

# Effectiveness of Dual Language Immersion

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Over the past several decades, there has been a growing body of research into the benefits of bilingualism. This has been one of the attractions for many parents to send their children to one of Seattle's International Schools with Dual Language Immersion (DL or DLI) programs. There has also been compelling evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of Dual Language Immersion as an instructional model that can not only close, but eliminate the opportunity gap for underrepresented populations. Here are a few highlights of this research.

## *Dual Language Education for a Transformed World*

<http://www.thomasandcollier.com/our-publications.html> accessed 1/18/2019

This 2012 book written by Wayne P. Thomas and Virginia P. Collier offers some of the most comprehensive data about the performance of different groups on standardized tests of English and Math, comparing results of students in DLI programs with those of students not learning in two languages. Here are a few representative quotes:

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- “English learners in DL score very significantly higher on state tests as well as norm-reference tests than in ESL-only programs.”
- “English learners in DL master much more of the curriculum, academically and linguistically, than English learners in ESL-only programs. They experience full gap closure rather than partial gap closure.”
- “English learners in DL master English better than English learners in ESL-only programs (even though only have or less than half of their instruction is in English).”

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“... we have found in our research that **dual language education is the most powerful school reform for high academic achievement whatever the demographic mix.**”

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Reading achievement. “... **by the middle school years and sometimes sooner, two-way dual language students, regardless of subgroup, are often at least one grade level ahead of their comparison group.**”

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“... **when English learners and African American students of low socioeconomic status participate in dual language programs, they score very strongly higher (in terms of practical significance) in EOG Reading in all grades, compared to English learners and African American students not attending dual language programs. The dual language program seems to strongly counteract the negative impact of low socio-economic status on school achievement.**”

## **“Study of Dual-Language Immersion in the Portland Public Schools” by the RAND Corporation and American Councils for International Education**

<http://www.opb.org/news/article/study-portland-immersion-students-become-better-readers-english-speakers/>

accessed 8/10/2016

This study compared language immersion students with other Portland students from 2004 through 2014 and found:

*Key Finding No. 1: Students randomly assigned to immersion outperformed their peers in English reading by about seven months in fifth grade and nine months in eighth grade.*

*Key Finding No. 2: Immersion students have 3-point lower rates of classification as English Language Learners (ELLs) by sixth grade, and this effect is larger (14 points) if students' native language matches the classroom partner language.*

Research Significance: “Portland Public Schools provides an excellent test bed for studying dual-language education at scale, in part because it allocates its popular immersion slots using a random assignment lottery process.”

## **“What the Research Says About Immersion”**

by Tara Williams Fortune, Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition

University of Minnesota

[http://carla.umn.edu/immersion/documents/ImmersionResearch\\_TaraFortune.html](http://carla.umn.edu/immersion/documents/ImmersionResearch_TaraFortune.html) accessed 8/10/2016

“Over nearly half a century, research on language immersion education has heralded benefits such as academic achievement, language and literacy development in two or more languages, and cognitive skills.”

### **Academic Achievement**

“English proficient immersion students are capable of achieving as well as, and in some cases better than, non-immersion peers on standardized measures of reading and math.”

“This finding applies to students from a range of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, as well as diverse cognitive and linguistic abilities.”

### **Language and Literacy**

“This approach to second-language and literacy development proved itself to be the most successful school-based language program model available.”

“...students whose first language is not English become more balanced bilinguals and develop higher levels of bilingualism and biliteracy when compared with English proficient students or home language peers participating in other educational programming.”

“English learners' higher bilingual proficiency levels are also linked to higher levels of reading achievement in English, increased academic language proficiency, and successful schooling experiences in general.”

### **Cognitive Skill Development**

“Fully proficient bilinguals outperform monolinguals in the areas of divergent thinking, pattern recognition, and problem solving. Bilingual children develop the ability to solve problems that contain conflicting or misleading cues at an earlier age, and they can decipher them more quickly than monolinguals.”

### **Economic and Sociocultural**

“In the United States, world language abilities are increasingly important to national security, economic competitiveness, delivery of health care, and law enforcement.”

**Evidence Base for Universal Benefit of Dual Language  
Experiences and Instruction (Current Summer 2016)**  
*Support Maintenance, Investment, and Expansion of Dual Language Instruction*

(Resource List provided by Task Force member, Dr. Gina Lebedeva, University of Washington)

**The Astounding effectiveness of Dual Language Education For All.**

National Association of Bilingual Education, Journal of Research and Practice, 2:1, Winter 2004

[http://www.berkeleyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/TWIAstounding\\_Effectiveness\\_Dual\\_Language\\_Ed.pdf?864d7e](http://www.berkeleyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/TWIAstounding_Effectiveness_Dual_Language_Ed.pdf?864d7e)

**The Benefits of Dual Language Education.** Rice University's Houston Education Research Consortium & Rice's Kinder Institute for Urban Research. 2015

<https://www.wanderingeducators.com/language/learning/benefits-dual-language-education.html>

**What the Research Says About Immersion**

Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition

[http://carla.umn.edu/immersion/documents/ImmersionResearch\\_TaraFortune.html](http://carla.umn.edu/immersion/documents/ImmersionResearch_TaraFortune.html)

**Celebrating the Power of Bilingualism.**

One America Report

<https://roadmapproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Celebrating-the-Power-of-Bilingualism.pdf>

**Cognitive Advantages of Bilingualism**

Dana Foundation: Gateway to responsible information about the brain.

[http://dana.org/Cerebrum/2012/The\\_Cognitive\\_Benefits\\_of\\_Being\\_Bilingual/](http://dana.org/Cerebrum/2012/The_Cognitive_Benefits_of_Being_Bilingual/)

**Cognitive Benefit of Lifelong Bilingualism**

Society for Neuroscience

<https://www.sfn.org/Publications/Latest-News/2013/01/09/Study-Shows-Cognitive-Benefit-of-Lifelong-Bilingualism>

**Center for Applied Linguistics: Two-Way Immersion**

[www.cal.org/twi](http://www.cal.org/twi)

**Center for Applied Linguistics: National Dual Language Forum**

<http://www.cal.org/ndlf/background/crede/>

**Dual Language Education, New Mexico**

<http://www.dlenm.org/>

**National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition**

<https://ncela.ed.gov/>

**Directory of Two-Way Immersion Programs in the US:**

<http://www.cal.org/twi/directory/index.html>

**OSPI Migrant/Bilingual Dual Languages**

<http://www.k12.wa.us/MigrantBilingual/DualLanguages.aspx>

**WA Association of Bilingual Education**

<http://wabewa.org/>

(Special Interest Group: Dual Language WA: <https://wabewa.org/dual-language/>)

## **REFERENCES SPECIFIC TO EARLY LEARNING (Prenatal-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade)**

**WHITE HOUSE FACT SHEET: Supporting Dual Language Learners in Early Learning Settings (2016)**

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/06/02/fact-sheet-supporting-dual-language-learners-early-learning-settings>

**Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners: Research Overview Papers (2013)**

*Child Development Division, California Department of Education (CDE), for the State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care.*

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ce/documents/dllresearchpapers.pdf>

**PreK-3<sup>rd</sup>: Challenging Common Myths About Dual Language Learners: An Update to the Seminal 2008 Report.**

*Foundation for Child Development, Espinosa, Linda (2015).*

<http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/Challenging%20Common%20Myths%20Update.pdf>

**A Call for Equity and Excellence for ELLs in WA State**

<http://www.k12.wa.us/MigrantBilingual/pubdocs/BEAC-ExecutiveSummary.pdf>

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