particularly relevant as complex and neglected. Readers are referred to this article for a powerful summary of these needs and gaps in DLI.

With regard to bilingualism and biliteracy, Arias and Markos (2018) note that “the research on the goal of bilingualism and biliteracy is in general not as robust as the research on student achievement.” Equally concerning, most of the research on proficiency dates back to the early 2000s in spite of the rapid growth of DLI and curricular models that should produce higher levels of language proficiency. Furthermore, as Lindholm-Leary (2016) points out “there are few studies that examine Spanish language development as most research focuses on English, especially the English language development of EL students ... while DL programs have a stated goal of biliteracy and bilingualism, there is often little accountability for demonstrating grade-level reading skills in Spanish.” Arias and Markos (2018) provide a brief and important review of the very limited research that connects DLI to the development of biliteracy and bilingualism. More complications arise when one notes that standard proficiency assessment targets standard name language abilities, which we have seen is not necessarily the output of DLI programs. It is clear that there is a serious need for more longitudinal research.

The gaps.

Concerning the cognitive and target language reconceptualization of bilingualism, we have to understand its impact on DLI curricularization. Even focusing on proficiency and usage/exposure takes us well beyond the traditional L1~L2 class time distribution (50/50, 90-10, etc.) to include out-of-class home, community and on-line usage. Once usage/exposure in and outside of class become relevant, so too must be the mediating factors of providing opportunities and motivation (Lo Bianco & Peyton 2013) appropriate to the proficiency as well as the social and emotional needs of all DLI students, particularly in minimally monitored usage/exposure conditions (Schneider & Bacon 2018) and especially sensitive to students’ race, ethnicity, class and social/economic status.

Even more complicating are the broader issues of usage noted by Kroll, Dussias & Bajo:

The theme that emerges in our review is that learning and using two languages creates a dynamic within the language system that enables individuals to juggle the two languages with a high degree of proficiency under radically different conditions. But the two languages and their reliance on cognitive resources change as a function of the context, even for the same individual across the lifespan. There is a great deal that we still do not know about which of these changes are reversible and which create enduring

consequences for bilingual minds and brains. We are also just beginning to see how the cognitive and neural consequences of bilingualism may depend on the contexts in which the two languages are learned and used. Many have assumed that we can simply ask whether bilingualism produces differences in cognitive functions. This brief review suggests that the question is far more complex and that an adequate answer to this question will require a consideration of how bilingualism differs across individuals and the environments in which they use the two languages. (manuscript p 22)

These considerations raise practical questions that need to be addressed by research:

(1) How much DLI is enough to ensure desired levels of bilingualism (as defined to include both proficiency and usage/exposure)? (2) What is the effect of time-on-task and its apportionment for the two languages in class (50/50 vs. 90/10; length of program) and out of class? (3) Do bilingual as well as achievement effects persist or atrophy after exit from DLI? (4) How can DLI adjust to differences in student experiences, proficiencies, and social and emotional skills? (5) How does DLI program student motivation and usage opportunities? (6) Most relevant to equity, do all DLI students profit, and do they profit equally in their development of language proficiency? (7) Does DLI accommodate the differences in students L1 language and their L2 targets? There is no doubt that the experimental and semi-experimental research on this part of the educational system is in an early phase, with significant challenges lying ahead. But significant research results are in, with much more in progress.

Social-Emotional Development

Concurrent with DLI expansion is the emerging consensus that effective social and emotional skills are essential to a child's development and success as an adult. Social-emotional learning (SEL) "is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (CASEL, www.casel.org/what-is-sel/, (June 19, 2017).

Evidence suggests that the use of a child's home language in the classroom encourages closer relationships between teachers and students, promoting better behaviors in the classroom (Chang et al, 2007). Children who are learning two languages "may need to negotiate

between two competing sets of cultural expectations that have distinctive goals for behavior relevant to social-emotional development (Halle, Whitaker et al, 2014). DLI has, since its inception and more prominently in recent years, promoted a vision of multilingualism and multiculturalism that encourages development of a student’s academic, social, and behavioral skills. The latest edition of the *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education* emphasizes the goal of sociocultural competence (e.g. Feinauer & Howard 2014). “The research in this area is consistent with the body of child development research which demonstrates that programs that promote socio-emotional learning have a significant impact on student success at all grade levels...since the vision and goals of dual language education also include sociocultural competence and equity, the curriculum needs to reflect and value students’ languages and cultures.” There is evidence that the social-behavioral competence of DLL children in preschool and elementary school settings is higher than that of their monolingual peers. The Center for Early Care and Education Research (CECER-DLL, 2011) reports additional evidence that use of the home language by early childhood educators may have a positive effect on learners’ behavioral regulation. This is important as social-emotional skills such as conscientiousness, resilience, empathy, and self-control have been found to play a prominent role in shaping academic and long-term outcomes, in addition to the role of IQ and cognitive ability (see e.g. Almlund et al., 2011).

Links between simultaneously acquiring two or more languages and social-emotional development have been established, but systematic and sustained research exploring these links is very limited. We are guided and informed by a comprehensive overview of research on social-emotional development and dual language learners (DLLs)² (Halle, Whittaker et al, 2014). The study identified 14 peer-reviewed articles between 2000 and 2011 that focused on the social-emotional development of DLLs. From these studies we begin to see that DLLs tend to be judged by teachers and observers as higher in measures of self-control and interpersonal skills and to exhibit lower levels of externalizing and internalizing behaviors and other problem

² It is important to note that dual language learners (DLL) is a term used to refer to all children living in a household where one or members speak a language other than English. DLL is not directly connected to DLI. However, the research we have that links DLLs to socio-emotional learning is relevant to our discussion here.

behaviors compared to English-speaking monolinguals. However, other findings reported in the study show no differences related to language use.

The gaps.

We do not know a lot about the social and behavioral development of students enrolled in DLI. It is a relatively new field of empirical study and highly subjective and inconsistent efforts to “measure” and evaluate social-emotional development have limited our understanding. Halle and Whittaker (2014) suggest that a major reason for conflicting findings is “due to lack of systematic study of DLL’s social-emotional development...and by various operational definitions of DLLs across analytic samples.” Studies also suffer from (1) failure to track learners’ social-emotional development over time; (2) lack of systematic definition of DLLs across datasets; (3) lack of differentiation among learners from non-English-speaking backgrounds by assuming homogeneity within language groups (e.g., all Spanish speakers are the same); and (4) inconsistencies in approaches to SEL measurement. With a reenergized effort to more systematically measure and analyze SEL we should be better able to assess the role that DLI might play in the social, behavioral and identity development particularly of young children and, more importantly, provide feedback to teachers and schools about the effectiveness of their programs.

Survey of Dual Language Immersion Administrators

Any discussion of an issue as important as equity should consider the perspectives of the DLI practitioner community. As with any program experiencing rapid growth there is likely to be an extensive range of DLI programmatic understanding and expertise among school, district, and state administrators. In order to reflect perspectives from the field and gain some additional awareness of how practitioners understand the equity issue, we conducted a brief open-ended survey during September/October 2018. Eighty-two DLI administrators (not teachers) from schools, districts and states across the U.S. were identified and sent, via Survey Monkey, seven basic questions. We are aware that the 82 administrators are not necessarily representative of the DLI field, although it is reasonable to assume that they do reflect varying

degrees of experience and knowledge on issues like equity. Respondents were asked to provide written responses to each question:

1. What does equity mean to you in terms of dual language education?
2. What are your concerns about equity in DLI in terms of the following at the school, district, and state levels?
 - a. Equity of access
 - b. Preparation of teachers, administrators and school staff.
3. How do you think the curriculum, materials, and assessments you use in the program affect equity?
4. What is an effective balance in classrooms between native speakers of English and of the partner language? What are the issues that might result from that balance? How do you integrate students with special needs into the classroom?
5. How do teachers, administrators and/or school staff discuss ways of promoting equity (or express concerns about it)? Could you provide an example? What is your state/district/school doing to enhance equity?
6. Do you think that lotteries for admission to DLI programs provide an equitable approach? Why? Should there be separate lotteries for partner language students and native English speakers? Why? How should out of boundary and in boundary issues be addressed?
7. Any other comments on the equity issue?

We received 32 responses. Given the short time frame for the questionnaire and limited follow up, a 40% response rate is rather remarkable and suggests a strong interest in the issue. The responses came from DLI administrators across 23 states, in rural and urban contexts, and in districts with large and small immigrant and/or non-English speaking populations. Our summary represents an effort to reflect the responses in the aggregate while honoring the anonymity of the respondents.

In general, we would say that the responses were reflective of the state of the DLI field with a broad recognition of the critical importance of equity, but also a degree of uncertainty as to the depth and breadth of equity issues and their potential impact on DLI programs. In some cases, respondents indicated there were not significant equity issues because their districts are located in predominantly English speaking and non-immigrant communities. It is clear at least

from the 32 respondents that as a group they are well aware of the important equity issues confronting DLI although their characterizations of each issue vary and their approaches and solutions range from simplistic to complex.

Our summary of the responses to each question represents an effort to report on the responses while maintaining the anonymity of each respondent.

Meaning of Equity. When asked to define equity in terms of dual language education, most respondents emphasized the achievement gap and equal opportunity. The responses most certainly suggest that the respondents appreciate the importance of equity in their programs, but they vary widely in their interpretation of the meaning of equity. The list below is presented in no particular order of priority:

- Closing the gap for Hispanic students
- Increasing opportunities for involvement of Spanish speaking parents
- Value of other cultures
- Access to DLI for all
- Every learner is treated fairly
- Closing the achievement gap
- Meets every student's academic needs
- Access to quality and rigorous core instruction that is attentive to developing high levels of proficiency in two languages and developing inter cultural skills
- Equal funding across DLI models
- Access to immersion for all students, especially those of color, poverty, disabilities, ELs
- Ensuring barrier-free access to populations that can benefit most
- Inclusion of ELs
- Closing the achievement gap for historically underserved emergent bilingual students and families
- Opportunities for all students: cognitive development, academic achievement, cross-cultural skills
- Moving beyond systemic racist practices of compliance and responsiveness
- Diversity of student populations
- Available to students representing any demographic in the district, whether race, ethnicity, gender identification, socio-economic status
- Access for any student whose native language is not English
- Qualified teachers

Concerns About Equity. The responses indicate a set of broad concerns about equity including: inadequate funding, access to programs including worries about gentrification, lack of

curriculum and materials, the absence of information available to parents, and transportation.

The list below reflects these concerns and is grouped around these key issues:

- No formula for funding programs
- Inadequate funding
- No funding
- No state funding
- Inequity of funding across schools
- Uneven funding of across programs influenced by Title I and Title III
- Equity across two-way and one-way programs. Two-way use Title III funds
- Dual language curriculum is expensive.
- Hesitant to allocate funds on a district level and depend on startup funds from grants
- Lottery processes may be biased
- School choice laws may not be equitable
- Perception that programs are promoted by those of privilege
- Programs result from demand from English speaking parents
- Universal access to quality DLI is not feasible; those with influence get access to information
- Latinx families losing access
- African-Americans have almost no access
- Lack of diffusion of information means partner language parents unaware of programs
- Programs began as ESL service delivery models in predominantly Latinx neighborhoods. With gentrification and increased visibility, English speaking families have more access to them and Latinx families are losing access
- No information in partner language about programs
- Push to expand DLI in areas where there is already privilege
- Totally lacking in infrastructure for curriculum in partner languages
- State assessments in English and performance expectations do not often align with research on second language acquisition
- Lack of transportation options
- Designed as choice programs for which transportation is not available

Curriculum and Materials. The responses to this issue were fewer (about 1/3 of the respondents left this blank). At the same time, the question seemed to have provoked more in-depth replies that centered on teacher qualifications, availability of quality curriculum in the partner language, assessments, and local vs. central control.

- Teachers creating their own material
- Most teaching and learning departments staffed by professionals without bilingual backgrounds and without second language acquisition or immersion pedagogies

- Limited teacher capacity to teach with the necessary rigor. Changes in leadership, budget cuts, shifts in state/district standards and initiatives often compound these challenges
- Most curriculum is monolingual
- Focus on ensuring the curriculum and materials are high quality and adopted by the state to meet the needs of immersion learners, not generic learners.
- Linguistically and culturally responsive practices must inform all dimensions of program planning, design and implementation; otherwise pedagogy without this framework risks perpetuation of inequity
- Local control suggests that materials, curriculum and assessments are up to individual districts
- Finding and developing linguistically, culturally and developmentally appropriate materials and assessments presents many financial and logistical challenges that impact a teacher's ability to teach with the necessary rigor
- Curriculum often left up to the district or school level designee to purchase from a limited selection of materials and it often falls to the teacher, with very limited time, to align these components
- Most dual language professionals have to leverage language assessments built for either foreign language learners or at least older learners to gauge language proficiency of students who are acquiring language through study of content.
- Systematic attention must be given to the inherent cultural bias that surrounds the program

Effective Balance. Similar to the previous question, there were fewer responses to the issue of effective balance in the classroom. The responses, in general, suggest a struggle to agree on the most effective balance in the classroom, particularly when mitigated by demographics and school boundaries. Since our survey was not restricted to schools and districts with only two-way programs, the responses from one-way program administrators are clearly less relevant to the balance issue. The sample responses below only reflect issues that seem related to two-way programs.

- Our district requires balance in two way with 1/3 English; 1/3 Bilingual and 1/3 Partner language.
- EL label gives students with a partner language priority for between 40-60% of seats. Ideal would be 70% Spanish and 30% English.
- School enrollment is determined by boundary so we cannot control demographics.
- Spanish Dual Language in our district is not designed for ELs since most students speak Chinese or other Asian language.
- Emphasize 50/50 balance but problem is that teachers struggle to differentiate among their linguistic abilities and needs. They either move too quickly for English speakers or do not challenge partner language students enough.

Promoting Equity. Responses to the issue of what is being done within schools or districts to promote equity elicited a range of answers from little familiarity with equity related issues to a more complex understanding of the concerns. The responses below suggest a rather uneven terrain when it comes to defining what the equity issues are and how they might be addressed.

- Principals are beginning to appreciate that issues concerning equity in DLI change the culture
- State and local administrators not really aware of equity issues
- New Board leadership changes focus.
- Equity is not often the focus of program discussions
- Priority on insuring that students whose native language is not English are excelling; if they are not adjustments must be made
- Very little movement on addressing systemic inequities within school districts. ELs are taking tests normed on English dominant children. Students of color spend too much time in their literacy instruction doing interventions and worksheets.
- Unclear what it means for teachers and administrators to discuss promoting equity
- International vs local teachers a major issue
- Routine and regular review of language proficiency data and statewide assessment score data in ELA and math.

Lotteries. There were fewer replies to the lottery issue reflecting both a lack of familiarity with lottery processes and the many contexts where lotteries are not used. It is clear from the limited replies that the application of lotteries as an equity tool is not broadly understood or desired.

- In contexts where the white subgroup (of native English-speaking students) is the largest and percentage of applicants of that subgroup is high it is virtually impossible to ensure an ethnically diverse composition for the English side of the lottery
- Certain communities know how to maneuver the lottery, others don't
- The timing of the lottery is critical. Holding off until before the start of the school year allows parents to learn more about programs
- Building a fair lottery process where slots for partner language students are reserved in all programs
- Separate lotteries for native English speakers and partner language prohibited by state choice law.

Other. More than half the respondents did not offer other comments. This is likely due to the normal "fatigue" associated with responding to open-ended surveys coupled with a sense that there was nothing more to say. It is instructive to provide some of the verbatim answers to the question of "other concerns:"

- Equity has become our statewide focus this year and it is at the heart of every decision we make. We have become hyper sensitive to the performance of students of color, students with special needs and students from low-income backgrounds in our immersion programs and continue to monitor this from the state level. Our statewide dual language immersion plan outlines a three-year strategy to reduce achievement gaps for subgroups in immersion.
- DLI is the best instructional model with the potential for closing the achievement gap for ESOL students. We need to work on changing the perception of Spanish-dominant students from different cultural backgrounds as “deficient” because it does not comply with expectations of what it means to be successful in the age of accountability with culturally defined norms by the majority culture.
- Language education is equity work. It is important to engage those we seek to represent and to give voice and attention to the needs and interests of their community. We need to ensure that programs are designed and supported to deliver on the promise of language proficiency development. Language learning can be transformative. Identity and relationships are critical dimensions of this work.
- Equity is at the core of our strategic plan as a district and DLI is considered one of the major initiatives in bringing about racial and linguistic equity. The Department...works hard to align practices and policies to ensure DLI prioritizes the needs of historically underserved students and families and provide equitable access.
- When we say dual language for all I think it is important to see things broadly. The more dual language is truly seen as a benefit for all students, the more likely funding is to flow into program expansion. There is a strong (and valid) argument that resources are finite...however, districts are often more creative in supporting dual immersion when it is seen as a program for all.
- Equity is a neglected lens in the DLI program. One main reason is that DLI decision makers, particularly at the school level, are often not well versed in the program itself, nor the deeper implications of equity issues and therefore are not able to layer the equity lens using a well-informed framework.

In this limited, admittedly unscientific survey, we can observe that administrators involved with DLI programs across the country have concerns about equity, with equity focused primarily on issues of access, resources, academic parity, adequacy of curriculum and assessments, and teacher preparation. There appears to be some awareness and active discussion at the local and state levels about these concerns, but specific actions are more limited. In many ways, enacting a dual language immersion program is seen in itself as an effort to promote greater equity for linguistically diverse student populations and moving to more specific issues within the programs is the next step. There will be many challenges inherent in the understanding and incorporation of these issues.

Conclusion

This brief overview is a foundation on which the discussion of equity in DLI can build, in an effort to move these promising programs into a phase where we pay serious attention to issues that demand attention. Investigations of DLI in action have raised concerns about equity, about how well the promise of the program can be realized, especially as it applies to students from minoritized communities who participate (and those who do not have access). By its very nature, DLI attracts and interfaces a broad cadre of learners, all seeking equal access to quality education.

As we move beyond broad-based comparisons of DLI vs. non-DLI, we can look more closely at the factors, practices, and policies that contribute to or detract from the fulfillment of DLI's potential for all students. We need a better understanding of DLI's impact and limitations, and how DLI policy and practice can be improved to serve students in all DLI contexts. We will also need to "translate" the intense academic social justice and equity debate to the very experientially diverse practitioner field across the country, striving to build and sustain these programs.

Researchers must continue to partner with DLI practitioners in studying and analyzing key questions including those that reflect the differential effects of programs on diverse student populations, their admission and enrollment practices, curricular development, teacher preparation and professional development. Improvement science, among other goals, tells us that (1) it is hard to improve what we don't fully understand; (2) we cannot improve at scale what we cannot measure; and (3) failures may occur and the fact that we might not learn from them is the bigger problem.

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