Frequently Asked Questions: Preparing and Implementing Dual Language Immersion Programs

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Introduction: 50 Questions on Dual Language Immersion

Developing and implementing a dual language immersion program promotes linguistic and educational justice, but requires careful and thoughtful planning. The following frequently asked questions are designed for educators, district administrators, and policymakers who seek a reference citing research-based evidence on a variety of topics related to dual language immersion. These 50 FAQs each provide facts concerning common topics in planning for, overseeing, and supporting success in dual language programs. While reading all 50 will provide the reader with a more extensive overview of dual language immersion education, the questions are designed to be consumed one-by-one and are listed in the table of contents above. Where relevant, there are references to other questions in the answers. While I encourage all stakeholders in dual language immersion to be informed about and to continue seeking the research supporting their decisions, I hope that this document provides the necessary foundations to support important planning conversations surrounding dual language immersion that can bolster long-term student success.

These questions are broken into five sections. The first discusses an important overview that is critical to planning and implementing dual language immersion programs. Next, I present questions and research addressing the ways that students learn in immersion programs. Thirdly, I address partner language learning outcomes and teaching strategies necessary to support bilingual development in dual language schools. This is followed by a section outlining secondary school program planning recommendations. The final section includes information on the best practices for translanguaging, an important topic that has inspired a great deal of discussion in bilingual education. Throughout these sections, I hope to debunk myths about bilingual education to support a more holistic perspective of dual language education, with the goal of promoting linguistic equity for all children.

In addition to the 50 questions, the following pages contain a brief summary outlining the positive impacts of dual language education for all students. This summary discusses many of the common hesitations among school administrators and provides a birds-eye view of the current landscape of dual language education. My hope in preparing this document is that administrators and teachers looking to start new immersion programs, or to refine existing ones, will feel better informed of the best practices for this equity-generating method of bilingual education in their schools. While there is a long way to go, dual language programs represent the future of bilingual education, and I hope to share my excitement and enthusiasm for this method of education, as well as some of the key challenges, in hopes of supporting long-term success for multilingual learners.

Summary: An Overview of the 50 Questions

Dual language immersion refers to a method of bilingual education in which academic content is taught in English and an additional language, known as the *partner language*, across the primary (and sometimes secondary) years. These programs are incredibly powerful because, if implemented properly, they normalize the language learning process for all children, not just English learners, and set a precedent for bilingualism and biliteracy in school communities. Whether a two-way program, in which English-speaking children and those who speak the partner language at home are in the same classroom, or a one-way program, in which only one of these groups is present, dual language schools create a context for multicultural learning, culturally-responsive teaching, and bilingualism. To be considered a dual language immersion program, at least 50% of academic content must be taught in the partner language across the elementary years, although some programs offer up to 90% of instruction, including all early literacy training, in the partner language. While most immersion programs span the elementary years, there are a growing number of secondary programs that "maintain the momentum" into the later childhood and adolescent years, a time that is critical for linguistic and cognitive development.

Perhaps the most widespread misconception about immersion schooling is that this method poses a detriment to children's English language development. In fact, in the case of children who speak the partner language at home, in some instances, children in dual language programs have been shown to exceed the English language arts assessment scores of peers educated in monolingual settings by the end of elementary school (Marian et al., 2013). Even though it is not intuitive, it is in fact the case that more children who attend immersion programs offering 90% of instruction in Spanish meet grade-level English language arts proficiency standards than children in programs offering 50% of instruction in the partner language (Acosta et al., 2019). Moreover, there is evidence that immersion actually leads to faster reclassification as English proficient (Serafini et al., 2019; Umansky & Reardon, 2014), so not only is this method as effective for developing bilingualism and biliteracy, but it appears even more impactful on learning English than monolingual education programs.

Plus, children attending dual language immersion schools generally develop at least intermediate levels of proficiency in the partner language, which may not be possible in the context of traditional schooling. For children from diverse backgrounds, accessing education in the language of their family realizes their cultural and linguistic rights. For children learning the partner language at school, interacting with multilingual and multicultural peers fosters an appreciation for other ways of knowing. However, as shown

throughout this document, the linguistic benefits of immersion are only evident in the partner language when there are specific pedagogical strategies tied to language learning across the content areas. Certain strategies that may be effective for teaching children learning English, such as translanguaging, may have a different impact on the partner language. Properly implementing the partner language across the content areas in dual language programs is particularly important given that there are multiple studies that document home language loss (or slowed development) in young bilingual children without access to bilingual education, as early as age three (e.g., Anderson, 1999, 2001; Barnett et al., 2007; Castilla-Earls et al., 2019; Merino, 1983; Silva-Corvalán, 2014).

The benefits of immersion move beyond language, as well. As stated previously, by the end of elementary school, children who attend dual language programs can obtain higher average standardized assessment scores in English language arts than monolingually-educated peers (Marian et al., 2013). In addition, there is evidence that children may also perform better on mathematics assessments after receiving 90% of their education in Spanish (Marian et al., 2013). Research has also shown that children who attend dual language schools have higher grade point averages and are more likely to complete high school (Christian et al., 2004; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

These successes have laid the groundwork for the Guiding Principles of Dual Language Education (Howard et al., 2018). This document, now in its third edition, provides extensive guidelines and recommendations for dual language educators based around three key pillars: bilingualism and biliteracy, grade-level academic achievement, and sociocultural competence. The first pillar focuses on learning English and the partner language through rigorous and contextualized exposure across the content areas. The second focuses on mastering knowledge of grade-level concepts regardless of the language of instruction. The final one refers to the sociocultural foundations of communities where both languages are spoken: students should develop strong global citizenry and a critical awareness of the products, perspectives, and practices of these communities.

Despite the many benefits of dual language immersion schooling, planning and implementing quality programs is challenging. While these programs were initially developed to provide a platform towards academic equity for children from households where languages other than English are spoken, they have become highly gentrified (García & Flores, 2016; Valdez et al., 2016). In the case of two-way immersion programs, there is evidence that white parents often have greater say in school communities than those of home speakers of the partner language, which disadvantages the very population for whom immersion was originally developed (Valdez et al., 2016). Furthermore, schools often house immersion programs as *strands*, which means that only part of the school follows the immersion model. There is evidence that these programs do not facilitate the

true linguistic gains and equity that are necessary for academic success in two languages because English has hegemonic status (Freire & Alemán, 2021). This has important consequences: it appears that Latinx children begin to favor English around middle school, even after attending a dual language program (Babino & Stewart, 2017). As a result, Cervantes-Soon et al. (2017) call for greater critical competence and reflection in immersion programs to foster equity in the school community and the development of learning opportunities that are culturally relevant for speakers of both languages, who must become proficient in both cultures.

There are many considerations that are necessary to establish the immersion program that is appropriate for each school's demographics and community needs. The 50 questions outlined in this document provide insight into how to make policy determinations based upon each district's population, as well as the most important considerations for facilitating linguistic and academic equity and for supporting development through the best practices in bilingual education. The five sections of this document (outlined in the introduction) provide useful insights into different yet overlapping areas of consideration for planning for or strengthening dual language programs, both two-way and one-way, in an attempt to create a more equitable learning community for all children.

Introducing Dual Language: Program Planning Considerations

1. **What are the different types of immersion, and which is right for each school?**
   Dual language immersion programs provide a method of schooling that privileges bilingualism, creates a context of language learning for all students, and integrates the cultures and perspectives of diverse children into the learning environment while teaching grade-appropriate academic content in two languages (Howard et al., 2018). Dual language immersion is a term that generally refers to one of two possible methods of schooling: *one-way immersion* or *two-way immersion*. One-way immersion is well-suited for communities where a large percentage of students speak the same language, either English or the partner language (that is, the other language taught in the immersion school). This can include English-speaking children learning the partner language or partner language children learning English (but not balanced numbers of each). Two-way immersion is well-suited for diverse communities where approximately half (but no less than one third) of the students speak the partner language at home, and the others speak English at home (e.g., Kennedy & Medina, 2017). In these programs, these children serve as a source of exposure for one another, and those who speak both languages at home set the standard for other students. This places emphasis on bilingualism as the standard, rather than monolingualism. Note that some states do not allow one-way programs so that no students are excluded from participation (Howard & López-Velásquez, 2019); while this method appears inclusive in some communities, it is also prohibitive in others where most students speak only the partner language at home. Within each of these program types, schools must choose how much partner language content they wish to teach. The most common program types are 50/50 (balanced instruction in each language) and 90/10 (almost all instruction in the partner language during early grades), but other options are possible. While these definitions are shared throughout the field, Freeman (2007) and Lindholm-Leary (2012) offer particularly easy-to-read descriptions.

2. **What are the key goals of dual language education?**
   The Center for Applied Linguistics has released the Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education (3rd edition), and outlines three key goals, or *pillars*: grade-level academic achievement, bilingualism and biliteracy, and sociocultural competency (Howard et al., 2018). Pillar #1, grade-level academic achievement, calls for delivering academic content in both languages that is rigorous and that allows students to perform at or above grade level regardless of language of instruction. Pillar #2,

bilingualism and biliteracy, calls for all students to develop levels of proficiency in English and the partner language necessary for academic success in each, across all four domains of language (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). Finally, pillar #3 calls for sociocultural competency, whereby children who attend dual language immersion should be proficient in the cultural knowledge of the speakers of both languages. This involves greater tolerance towards and appreciation of all cultural perspectives and ways of knowing. While each community may have unique goals for establishing bilingual programs, these are the overarching national goals that all dual language immersion schools should aspire to achieve. The Guiding Principles document also includes a plethora of useful resources and rubrics for program planning and evaluation. In addition to these three pillars, Cervantes-Soon et al. (2017) argue that a fourth pillar is necessary for dual language education: critical consciousness. These researchers claim that it is necessary to think critically about pedagogical materials, content area standards, and program planning within dual language schools to ensure equity for speakers of less-hegemonic languages. Furthermore, these researchers argue that dual language immersion necessitates its own content learning standards since these programs must integrate cultural products and worldviews from the cultures of those who speak both languages, and not only English.

3. **Is dual language immersion the same as transitional bilingual education?**

No. There are key differences between transitional bilingual education and dual language immersion. Transitional bilingual programs represent what Lambert (1977) termed *subtractive bilingualism*. The goal of this program is to use a particular language only as much as is necessary until students are able to function in monolingual English classrooms. By extension, the objective of transitional programs is not developing proficiency in both languages. While these programs offer better support for multilingual children than a total lack of bilingual education, they do not facilitate the long-term development of bilingualism and biliteracy. Dual language immersion programs represent *additive bilingualism* because the goal of such programs is sustained bilingual and biliterate development across the elementary (or ideally secondary) years. Although it may appear to be counterintuitive, research has shown that children who attend dual language programs often become reclassified as English proficient sooner than those who attend transitional bilingual programs that push English development (Umansky & Reardon, 2014). Furthermore, while younger students may make slower progress in dual language immersion programs, data show that children who attend two-way immersion programs are more likely to reach grade level on standardized measures of English language arts and mathematics than students who had attended a transitional program in the early elementary years

(Marian et al., 2013). Finally, Merino (1983) documented Spanish language loss in children who attended a transitional bilingual program across the elementary years. Taken together, these findings suggest that dual language immersion programs are more effective in supporting academic development and bilingual proficiency in both languages.

4. **Are dual language immersion programs the same as heritage language programs?**

No. Immersion programs teach academic content in English and the partner language. Many children may be *heritage speakers* of the partner language; that is, these individuals at least occasionally speak this language at home. In dual language immersion, these children access academic content in their heritage language. In contrast, heritage language programs teach this language as a content area, but teach the rest of the curriculum in English. For instance, in immersion programs, children may learn math, science, social studies, and/or literacy in the partner language. However, in heritage language programs, children learn their home language as a content area, but the same math, science, or social studies courses would be offered only in English. It is uncontroversial to argue that dual language immersion programs are superior to heritage language programs because they provide more support for learning academic content in this language beyond the language arts curriculum. In all cases, it is important to consider the fact that language instruction is important, even in immersion programs, to complement the language learned through the content areas. Additionally, many school districts that do not have the staffing or community support for secondary or high school dual language programs can implement heritage language courses to help children who attend bilingual elementary schools to maintain the linguistic gains made over the early school years. In these cases, even children who are not home speakers of the partner language but who received extensive exposure through dual language immersion may be students in such courses. In short, immersion programs include heritage language learning, but heritage language learning does not reflect the only goal of dual language immersion.

5. **What language should be the partner language?**

Dual language programs exist in many different languages. In the United States, there are dual language immersion programs in at least 27 indigenous and world languages (American Councils for International Education, 2021), with the vast majority offering content in English and Spanish. Choosing the appropriate partner language depends on community demographics and needs: the primary initial objective of dual language immersion is to utilize the language spoken by the community to support the development of proficiency in two languages. It is imperative that there are staff

members who have the requisite language proficiency to teach in the partner language in these dual language programs.

6. **Should the entire school be a bilingual program, or are strands equally effective?**
Dual language immersion programs can exist at the whole-school level, but many immersion programs are *strands* within a larger school. This means that within the same school community, there are children who learn in English and the partner language as well as students who attend school only in English. A consequence of this approach is that this may elevate the status of English, which may have negative consequences for the development of and attitudes towards the partner language (Babino & Stewart, 2017). Along these lines, research has shown that strands can actually promote within-school tensions between students who are in monolingual and bilingual programs (Freire & Alemán, 2021). Bearse and de Jong (2014) argue that strands are viable alternatives if and only if there are appropriate supports at the school level to support linguistic equity. These researchers argue that strands are particularly problematic at the secondary level because, unlike in elementary school, school subjects are departmentalized across grades, which introduces additional layers and complications for planning content area instruction in both languages. Specifically, secondary students with and without immersion experience may thus be mixed in classes taught in English, which promotes the fact that English is seen as the "dominant" language of the school community.

7. **What are the key decisions for educators looking to create dual language programs?**
There are a number of important decisions, all of which should be documented in a *language allocation plan* (e.g., Ibarra-Johnson et al., 2019; see the next question) that spells out specific goals of the program. The most important and interrelated topics are (1) which type of dual language program is appropriate, (2) how much of the partner language should be taught, (3) whether the entire school be dual language, and (4) which content areas should be instructed in the partner language. Regarding #1, it is essential to consider the demographic profiles of the school community: if most or all children in the school are home speakers of the partner language or of English (but not both), a one-way program is likely most appropriate, while if there are multiple groups of children, a two-way program is best. Regarding #2, as discussed in other sections of this document, a greater amount of partner language instruction still leads to equal English language development by the end of the elementary years (Christian et al., 2004), so, depending upon the availability of qualified teachers, the partner language should be taught as much as possible (up to 90%). Regarding #3, there are many dual language schools that exist as *strands* (e.g., de Jong, 2002; de

Jong & Bearse, 2014; see the previous question), whereby only some students are enrolled in dual language. Wherever possible, entire-school dual language programs are preferable: these programs have a better likelihood of giving equal status to both English and the partner language, and they alleviate the burden of coordinating across programs on special education teachers (Martínez-Álvarez, 2023). Finally, regarding #4, it is important to consider the community's testing guidelines. Since many high-stakes assessments are delivered in English, it may be useful to teach those academic areas that are assessed through standardized tests in English (see Gottlieb, 2021), and other content in the partner language (this is not feasible in 90/10 programs). Since there is less testing in the early elementary grades, it is ideal to incorporate high concentrations of the partner language during this time.

8. **What is a *language allocation plan* and why is it important?**

A *language allocation plan* is a written document that states how English and the partner language will be distributed in a dual language immersion curriculum. This document is the lifeblood of any immersion program, and serves as a sort of school-level constitution. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to designing such a plan precisely because each school is different on a number of dimensions: student population, availability of bilingual teachers, flexibility with high-stakes accountability assessments, community perspectives, etcetera. In any case, this plan should be as specific as possible in naming what type of immersion program is intended (see question #1), what the requirements are for enrollment (see questions #9 and #12), how much of the partner language is taught in each grade (see question #7), which content areas are taught in each language (see question #7), whether the school is a strand or a whole-school model (see questions #6 and #7), if and how often schools switch between languages (see question #34), what the language proficiency goals are for students (see question #29), and how to assess partner language proficiency (see question #31). This document is important for multiple reasons. Firstly, it helps to lay out expectations for the program during the planning phase, and makes the objectives of the program explicit for staff. Secondly, it serves as an informal contract, such that it provides standards for program evaluation (e.g., if a school achieves less instruction in the partner language than is stated in their plan, they aren't meeting this plan). Attentive readers will notice that this particular question does not cite specific research. This is because the allocation plan is considered such a fundamental tenet of dual language planning that researchers may (problematically) take it for granted that schools have formed such a plan. However, the long-term success of immersion programs is largely dependent on a clear, well-articulated plan that is capable of meeting the students' and communities' learning needs. Language allocation plans

are discussed (but explicitly defined) critically in Ibarra-Johnson et al. (2019) and Sánchez et al. (2018).

9. **Who should be eligible to participate in dual language programs?**

Based upon a study of district policy in a successful dual language immersion program, de Jong (2002) argues convincingly that all children who participate in dual language should be enrolled from the start of the program. This is because children who join the program later on will likely not have the proficiency or multicultural content area knowledge in the partner language (Collier & Thomas, 2018), and would not be able to withstand the demands of such a program. An exception is for recent arrivals and who have attended school in the partner language in their country of origin (e.g., if a Peruvian student arrives in the United States and has gone to school in Spanish in Peru), because immersion programs allow such individuals to maintain their linguistic heritage while also developing English language skills in a socioculturally responsive learning environment. Finally, it should be noted that it is not appropriate for children to enroll in immersion programs at the secondary level if they have not received a bilingual education during the primary years, at least if there are other students who have enrolled that have already received immersion during the elementary years (Collier & Thomas, 2018). As mentioned in question #27, special education students should be offered the same opportunity to enroll in dual language programs as other children.

10. **What are important considerations about student equity to take into account before starting an immersion program?**

There has long been discussion that immersion programs often privilege the performance of children who are learning the partner language and whose families come from affluent backgrounds, which oftentimes reduces the voices of the very families for whom dual language education was originally conceived (García & Flores, 2016; Valdés, 1997; Valdez et al., 2016). Promoting equity requires continuous reflection, and there are multiple steps that can facilitate the creation of equitable bilingual schools. One possibility is to deliberately enroll a specific number of students who are home speakers of each language, as described in de Jong (2002). Another is to offer priority enrollment for students who are home speakers of the partner language. Different methods of student enrollment are discussed in the following question. A related consideration is that schools must offer transportation in order to create equitable access to immersion schools: oftentimes, children in nearby neighborhoods would otherwise be eligible to attend an immersion school are unable to do so because they cannot get to that school. Therefore, school placement and

transportation are important factors in the successful implementation of equitable dual language programs.

11. How do students enroll in dual language programs?

There are generally more families who wish for their children to attend dual language programs than there is space in these programs. This raises the issue of how to equitably enroll students in the program. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to enrollment, so each school or district's policy may differ. Marcus (2022) provides a description of multiple mechanisms that are frequently used to determine enrollment in dual language programs. Lotteries are perhaps the most frequent method for controlling registration. One initiative is for schools to provide preferential access to children who are home speakers of the partner language. However, Marcus (2022) warns that parents may purposefully misreport their child's home language to gain access to preferential enrollment groups, so language testing may be required if this approach is implemented. Finally, some dual language immersion programs do not offer choice enrollment at all, such that all students within the school's boundary attend immersion. It should be noted that this can also exacerbate inequities: if such schools are placed in neighborhoods with high concentrations of home speakers of English, it can reduce access for children who are home speakers of the partner language. Choosing the best enrollment strategy depends on broader district policy and on whether the school in question has a strand (e.g., only some students go to dual language, so not all members of the neighborhood would be eligible) as well as the type of program (one-way versus two-way, such that only certain groups could enroll). Finally, de Jong (2002) notes that certain districts such as the one mentioned in her study have a specific number of students of each language background to whom they allocate spots (e.g., in her study, 22 Spanish home speakers and 22 English home speakers). District policy managers should review Marcus (2022) for further ideas on how to assure that enrollment policy is maximally equitable for speakers of the partner language, who should be prioritized for participation in this type of schooling.

12. When should dual language immersion programs start?

Dual language immersion programs should start as early as possible. Research shows that Spanish-speaking children in traditional English-only preschool programs show loss of home language vocabulary within a single school year, as early as age 3, but that age-matched children in a two-way immersion preschool continued to show vocabulary growth (Barnett et al., 2007). Furthermore, a study on English and Spanish shows that while the introduction of English during the preschool and early school years slows down the growth of Spanish for all children, young dual language

immersion students have a slower deceleration in heritage language growth (Castilla-Earls et al., 2019). Therefore, dual language programs are well-advised to begin in PreK to protect the linguistic heritage of home speakers of the partner language. However, if such programs are not feasible, starting immersion in kindergarten is also plausible. Finally, there are a number of delayed immersion schools that begin in the secondary years (see question #40), although these programs lead to inferior gains in partner language proficiency.

13. Can children join dual language programs after the early elementary years?

One of the major advantages of dual language immersion is that it is inclusive of multilingual children. Since one of the main components of dual language is to privilege multilingualism and to emphasize the participation of students who are multilingual and multicultural, it is equally problematic for students who do not have the requisite bilingual skills to join these programs after they have already started. This is because these students may divert attention and resources away from others who are already engaged in the learning of English and the partner language, particularly in the case of two-way immersion programs. While there may be district-level policies requiring eligibility to enroll in dual language, it is strongly recommended that enrollment not be kept open to children after the start of the immersion program, unless the children can demonstrate grade-level proficiency in the partner language (e.g., the student has recently arrived from a country where the partner language is spoken).

14. Do one-way immersion programs promote segregation among students?

Since opportunities to support the cultural and linguistic heritage of multilingual learners are rare, one-way programs may be able to provide such opportunities to a greater number of students than would be possible in a two-way immersion setting. Therefore, the benefits of such an approach likely outweigh the drawbacks, but there are important equity concerns. If implemented properly, one-way immersion programs do not need to create a culture of segregation. This is particularly feasible at the whole-school level if all students in the school have the same linguistic profile, although tensions could easily exist between children in a one-way immersion strand and those in English-only classrooms within the same school (Freire & Alemán, 2021; see question #6). If a one-way strand is the only option, it is possible to mix children from one-way immersion and non-immersion classrooms during specials, at lunch, or in school events to promote an integrated school culture; however, this also does not protect the status of the partner language and may raise the status of English (Babino & Stewart, 2017). A key recommendation for such programs is to make sure that all

school signage, documents, and resources are listed in two languages, with the partner language coming first. Also, as García and Flores (2017) state, bilingual classrooms have historically been located in school basements, so it is critically important that children who attend one-way programs are placed in high-quality classrooms throughout the school building. This sends the message that both languages hold equal status and that children should be privileged for their multilingualism, rather than motivated to learn English quickly at the expense of their linguistic and cultural heritage.

15. Can students who don't speak English or the partner language at home benefit from immersion programs?

The research on multilingual students' participation in dual language programs is mostly positive. Evidence suggests that those who speak a third language at home can enjoy the same or even superior success in learning the partner language when compared to second language learners (Bild & Swain, 1991). This appears to be particularly true for students who develop literacy in the home language (Swain & Lapkin, 1991; Swain et al., 1990) or that speak a language that is historically similar to the partner language (Hart et al., 1998), like French and Spanish. Genesee and Lambert (1983) reported that children in a trilingual school performed in line with children in monolingual and bilingual schools in their knowledge of English and French, respectively, pointing towards an advantage for learning multiple languages at school. However, as Hurd (1993) cautions, relatively little is known about trilingual/ multilingual students who do not have literacy in their home language; moreover, multilingualism has not yet been researched within the context of U.S. immersion schooling. So long as there are adequate supports for learning English *and* the partner language (e.g., students are able to access ESOL/Spanish as an additional language services at different times of the day), it is likely that multilingual students can succeed in these programs.

16. How can we make language use equitable between English and the partner language?

Babino and Stewart (2017) show that despite receiving a dual language education, Hispanic children often prefer to speak English with peers, including during class time. This reveals that immersion programs do not consistently provide a platform for multilingual children to develop bilingual and biliterate proficiency with equity across the two languages. In some instances, this is a product of school culture because many signs, parent communications, and school materials are written exclusively in English. Furthermore, many immersion programs exist as *strands* (see question #6) in schools where some children are enrolled in traditional monolingual classrooms, so there is

greater priority on English language at the school and community level. This leads to multiple meaningful suggestions that can help to address language inequities: firstly, it is critical to have (at least some) bilingual school leaders. Secondly, it is useful to have ongoing initiatives to promote the partner language in the community (such as through access to free books written in the partner language or virtual presentations about bilingualism at home for working parents after school hours). Finally, full-school immersion programs are preferable to strands. Aducar (2018) argues that there are typically more bilingual schools in communities that value bilingualism and biliteracy, which reinforces the fact that support for bilingualism is necessary beyond the school level to protect the partner language. Therefore, immersion programs must exist within communities that support them and that are willing to take advantage of resources that schools provide to enrich bilingualism beyond the school day.

17. How do students perceive immersion programs and their impact?

Bearse and de Jong (2008) along with de Jong and Bearse (2011) reported that middle and high school children attending a dual language immersion program identified as bilingual. Latinx students identified as bicultural, and English home speakers reported that they felt more accustomed to interacting and forming relationships with peers from multiple cultural backgrounds. Students also report high levels of investment in language learning. In particular, de Jong and Bearse (2011) reported that secondary students stated that they either wishing to continue studying the partner language due to the number of years that they had already invested in learning it or began learning a third language. In both cases, such findings imply a link between participation in dual-language education and a desire to continue learning languages and cultures.

18. What are necessary considerations and challenges for teacher recruitment?

In a study based on educator interviews, Howard and López-Velásquez (2019) offer multiple recommendations for supporting dual language teachers' development. Of critical importance is partnership with universities who can provide coursework and professional training leading to certification in bilingual education. Universities should also aspire to integrate bilingual education coursework into preservice programs to reduce the need for existing educators to return to school to obtain their certification. This could include practicum placement in dual language schools, where teachers can obtain early experience working in a bilingual setting. These researchers also reported the need for financial incentives to motivate teachers to relocate and to obtain their bilingual teacher certification. Possible additional ideas include recruiting teachers prior to college, starting in high school, and developing undergraduate programs at

local universities that lead to certification for existing paraprofessionals. Furthermore, new teacher mentoring, teacher-to-teacher professional development, and visits to other dual language programs are important components of training dual language educators. Partner language staff report the need for additional preparation time, as well as for support from bilingual administrators in materials preparation, since many such materials are not available in the partner language. Finally, administrators must be familiar with the practices and philosophy of dual language education, must be willing to hear the voices of partner language teachers, especially those who are women and people of color, and need to understand the differential and initially slower developmental path that multilingual students experience.

19. What professional development is necessary for dual language immersion teachers?

Dual language immersion teachers have the unique task of teaching both language and content. Therefore, in addition to being familiar with grade-level standards and the best practices for teaching in their content areas, these teachers must possess the necessary proficiency in the partner language in order to teach students content in that language. Guerrero and Guerrero (2009) argue that teachers in dual language immersion programs may not always possess the language proficiency required to teach content in the partner language, so investing in teachers' proficiency is critical. Furthermore, Menken and Antunez (2001) argue that teachers who work in bilingual schools must have a working understanding of second language development in order to appropriately integrate language learning objectives into their content area instruction. Finally, many dual language immersion teachers come from outside of the United States. Special professional development initiatives are imperative to familiarize these teachers with the sociopolitical context of U.S. schools and the expectations of teaching in dual language immersion (Kennedy & Medina, 2017).

Learning Outcomes in Dual Language Programs

20. **How can dual-language programs structure their literacy instruction to best support diverse groups of students?**

    There are multiple possible approaches to supporting initial literacy development in dual language programs. Choosing the appropriate approach is dependent upon the amount of partner language instruction and the structure of the program (e.g., one-way versus two-way immersion). Some schools divide students by home language background during the early grades for literacy instruction, while they combine English-speaking and partner-language speaking students in other content areas (see de Jong, 2002 and Soltero-González & Butvilofsky, 2017). Other schools teach literacy in both languages to all children. Finally, some programs that offer 90% of instruction in the partner language provide literacy development for all students only in that language during the early grades, transitioning to English in the later grades. In theory, this last approach strengthens the partner language during the early grades. Each approach has its advantages and disadvantages, and staffing and scheduling concerns are key considerations in selecting the one that is most appropriate for each school. However, seeing that English often becomes the preferred language in immersion programs, providing early intensive literacy in the partner language may be especially important to generate positive attitudes towards and a momentum for learning in that language.

21. **Do children learn to speak English proficiently when they are in dual language programs?**

    Yes. This is perhaps the greatest misconception surrounding bilingual education. False beliefs that these programs will not produce fluent English speakers have been rampant and, in some instances, outright damaging: multiple states, including Arizona and Massachusetts, have historically imposed bans on bilingual schooling under this assumption. However, dual language education actually has a positive effect on English language proficiency long-term. Serafini et al. (2019) reported that children who attended dual language programs in Miami Dade County were more likely to be reclassified as fully English proficient in earlier grades than children in traditional monolingual schools. Furthermore, Marian et al. (2013) found that by fifth grade, but not sooner, children in 90/10 two-way immersion programs outperformed children in monolingual programs on English language arts assessments, especially if they spoke Spanish at home. This suggests that bilingual instruction actually supports the development of English, even if this is not clear in the early grades. In an analysis of

three years of assessment scores across the elementary grades, Acosta et al. (2019) found that more children who attended a 90/10 two-way immersion school reached grade level standards in English language arts than those who attended a 50/50 immersion school. Christian et al. (2004) furnished similar findings, showing no difference between children in 50/50 and 90/10 immersion schools with regards to their English language proficiency by the end of elementary school. Finally, Lindholm-Leary and Hernández (2011) found that students' Spanish proficiency correlates with their English proficiency level. Two important topics emerge across these studies. Firstly, greater proficiency in the partner language is correlated with proficiency in English, further supporting the need for prolonged and intensive dual language immersion programs. Secondly, dual language immersion students may require the full elementary school period to show these advantages, so patience is key (e.g., their initial progress may be slow, as discussed in the following question).

22. Do multilingual learners who attend dual language programs experience the same rate of English growth as peers in English-only programs?

There are two studies on this topic, both of which report an advantage for dual language immersion, but in different ways. In a seminal large-scale analysis of over 5,000 Latinx children, Umansky and Reardon (2014) found that English language learner children in dual language programs had higher likelihoods of reclassification as fully proficient, English language arts achievement, and English proficiency when compared to children who received a mainstream education. However, these advantages only emerged in the middle and high schoolers' data; in elementary schools, the English mainstream children showed faster initial progress towards reclassification. In contrast, Serafini et al. (2019) reported that children who attended dual language programs in Miami Dade County were more likely to be reclassified as fully English proficient in earlier grades than children in traditional monolingual schools. Therefore, both studies report a positive effect for immersion, but Umansky and Reardon (2014) state that the *rate* of progress is slower for immersion students since they are learning two languages. Therefore, it is important that district leaders be patient and recognize that the advantages for immersion may (or may not) require several years to emerge, yet research consistently points towards an advantage for immersion students in academic English proficiency in the long-term. This is consistent with language acquisition research, which has shown that bilingual children may need longer to master some areas of language when compared to monolingual children (Paradis & Genesee, 1996).

23. Does dual language immersion have an impact on other (e.g., non-ELA) standardized assessment scores long-term?

Marian et al. (2013) also reported that children who attend dual language immersion schools have higher levels of achievement on mathematics standardized assessments by the end of elementary school; once again, this was only observable in fifth grade, but not in the previous grades. In a more recent study, Steele et al. (2017) did not find differences in math performance between children in dual language immersion and monolingual schools. Therefore, evidence is mixed, but one finding is consistent: dual language immersion does not hurt any group's acquisition of academic proficiency in mathematics. More research on science and social studies literacies would be useful. After the immersion years, Lindholm-Leary and Borsato (2005) showed that Hispanic high school students who had attended a dual language program had below-average scores in mathematics in second grade, but performed at grade level in ninth grade and reported generally positive attitudes towards and performance in math courses later on. Therefore, the positive role of dual language immersion on mathematics achievement may not show up until later years, but students in these programs are at least as proficient, if not more so, in this area than peers without bilingual education.

24. Do students in dual language immersion programs complete the same content area assessments as monolingually-educated peers?

Yes. Dual language immersion programs are held to the same grade-level criteria as students in monolingual schools. However, a consistent problem in dual language programs is the lack of assessments in the partner language. This often motivates schools to implement more instruction in English, since these programs are still judged according to traditional measures of student achievement. Some states, however, have multilingual assessments, which makes teaching a greater concentration of academic content in the partner language more feasible. Nevertheless, an important component of dual language education is grade-level academic achievement (Howard et al., 2018), which implies that children are expected to develop the same academic skills but through appropriate and contextualized instruction in two languages.

25. What are the impacts of dual language immersion on academic performance aside from standardized assessments?

Thomas and Collier (2002) report that children who attended a two-way immersion program had higher grade point averages and were more likely to complete secondary education. In fact, Christian et al. (2004) reported data from interviews with Latinx students who attended immersion schools, and half of the interviewees shared that

the immersion program was so validating of their cultural identity that it prevented them from dropping out of high school.

26. Do children develop stronger sociocultural appreciation for the cultures where the target language is spoken?

Research has shown that children in dual language immersion programs have stronger sociocultural competence. Bearse and de Jong (2008) report that Latinx children who were home speakers of Spanish commented on interviews that their dual language program was influential in maintaining cultural and linguistic links with their families. Furthermore, there is evidence that children's self-esteem is tied to viewing their multilingualism as an asset (Buriel et al., 1998), so promoting as authentic of a bilingual community as possible is essential for the success of dual language immersion programs. Since research has also shown that, in instances where school communities are not able to protect the partner language, children begin to prefer English (Babino & Stewart, 2017), developing a school community that prioritizes this language in physical spaces, on announcements, in parental communications, and through bilingual staff is essential.

27. Can students who receive special education services benefit from dual language immersion programs?

Yes. A common misconception is that special education students are unfit for participation in bilingual schools. Data show that children who receive special education services perform at least as well in immersion as in monolingual programs. In a very early study on this topic, Genesee (1976) showed that children with intelligence quotients between 85 and 115 were equally successful in academic performance in monolingual and dual language immersion schools. More recently, Myers (2009) analyzed standardized assessment data with students who were classified as receiving special education services, and once again did not document a difference in performance between the two methods of schooling. There are also some studies that suggest that children receiving special education services who attend dual language schools outperform those in traditional monolingual schools (Howard, 2003; Kay-Raining Bird et al., 2021), contra public expectations. It should be noted that dual language immersion does not minimize or eliminate the need for special education interventions, but children have the same chance of success in dual language programs as in monolingual schools, with the added benefit of obtaining a certain degree of proficiency in the partner language. In fact, for home speakers of the partner language with special education needs, dual language immersion may be especially important in supporting academic and linguistic development. The previous studies

presumably evaluated children learning the partner language at school; however, more studies with heritage speakers of the partner language would be useful to further document that dual language immersion is, at minimum, equally successful in educating children with special needs. Readers who wish to review this topic at length may wish to consult Genesee and Fortune (2014).

28. What supports are necessary to integrate students with special needs into dual language immersion classrooms?

Unfortunately, there is a very limited body of research on best teaching practices for special education services within dual language classrooms. However, in a collaboration with the Center for Applied Linguistics, Sánchez López et al. (2022) offer a number of suggestions and provide overviews of some of the barriers that schools face in offering students with special needs high-quality bilingual education. For instance, these researchers state that in many dual language schools, special education services are only available in English. The access to bilingual special services impedes children's development in the partner language and may require them to re-enroll in English-only programs. Furthermore, Sánchez López et al. (2022) point out that schools often recommend that children with special education needs do not enroll in bilingual programs or leave these programs upon diagnosis, which has made it even more challenging to find a sufficient number of dual language special education learners with whom to conduct research on best practices. This area of research should be a key priority for future researchers, and is currently being undertaken by at least one doctoral candidate at an R1 university at this stage to expand our knowledge base.

Teaching and Learning the Partner Language in Dual Language

29. What level of proficiency do children develop in the partner language?

Students who attend dual language programs often develop mid-to-high intermediate levels of oral and written proficiency in the partner language (Burkhauser et al., 2016; Fortune & Tedick, 2015). However, a slight decrease can take place when instruction in the partner language is reduced (Fortune & Tedick, 2015), arguing that for best results, lengthy immersion programs with intensive exposure to the partner language are needed. While studies on immersion students show that knowledge of Spanish grammar increases with age (Gathercole, 2002; Montrul & Potowski, 2007), results differ concerning different outcomes for home speakers (that is, heritage speakers) versus second language learners of the partner language. For instance, Potowski (2007a, 2007b) reports differences between second language learners and home speakers of Spanish, and both groups differ from Spanish-dominant children in their knowledge of multiple grammatical structures despite having received a primary and middle school dual language education. In contrast, other studies report that home and second language speakers of the partner language have similar performance on language tests by the end of the elementary years (Burkhauser et al, 2016; Xu et al., 2015). Studies on second language learners of the partner language show that these speakers appear to be able to communicate their ideas in the partner language, but these individuals rely on simpler vocabulary and grammar than monolinguals of the same age (Harley & King, 1989). Importantly, in the case of home speakers of the partner language, there is no evidence of language loss across the immersion years. Therefore, this method of schooling prevents heritage language loss, a phenomenon that has been documented for Spanish speakers in English-only schools (Merino, 1983). Although not all heritage speakers reach the same levels of fluency as monolingual children, dual language immersion at minimum protects against loss of this language. Research projects comparing heritage language acquisition in dual language versus monolingual schools are nearing publication, and more information will be shared if and when these studies have been published.

30. What initiatives exist to recognize the proficiency of immersion graduates?

49/50 states and the District of Columbia have designed Seal of Biliteracy programs through which high school graduates can obtain recognition on their diploma for obtaining a certain degree of bilingual proficiency in English and another language. Each state determines its own standards for obtaining the Seal, so requirements vary greatly across the nation. The Seal of Biliteracy website (https://sealofbiliteracy.org)

provides a useful overview of the project goals and requirements for each state, as well as points of contact for schools looking to align with state standards. In some states such as Massachusetts, the Seal of Biliteracy requires that students obtain intermediate high levels of proficiency in listening, reading, speaking, and writing, which is generally higher than the proficiency obtained in introductory course sequences at the university level. For this reason, many higher education institutions are beginning to recognize the Seal and honor it for college credit. This is an important social justice initiative because it creates a coveted role for bilingualism and biliteracy and because, through awarding college credit, it can alleviate financial burden on multilingual families who are often in positions of economic hardship. Therefore, the Seal of Biliteracy should be useful in guiding dual language program planners' goals for their students' partner language proficiency, which should be stated in their language allocation plan (see question #8). Since the Seal is awarded at the end of the high school, and since language since heritage/second language proficiency can decline during the childhood years if not cultivated (Putnam & Sánchez, 2013), elementary immersion may not be sufficient to obtain this distinction. Schools that aspire to award the Seal must at minimum have a partner language maintenance program for immersion graduates past the elementary years, with prolonged and partner language-rich immersion programs throughout the secondary years as the strongly preferred alternative.

31. What assessments are available to measure partner language proficiency?

There are multiple assessments available to measure proficiency in the partner language that are nationally norm-referenced. Among the most common are the STAMP (Standards-Based Measurement of Proficiency) from Avant Assessments, the SOPA (Student Oral Proficiency Assessment) from the Center for Applied Linguistics, and the AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages) by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages. There are no known studies comparing each of these tests. The STAMP and the AAPPL measure language knowledge across all four domains (listening, reading, speaking, and writing), and the AAPPL was designed to align with the national world language proficiency guidelines. Note that while the Advanced Placement exam for Spanish does to some degree measure language proficiency, it may not be ideal for measuring overall linguistic and communicative ability because it is oriented towards intellectual content that is taught in high schools (and therefore may not be a holistic measure of student proficiency). While smaller regional assessments may be available, the STAMP, SOPA, and AAPPL tests are the most common. The STAMP and SOPA have also been used in published studies on children's language proficiency (e.g., Burkhauser et al., 2016; Fortune & Tedick, 2015).

32. How does immersion students' proficiency in the partner language compare to that of children in traditional world language programs?

There are at least two studies addressing this question. Firstly, the Center for Applied Second Language Studies at the University of Oregon (2013) reports that less than one third of children in high school world language courses who completed the STAMP exam (see question #31) reached the intermediate level. In contrast, in a large-scale study, Burkhauser et al. (2012) report that children in immersion programs on average obtained at least intermediate-level partner language proficiency by eighth grade, and further gains may be possible in high school. Along these lines, Xu et al. (2015) found that second language learners were far more likely to place at the intermediate level in Mandarin after enrollment in a dual language program than they were if they had only taken the Advanced Placement course. These researchers reported less of an advantage for immersion when considering Mandarin home speakers, likely because of the home support for this language. Nevertheless, the data reported throughout other sections of this document reveal the potential of heritage language loss in the absence of exposure in the elementary years, so dual language immersion has an important role in protecting the home language during this time.

33. Does dual language immersion promote enrollment in language courses after these programs conclude?

Yes. De Jong and Bearse (2011) reported that students who had attended an elementary and middle school immersion program felt invested in the continued learning of Spanish, and continued to enroll in courses beyond the required level. Kohne (2006) found that 13% more Hispanic students and 49% more English home speakers enrolled in advanced Spanish language classes at the high school level if they had attended an immersion program when compared to peers in traditional English-only schools. However, former immersion students also report that they feel that these courses are often designed to favor more traditional language learning contexts with a focus on grammar, so in areas where there are large numbers of former immersion students, developing classes that reinforce grammar through content learning would be particularly appropriate.

34. How should schools divide instruction between English and the partner language?

There are multiple possibilities for switching between English and partner language instructional blocks. Thomas and Collier (2018) argue that switching after half of the academic day has best results, but do not explain the specific advantages for this approach. Some schools switch between languages every day, week, or unit. It is best

to teach any given content area in one language: switching within the same content area may mean that students could simply wait until English time and rely on this language to participate in class, which has the unintentional consequence of making the two languages imbalanced. To this effect, Molina (2020) found that switching languages in one content area each week led to slightly better learning outcomes than switching each day. For this reason, it may be ideal to maintain separation of the same content areas (with the appropriate scaffolds for emergent multilinguals) throughout the week or even a whole academic year in order to better facilitate the acquisition of the partner language (e.g., history is consistently taught in Spanish and science is consistently taught in English). This may alleviate staffing challenges since it is possible that only certain teachers are able to teach their content areas in the partner language. As addressed in question #45, there are possible drawbacks to this approach, but doing so avoids the likelihood that children will simply rely on English, the more hegemonic language.

35. What is the role of the world language teacher in dual language immersion?

World language teachers are particularly important in helping to plan content area instruction in the partner language. While bilingual teachers are often proficient in the partner language and possess knowledge of the content areas, they are often not trained in language teaching. For this reason, teachers may not be conscious of the best practices for supporting language development within immersion classrooms (Snow et al., 1989; Swain, 1996). On the other hand, world language teachers are trained in the more formal aspects of language (e.g., grammar, pronunciation, etc.) and in strategies for teaching them. In alignment with questions #36 and #37, world language teachers are thus particularly well-trained to help content teachers to think about specific language learning objectives that can be integrated into their lessons. Furthermore, the world language teacher serves as a reinforcement for providing support to bilingual students. In ideal circumstances, world language teachers can offer sheltered partner language instruction for children who have limited proficiency in the language (e.g., children who are new to the school, children with special needs, etc.) that can support their equal access to content.

36. Should dual language programs integrate language arts in both languages?

Yes. Harley (1993) argues that second language learning may require two different types of teaching approaches: experiential and analytical. Experiential approaches are as they sound: dual language immersion students have rich context for learning the partner language through experiences across the content areas. However, research has shown that bilingual classrooms do not contain the same type of language that

occurs in natural speech (Allen et al., 1990). Therefore, there may be a need for more traditional *analytical* approaches to partner language learning that take place during the language arts class as a reinforcement for what is learned elsewhere in the curriculum. These approaches include explicit grammar instruction and task-based learning that are long-standing practices in world language classrooms. Crucially, the language that students are learning in their content areas should be reinforced systematically during partner language arts, which facilitates developing bilingualism and biliteracy across the content areas (Snow et al., 1989; Swain, 1996). While the need for explicit language instruction has not been clearly documented for heritage speakers who speak the partner language at home, there are some studies that suggest that this type of learning may be important. For instance, Montrul and Perpiñán (2011) show that second language learners of Spanish may possess greater knowledge of complex and highly academic grammatical structures than heritage speakers, likely due to their experiences with instruction. As a result, language arts instruction is necessary in both languages.

37. What are best practices for connecting language learning in content area instruction?

Collaboration is fundamental to the successful integration of content and language objectives. Snow et al. (1989) propose a framework for partner language learning that focuses on connecting academic content with language arts instruction. They argue that in the case of content area instruction, teachers must contextualize the language that is "obligatory" for meaning, known as *content-obligatory* language. This is achieved through making input comprehensible for all learners in ways that are contextually appropriate (realia, demonstrations, visuals, total physical response, drawings, etcetera). Then, through planning and collaboration, world language teachers should reinforce language learned in the content areas by teaching *content-compatible* grammar topics. Content-compatible grammar topics relate to additional language objectives that are not essential to understanding the lesson in the content course, but that are related to this lesson and that can be learned during language arts in the partner language. Snow et al. (1989, p. 211) offer the example of teaching comparatives and superlatives in language arts as a content-compatible topic in tandem with the mathematics teacher who teaches the symbols for greater than, less than, and equal to, which comprise the content-obligatory topic during math class. Therefore, language teachers should assist content area teachers in planning language objectives, and should make use of their own language arts periods to reinforce linguistic concepts that are associated with the content that students are learning in other classes.

Secondary Dual Language Programs

38. What are key planning considerations when designing a secondary dual language immersion program?

The specific demographics and structure of each school district make it difficult to provide general recommendations for expanding dual language immersion programs beyond the primary years. Key concerns include where to locate the program such that students who attended the elementary "feeder" school are nearby and can easily access their continued program, how to promote retention of dual language students, and how to collaborate with the elementary school to determine specific objectives and select content areas that require teaching in the partner language. Finally, teacher recruitment and training are necessary prior to the start of any program. Nicholls (2022) argues that planning for a secondary immersion program requires three years, and provides specific stages and a useful checklist.

39. How do dual language programs function at the secondary level?

Nicholls (2022) argues that secondary immersion programs are not divided by percentage of time in each language as rigidly as elementary programs, but claims that at least one literacy block and one content area must be taught in the partner language. While many immersion programs reduce the amount of partner language instruction in the secondary years, it is not necessary to do so. Only students who can demonstrate advanced proficiency in the partner language, such as those who have arrived from another country or who attended a comparable immersion program elsewhere, should join this program at the secondary level. Thomas and Collier (2018) advocate that students who have not received an immersion education since elementary school and who do not have previous exposure to the partner language should not join an immersion program in middle or high school for two reasons. Firstly, such students would face challenges in learning in a language in which their peers have already become far more proficient. Secondly, the rigor of academic content that has a bicultural focus for students who are accustomed to learning in the partner language may be too high for these students.

40. What is *delayed immersion* and can it offer a viable alternative to dual language programs that start in elementary school?

Delayed immersion involves a one-way program in which children attend a traditional elementary school, with regular world language instruction, and then begin to receive

content instruction in the partner language in late elementary or middle school. Genesee (2013) describes that these students make faster initial progress in the acquisition of the partner language since they are more cognitively mature. However, late immersion students lag significantly behind age-matched peers who have received a consistent dual language education since the start of elementary school, particularly in their speaking skills (Turnbull et al., 1998). In fact, on a comparison of partner language proficiency between early and delayed immersion students, Lapkin et al. (1991) showed that late immersion students' overall scores on a French proficiency test were only 47% of that of early immersion students, and 26% of those of French children in Quebec. In theory, one-way immersion programs, in which all children are either home speakers of English or home speakers of the partner language, could function at the secondary level. However, two-way immersion programs would likely not be appropriate at the secondary level, in accordance with Thomas and Collier (2018): delayed two-way immersion programs would require such an extreme level of differentiation to make language approachable for students without prior partner language exposure that it would provide significant obstacles for quality instruction. Furthermore, the need for differentiation to accommodate second language learners would mean that teachers may need to simplify the partner language input so extensively that it would not adequately challenge the home speakers of this language, which thus does not equitably serve this population. At any rate, while delayed one-way immersion is possible, best practices advocate for an early start to immersion that is sustained over the secondary school years.

41. Are there suitable alternatives to dual language programs at the middle school level that still support partner language learning?

Although long-term dual language programs are the most impactful choice, there are alternatives. While any elementary school must offer half of its instruction and middle schools must offer 1-2 content areas in the partner language to be considered a dual language program, there are intensive world and heritage language options at the secondary level. For instance, at the middle and high school level, schools can offer partner language arts for former immersion students to help maintain the linguistic and sociocultural gains made during the elementary years (see de Jong, 2002). Courses for partner language heritage speakers should also be designed, as addressed in the following question.

42. What possibilities exist to support students' growth after the conclusion of immersion programs, particularly in the late secondary years?

Many language programs have created heritage language courses for students exiting dual language immersion after the elementary and middle school years. It is a well-known fact in language acquisition research that periods of decreased language use can cause language loss (e.g., Putnam & Sánchez, 2013). Therefore, it is essential to maintain the gains made during the immersion years through specific courses designed for heritage speakers of the partner language. There are many materials that are available for teaching heritage language courses. Good references for building familiarity with the basics of teaching heritage languages include Potowski's (2005) manual in Spanish and Beaudrie et al.'s (2014) textbook in English. Important recommendations include focusing on holistic, project-based assessments (Belpoliti & Fairclough, 2016), integrating texts and topics that celebrate multiculturalism and personal identity, and focusing on social and linguistic justice. A successful example of a secondary heritage language program is found in Worcester, MA. This program incorporates three levels, whereby students who attend dual language programs for elementary and middle school proceed directly to level three, while home Spanish speakers from English-only schools begin in level one or two, depending on proficiency. These courses integrate Hispanic literature and prepare students to obtain the state Seal of Biliteracy with distinction, leading to potential college credit.

Translanguaging in Dual Language Immersion

43. What is *translanguaging* and what is its role in dual language classrooms?

Translanguaging has become arguably the most important topic in bilingual/ multilingual education in recent years. There are many definitions of translanguaging, but most generally, this term refers to both a philosophy and an approach to viewing all the languages that a person speaks as part of a single system (García, 2009). This approach recognizes that children, particularly those who are developing bilingual proficiency can and should rely on their full linguistic repertoire. This means that children should be encouraged to produce meaning using both of their languages. Following this framework, students and teachers who are multilingual can move fluidly between their languages, and García argues that traditional labels such as "English" or "Swahili" are socially constructed by monolingual communities. There are multiple advantages, as well as disadvantages, to such an approach. Without question, translanguaging provides an important scaffolding tool for supporting students with certain proficiency levels (e.g., newcomers to the English language or children who have no experience with the partner language). However, some researchers have been critical of translanguaging as a practice in dual language schools (Guerrero, 2023) because it may inadvertently shift preference towards English and away from the partner language (Babino & Stewart, 2017). In sum, more research on the long-term benefits of translanguaging is necessary, and it is essential to formulate more specific recommendations concerning how to use translanguaging as a tool without allowing it to become a detriment to students' acquisition of the partner language.

44. Is translanguaging a teaching practice?

Translanguaging refers both to a philosophy and a method in bilingual education. On one hand, García (2009) argues that translanguaging represents a way of learning that does not require selecting a specific language for instruction. Under this framework, children *and teachers* can utilize both languages freely for constructing meaning, explaining concepts, and communicating. On the other hand, researchers such as Ibarra-Johnson et al. (2019) argue that translanguaging is a scaffolding technique that is useful in certain contexts as a method for differentiating instruction between students of varying proficiency levels in English and/or the partner language. While this topic is not one that has a clear "right" or "wrong" answer, the second approach allows for balancing tolerance of students' entire linguistic repertoires with maintaining contexts where children must learn and use the partner language to communicate and grow (see Guerrero, 2023). That is, with English as a socially stronger

language, the partner language may not be cultivated when students are given free choice over which language to use.

45. Does translanguaging argue against the separation of languages or the need for a language allocation plan in dual language immersion programs?

While early conceptualizations of translanguaging may have argued for abandoning the separation of languages by content areas in dual language immersion (García, 2009), more recent work has concentrated on how to best integrate translanguaging into the classroom with language allocation plans (see question #8). Along these lines, in their popular *Teaching for Biliteracy* approach, Urow and Beeman (2013) argue that teacher language use should be strictly planned, although children may use their language freely and translanguage with one another. These researchers also argue that it is essential to compare and contrast the features of the two languages of instruction, and to create times during the school day, as well as physical spaces in the classroom, where children can read, produce, and display texts in multiple languages. In this way, these researchers offer a strategic proposal that keeps the schools' languages separate during most instructional time, and then brings them together in a strategic moment known as the *bridge* to support bilingualism and biliteracy development. This approach to learning builds children's awareness of their language system, which has been tied to favorable partner language learning outcomes in elementary-aged children (Leonet et al., 2020; Lyster et al., 2013).

46. Is translanguaging the same thing as translation?

No. Translanguaging is the use of more than one language to communicate or understand. For this reason, it is very important that teachers do not misinterpret translanguaging practices as translating content from one language to another. While, as Ibarra-Johnson et al. (2019) argue, translanguaging may involve translating in some instances for some students, translation itself should never be a technique that is utilized consistently for all students in a partner language classroom. This is because, over time, children will become accustomed to accessing the instructions and content in the language in which they are most comfortable, which does not create an ideal context for the development of bilingualism and biliteracy skills.

47. Is translanguaging the same thing as codeswitching?

No. Codeswitching implies that bilinguals mix together two separate but related language systems (such as English and Spanish), but translanguaging adopts the perspective that these languages are part of a single system. Scholars in

translanguaging argue that bilingual individuals have a single language system, such that they naturally blend together what we typically call English or Spanish (or any other language). Therefore, the key difference is that codeswitching is built on the view that two separate systems can be mixed together in bilinguals' communication practices, but translanguaging proposes that there is but one system in bilingual communication, and that this system incorporates elements of what we normally call "English" or "Spanish."

48. How can translanguaging be integrated as a teaching tool or scaffold?

Translanguaging is a natural scaffolding tool for multilingual children. Certain individuals, such as newcomers to the English language and those students without any previous exposure to the partner language, may not be able to access grade-level content in their less-dominant language. This may require allowing students to use translators, dictionaries, or peer-to-peer scaffolds to make the content approachable (Sánchez et al., 2017). Furthermore, this approach to dual language education also allows such students to produce content in multiple languages as their proficiency in one continues to develop. In this way, students can be encouraged to express themselves meaningfully using their entire linguistic repertoire. However, these scaffolds (e.g., translators, dictionaries, peer-to-peer interactions) should not be permanent (Ibarra-Johnson et al., 2019), as after children develop higher levels of proficiency in the more challenging language, it will benefit their growth to produce texts largely or entirely in this language.

49. What research has been done on the academic and linguistic benefits of translanguaging?

While research has shown that translanguaging is undoubtedly an inclusive practice that allows children to celebrate their multilingual knowledge, there is not yet empirical research on how this practice affects children's development long-term (Guerrero, 2023). Therefore, it is too early to claim that children experience better academic outcomes or linguistic growth as a result of translanguaging because there are not yet any studies that have compared translanguaging approaches across the content areas with traditional separation of languages in immersion programs. Such a study is needed. However, there are two studies that show that translanguaging is useful in comparing the features of students' languages to support the development of morphological awareness (Leonet et al., 2020; Lyster et al., 2013). Importantly, however, in both of these studies, teachers' language use was carefully planned, and the translanguaging only took place during a portion of the lesson to compare the linguistic features that students were learning in their content classes with those of the

other instructional language. In sum, careful deployment of translanguaging at specific points of a content area or a partner language arts lesson is tied to positive linguistic development, but there are not yet studies comparing this approach with traditional ones on the long-term academic and linguistic development of dual language immersion students.

50. Why is being informed about translanguaging important?

There is not yet a clear or widely-shared perspective about whether translanguaging is an effective and all-encompassing teaching practice for all children in dual language immersion schools. While advocating for tolerance of students' emerging linguistic systems, particularly on assessments that traditionally only consider knowledge of English, it is important to be cautious in translanguaging freely throughout the instructional time in each language. As Guerrero (2023) states, there are certain cognitive advantages to sorting through each language, so translanguaging freely may encourage students to develop a practice of using only one of these languages. Research has shown that this language tends to be English due to its greater social status and representation in public spaces (Babino & Stewart, 2017). Therefore, all educators in dual language programs may wish to be conscious of their translanguaging practices as well as of their use of the partner language. While translanguaging has its advantages in certain situations, it is not yet clear (and is largely disputed) that it is useful at all times.

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