



Implementation of Spanish and Korean Dual Language Education Programs in L.A. Unified Elementary Schools

Executive Summary

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Los Angeles Unified School District's Board of Education and the State of California have promoted bilingualism and biliteracy through policy such as the "Establishing a Commitment to Biliteracy for All" (Res. 103 16/17) and the California State Superintendent's Global California 2030 initiative. This emphasis has coincided with the rapid growth of school-based dual language education programs in L.A. Unified. In 2018-2019, the District opened 42 new school-based programs and another 37 programs in 2019-2020, an increase of 77% since 2017-2018.

Since school-based dual language education (DLE) programs are a key part of the District's strategy to achieve biliteracy for all graduates by 2032, it is useful to understand how they are implemented. **To study this implementation, the Independent Analysis Unit (IAU) surveyed principals and teachers of all DLE programs in the spring of 2018 and observed elementary school Spanish and Korean DLE programs in the fall of 2018.**

An extensive body of research has identified practices that have led to positive outcomes for students in DLE programs across the country. Based on this research, the IAU developed a rubric that included five domains of instructional practice and three domains of classroom and program structure. In our observations and surveys, we assessed how well DLE programs aligned to this rubric. Additionally, we analyzed whether the degree of program alignment was associated with the language of instruction, class size, classroom composition, average California English Language Development Test (CELDT) performance per classroom, program type, grade level, and teaching experience.

Most Lessons were Aligned to Most of the Selected Research-Based Guidelines, but Weaknesses Existed

We found that most lessons aligned to most of the selected research-based guidelines, but we also found common shortcomings among DLE programs in several key domains. Table A shows the five domains of research-based **instructional practice**, the 16 indicators within these domains, and how well the observed lessons aligned to them.

Observed lessons aligned to six of the indicators over two-thirds of the time. They aligned to another nine indicators between one-third and two-thirds of the time, but only about one in ten lessons adequately built on concepts across languages. Other relatively weak areas of alignment were structured interactions and culturally sustaining practices.

Table A. Instructional Practice Results - Percent of Lessons Meeting or Exceeding Research-based Guidelines

Domain	Indicator	% of Lessons	Color Code
Language Separation	I.1.1 Teacher-to-Student	98%	■
	I.1.2 Student-to-Teacher	83%	■
	I.1.3 Student-to-Student	64% ^a	■
Curriculum	I.2.1 Build on Concepts across Languages	12%	■
	I.2.2 Oral Language Production	51%	■
	I.2.3 High Expectations	77%	■
	I.2.4 Objectives	79%	■
	I.2.5 Technology	89%	■
	I.2.6 Higher-order Thinking	56%	■
Connections	I.3.1 Past Learning	47%	■
	I.3.2 Culturally Sustaining	26%	■
Comprehensibility	I.4.1 Scaffolding	84%	■
	I.4.2 Check for Understanding	46%	■
Interactions	I.5.1 Equitable Participation	60%	■
	I.5.2 Structured Interactions	34%	■
	I.5.3 Modify Content	66%	■

^a More lessons conducted in English met guidelines than lessons conducted in Spanish or Korean.

Table B. Classroom and Program Structure Results - Percent of Classrooms Meeting Research-based Guidelines

Domain	Indicator	% of Classrooms	Color Code
Classroom Environment	S.1.1 Student Work	55%	■
	S.1.2 Wall Space	47%	■
	S.1.3 Classroom Libraries	46%	■
Classroom Composition	S.2.1 Two-way Immersion	76% of classrooms from our sample and 81% of all elementary Korean and Spanish DL classrooms District-wide.	■
	S.2.2 One-way Immersion	90% of classrooms from our sample and 90% of all elementary Korean and Spanish DL classrooms District-wide.	■
Bilingual Teachers	S.3.1 Professional Development	Most respondents to our teacher and principal survey do not agree that they receive frequent trainings relevant to DL.	■
	S.3.2 Planning Time	50% of respondents to our teacher and principal survey do not have adequate time to plan with DL teacher in their grade level, and 71% of respondents do not have adequate time to plan across grade levels.	■
	S.3.3 Teacher Credentials	Virtually perfect alignment of teaching credentials in elementary Korean and Spanish DLE programs to guidelines.	■

Note: Classroom and program structure indicators were scored as “met” or “not met” – there was no measure for exceeding guidelines

Color Code ■ 0-33% ■ 34-66% ■ 67-100%

Table B shows that most of the observed classrooms met multiple guidelines for **classroom and program structure**, but that some programmatic components had room for improvement, including the classroom environment and professional development. Teachers also reported a need for more planning time.

Although the IAU found that many aspects of DLE instruction and program organization in L.A. Unified followed research-based guidelines, we also found that, overall, instructors veered from these practices more often when they taught in Spanish or Korean than when they taught in English.

Strategies to Improve DLE Programs in L.A. Unified

This IAU report shows the need for additional focused support and capacity building for DL teachers and administrators. Therefore, the IAU recommends that the District devote more attention and resources to:

- Providing instructional and administrative support materials, training, and coaching;
- Changing policy to allow for more planning time;
- Ensuring that classrooms have adequate instructional materials in both English and the target language; and
- Initiating a mentor teacher program and creating more opportunities for teachers to observe each other.

Whatever form the additional support takes, teacher development should be targeted to the instructional and programmatic domains identified in this report that show evidence of relatively weaker alignment to research-based guidelines. Either central office or local district staff can provide these supports if they receive the resources to do so.

Considerations for Board Members

The Board of Education has already established the ambitious goal of bilingualism and biliteracy for all graduates by 2032, but it can make a difference in whether this goal is achieved by:

- Developing a deep understanding of the District's multilingual strategies,
- Monitoring and evaluating how these strategies are implemented, and
- Ensuring during the budget development process that resources and supports are in place for bilingualism and biliteracy.

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Note that the views expressed herein are those of the Independent Analysis Unit and do not necessarily reflect those of the District, the Board of Education, or any individual Board Member. The full report will be provided on our website, laschoolboard.org/iau.

Technical Report

For more information about the methods used in this report, view the Technical Appendix provided on our website, laschoolboard.org/iau. This document contains Technical Appendices A-D, which cover our methods, observation protocol, survey instruments, and additional analyses.