

FLAG Parent Information Night: Language Acquisition in Dual Language Immersion Programs

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Agenda

- I. Language Acquisition
- II. Cognitive Advantages
- III. Social/Emotional Benefits
- IV. Myths about Bilingualism
- V. Parents' Roles

An illustration of a globe in shades of orange and grey. Two ladders are positioned on the globe, one on the left and one on the right, both reaching upwards towards two white speech bubbles. The speech bubbles are connected to the ladders, suggesting a path from the world to thought or language.

*"The limits of my
language mean the
limits of my world"*

Ludwig Wittgenstein

Go beyond your language limit

+Babbel



Language Acquisition



First Language Acquisition

It is natural and easy, right?

- Complex and lifelong process
- Development of oral language is universal



First Language Acquisition

School Years (ages 6-12)

- Natural first language acquisition continues



Second Language Acquisition

- We use the same innate processes that we used to acquire our first language when learning a second language
- It is a natural, gradual, and long term developmental process



Early Years of Language Acquisition

It is less important to...

- focus on error correction
- focus on acquisition of discrete points of language



Early Years of Language Acquisition

It is more important to...

- focus on communication and content
- encourage thinking in the language
- develop extensive vocabulary in context
- integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing



Time It Takes to Develop Second Language Proficiency

- Social language: 2-5 years
- Academic language: 6-9 years



Cummins' Second Language Acquisition Theory

- BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills)
- CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency)



BICS

- takes approximately 2 years
- social, conversational language
- embedded in context
- reliance on visuals, non-verbal cues



CALP

- takes 5-7 years
- non-verbal cues are absent or less used
- more interaction in academic language (usually abstract)
- literacy demands are high
- cultural awareness needed to fully comprehend



Cognitive Advantages



Cognitive Advantages

Overall, proficient bilinguals outperform monolinguals in:

- creativity
- problem solving
- divergent thinking
- mental flexibility
- multi-linguistic awareness
- executive function



Cognitive Advantages of Being Bilingual

Long term, proficient bilinguals are more resistant to the potential onset of dementia and Alzheimer's disease.



Key Findings

Continuing non-stop development of each student's first language is essential to cognitive development.



Key Findings

- Students who continue to develop in their first language until age 12, including learning how to read and write in their first language, will have big cognitive advantages over monolinguals
- Language and cognitive development occur simultaneously



Social Emotional Benefits



Social Emotional Benefits

- Dual language immersion programs level the playing field for all students
- Both sets of students (those with knowledge of English or the target language) are equally challenged



Social Emotional Benefits

- Equal language status
- Teachers' diverse backgrounds shape meaningful lessons and activities that integrate multiculturalism within units of study
- Opportunities for cross-cultural curricular experiences for all students (not just those in DLI programs)



Social Emotional Benefits

- Students come to support and value each other
- More cooperative learning and creative sharing of ideas
- Confidence in self-identity



Myths about Bilingualism



Myth #1

One's first language can interfere with the acquisition of the second language.



Fact

- The first language serves as an important knowledge base or reference point
- The first language is key to figuring out the second language



Transfer of Literacy

A positive transfer of literacy occurs with reading and writing across human languages.



Myth #2

Young children are the fastest at learning a second language.



Fact

- Young children are often willing, often eager and less inhibited learners than older students
- Adolescents and young adults who have attended school and are on grade level in their first language are more efficient language learners than young children



Myth #3

Children can learn a second language really quickly.



Fact

In school, it takes an average of 6-8 years to reach full, grade level proficiency in the second language as measured by assessments.



Myth #4

More time spent in English results in higher achievement in English.



Fact

- Children who develop high levels of bilingualism become the best readers in English
- DLI programs promote brain development, increasing cognitive capacity



CAASPP Results 2018

	Math California	Math LA County	Math GUSD	ELA California	ELA LA County	ELA GUSD
English Learners	12.57%	12.02%	20% FLAG 25%	12.62%	10.73%	18% FLAG 20%
FLAG Students			60%			67%
All Students	38.65%	37.46%	54%	49.88%	48.93%	63%



Parents' Roles



Parents' Roles

- Provide authentic experiences to use language
- Support literacy development
- Go to cultural events
- Playdates with native speakers
- Exposure to media



Parents' Roles in Cognitive Development

- Use the language you know best and in which you are cognitively mature
- Share household responsibilities
- Engage in family activities



Key Recommendation

Use your strongest language with your children, since you present yourself as a cognitively mature adult in this way.



Summary



Dual Language Immersion Students...

- need to continue developing in their first language
- gain a strong grasp of their first language to inform their acquisition of their second language
- build more cognitive capacity and mental agility
- demonstrate high academic proficiency
- are more motivated and engaged in school
- have higher self-esteem and confidence

"He who knows no
foreign languages knows
nothing of his own."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



Thank You