Implementing Indiana's New Dual Language Immersion Programs: Educator Perspectives

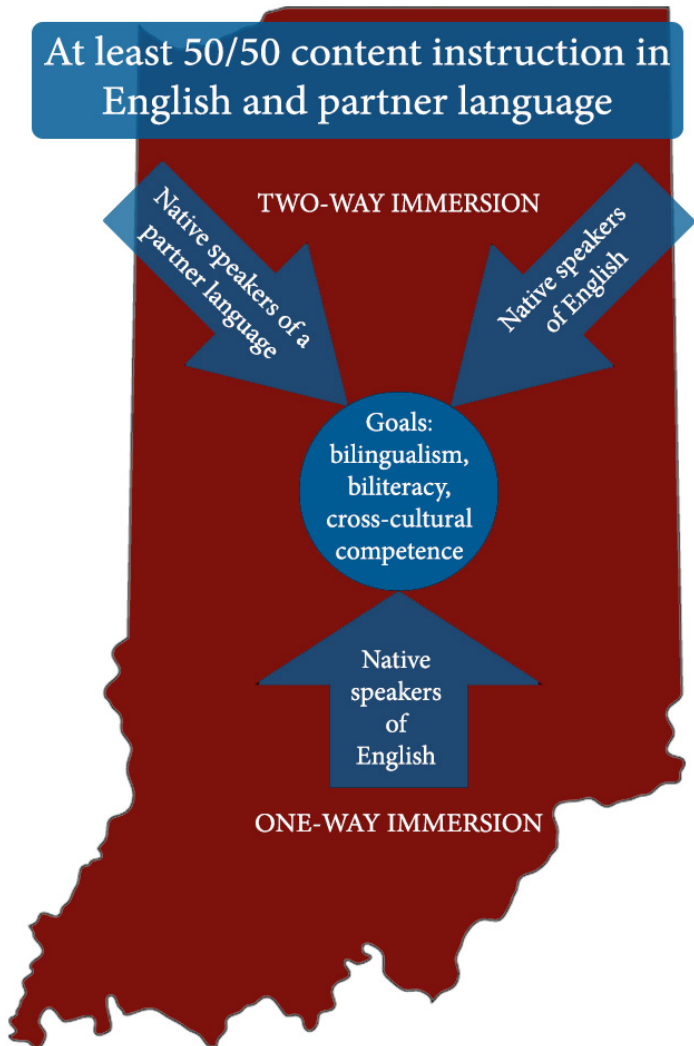Colleen E. Chesnut & Vesna Dimitrieska
March 2018

In K–12 education systems across the U.S., policy shifts and newly-adopted standards increasingly emphasize students' global competence, including their proficiency in foreign language(s), understandings of and abilities to work with culturally and linguistically diverse others, and skills to function productively in an interdependent world community (NEA, 2010). Through both policy initiatives and financial incentives, many states, including Indiana, have supported instructional models like *dual language immersion* (DLI) that encourage student global competencies. This brief examines the experiences of educators in several Indiana school districts that recently received state funds to plan and implement new DLI programs.

Scholars commonly define two-way DLI programs as including native English speakers and native speakers of a foreign language in heterogeneous classrooms, where all students learn content in both their native language and a second/partner language (Howard, Sugarman, Christian, Lindholm-Leary, & Rogers, 2007; Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). One-way immersion programs, which the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) also defines as DLI programs, include primarily native English-speaking students, but still deliver content instruction in two languages (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). In the

literature, a distinction is made between full immersion, in which all instruction initially occurs in the partner language and eventually shifts to a 50/50 split by third or fourth grade, and partial immersion, in which instruction is divided equally between English and the partner language in all grade levels (Soltero, 2016). Most of Indiana's DLI programs, particularly the ones recently funded, use partial immersion; school districts determine whether to follow a one-way or two-way DLI model.

As of this writing, there are eight one-way and 11 two-way DLI programs in Indiana (IDOE, 2017a). To be consistent with the terminology provided by IDOE, in this brief, we refer to both one-way and two-way programs in Indiana as DLI programs. Within the framework of Indiana's DLI definition, Figure 1 illustrates a comparison between two-way and one-way immersion; both offer common goals and instructional models and differ only in participating students' linguistic backgrounds. According to research on DLI programs across the country, the goals of these programs can be summarized as follows: high levels of proficiency in both the partner language and native language for all students, academic performance at or above grade-level standards, and cross-cultural competencies for all students (Howard, et al., 2003; Torres-Guzman, 2002). In communities with limited numbers of students

FIGURE 1. DLI MODEL IN INDIANA: TWO-WAY VS. ONE-WAY IMMERSION

At least 50/50 content instruction in English and partner language

TWO-WAY IMMERSION

Native speakers of a partner language

Native speakers of English

Goals: bilingualism, biliteracy, cross-cultural competence

Native speakers of English

ONE-WAY IMMERSION

classified as English learners (EL) and/or speaking home languages other than English, a school's only option for a DLI program would be one-way immersion.

Well-established language immersion programs (both one-way immersion and two-way immersion) date back to 1994 in several Indiana public schools (IDOE, 2017a). In 2015, the Indiana General Assembly passed Public Law 226, creating a state-funded DLI pilot program and a state certificate of multilingual proficiency (Senate Enrolled Act 267, 2015). Funds were appropriated ($500,000) for fiscal years (FY) 2015–2016 and 2016–2017, and IDOE was empowered

to disburse these funds to school districts to establish new DLI programs or introduce new languages into existing DLI programs. In 2017, funding was extended for an additional two years (IDOE, 2017b). The IDOE utilized a competitive grant process to select school districts to receive funding, and districts are eligible to be awarded up to two years in a row (IDOE, 2017b).

Furthermore, the state's recently approved Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) implementation plan affirmed that IDOE "will continue to support the growth of the existing state pilot programs for dual language and immersion programs," and acknowledged that such programs "produce significantly high results in closing the achievement gap for native English speakers and their non-native English-speaking classmates" (IDOE, 2017c; p. 113). In terms of school accountability, there does not seem to be a distinction between schools with DLI programs and schools without DLI programs; expectations for student growth and achievement on standardized tests in English remain the same across both. Guidance from IDOE has defined DLI programs to include both two-way and one-way immersion models, and school districts may choose from a variety of partner languages, such as French, German, Mandarin, or Spanish.[1]

This brief explores the perspectives of educators involved with planning for and early implementation of Indiana's newly funded DLI programs. We begin with a review of previous research on DLI programs and then outline the rationale and methodology for the study of educators in Indiana's new DLI programs. Findings focus on trends and comparisons among research participants. Following the discussion of findings, recommendations are provided for policymakers and practitioners who are growing and sustaining DLI programs in Indiana and beyond.

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[1] In this study, we do not identify the language selected by participating schools or programs, but rather use the term "partner language" to refer to the non-English language of instruction utilized by DLI programs.

DLI Research: A focus on student outcomes rather than policy contexts

Several researchers have explored student outcomes, including achievement, in well-established DLI programs. Collier & Thomas (2004) declared that "dual language education is a school reform whose time has come," as a result of their study of DLI classrooms in Houston public schools (p. 18). On standardized tests of both English and Spanish reading comprehension, they found that EL students in DLI programs outperformed their EL peers in traditional or transitional bilingual classrooms, particularly after participating in DLI programs for an extensive period of time (i.e., after four to seven years). Additional scholarship echoes these findings, with the following outcomes for students, families, and teachers in DLI programs:

- Narrowing achievement gap between EL and non-EL students (Lindholm-Leary & Hernandez, 2011)

- Enhanced academic outcomes for EL students as compared with their peers in non-DLI instructional settings (Kirk Senesac, 2002; Umansky & Reardon, 2014; Watzinger-Tharp, Swenson, & Mayne, 2016)

- Increased parent engagement (Freeman, 1996, 1998)

- Strengthened student and teacher attitudes toward bilingualism and biculturalism (Freeman, 1996, 1998; Palmer, 2007)

Scholars also have examined common threads among language immersion programs, often by comparing DLI models to other models, such as transitional bilingual education for 1–3 years, which generally serves only EL students, or one-way immersion, which generally serves only native-English speakers in immersive foreign language classrooms (Christian, 1994; Ovando,

2003). With their "language-as-a-resource" orientation, DLI programs have elevated the status of languages other than English in schools, have contributed to integration of certain communities, and have improved cross-cultural understanding (Freeman, Freeman & Mercuri, 2005; Ruiz, 1984). Furthermore, an increased interest and growing demand from parents who consider bilingualism as an asset have been identified (Maxwell, 2012).

Experiences with DLI programs have been known to be transformative for teachers, administrators, and parents and have helped build and grow "an inclusive and supportive school community for all" (Collier & Thomas, 2004). Preparation and professional development of DLI teachers is an ongoing issue; there is no singular accepted, recognized, nor widely known teaching qualification to prepare DLI teachers to meet the needs of language learners and to successfully integrate content and language instruction (Cammarata & Tedick, 2012). For students to reap the benefits of DLI programs, the programs must be well-implemented (Li, Steele, Slater, Bacon & Miller, 2016). In order to do so, one needs to identify the features and the structures in each school that contribute to successful program implementation (Calderón & Carreón, 2000). Some scholars have explored the implementation of DLI programs, focusing on factors like curricula (Castro, Páez, Dickinson, & Frede, 2011; Smith & Arnot-Hopffer, 1998), leadership (Feinberg, 1999), and pedagogy (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; Calderón & Carreón, 2000). However, especially in states where DLI programs are relatively new, research is lacking on the experiences of educators planning and implementing these programs. There is, in particular, a paucity of research on DLI programs in the state of Indiana. Conducting research on the implementation of Indiana's DLI programs will inform policymakers and program leaders in the state's districts. Leaders in other states might also find that this research informs related

decision making as they introduce or expand DLI models.[2]

Approach to the Brief

This brief provides guidance to policymakers and practitioners on the challenges and opportunities of the DLI model. We also offer recommendations for growing and sustaining such programs by examining the perspectives of the stakeholders in the early stages of implementation. The following research questions guide this inquiry:

1. How do educators involved with new DLI programs perceive this instructional model and its potential benefits and/or challenges?

2. As educators plan and implement new DLI programs, how do they perceive their own preparedness for this work?

3. What challenges and/or opportunities do educators perceive as they implement DLI programs? How do these differ among educators based on contextual factors (e.g., program model, experience, school/community demographics)?

This brief presents research conducted with teachers and administrators both before and during their first years of implementing new DLI programs in several Indiana school districts. To allow for an in-depth examination of the perspectives of these educators, we used a qualitative case study design, collecting data through stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and publicly available documents (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2012). We identified the state of Indiana as our holistic case, bounded both geographically and by state education policies related to DLI programs, including recently awarded state funding. The case study design consisted of research with a focus on the school districts planning and implementing new DLI programs.

Data Collection and Participants

The primary data for this research were collected via interviews/focus groups with DLI educators, and state-level policy and program documents related to planning for DLI programs were used to build the researchers' understandings of the policy context. We recruited educators (administrators [n=7] and teachers [n=14]) who were directly involved with DLI program planning and/or implementation in districts with new and/or planned programs. The teachers included classroom teachers who were either current or future teachers in their schools' DLI programs. The administrators included both school- and district-level personnel who were directly involved in either seeking funding for or planning their school/district's new DLI program. These educators represented six out of nine Indiana school districts that received state grants for planning or implementation of new DLI programs during the 2015–2016 and/or 2016–2017 school years. All districts were either implementing or planning to implement 50/50 DLI instructional models (i.e., students would receive content instruction in each language for 50% of the school day); additionally, all participating districts had structured their programs as strands (i.e., the DLI instructional model would operate alongside the traditional instructional model in a school, with a portion of classrooms at each grade level offering DLI instruction). Because one aspect of our research questions focused on exploring contextual differences among the various DLI programs, it should be noted that two of the participating districts were planning or implementing one-way immersion programs; the other four districts intended two-way immersion programs.

[2] Since funding for DLI pilot programs has been extended into the current [2017-2019] two-year budget cycle, school districts will continue to seek and receive grants from IDOE to establish and implement their programs. Meanwhile, school districts that received grants in 2015–2016 and 2016–2017 for their DLI programs may no longer be eligible to apply for state funding, but will work to sustain and grow their programs.

Policy and program documentation

We collected documents related to DLI program oversight, planning, and implementation from publicly available sources (i.e., legislative and regulatory guidance from the Indiana General Assembly and IDOE, district and school websites, and state/local media stories about DLI programs). These documents provided policy context for Indiana's DLI programs and helped us in understanding the guidance provided to educators as they planned and implemented their programs. These documents were not included among the data analyzed in response to the research questions.

Interviews/focus groups

To examine the perspectives of the DLI educators, the research team conducted interviews and focus groups—five individual or paired interviews with teachers; three focus groups with teachers; and one focus group with administrators at different points during program planning and implementation. Questions focused on the successes and challenges of planning and implementing DLI programs, program growth, program sustainability, and community responses to DLI programs. In-person interviews/focus groups were audio-recorded, and all data were analyzed manually.

FINDINGS

Based on analysis of data in response to the research questions, findings are highlighted in four areas:

1. Benefits of immersion programs
2. Recruitment and staffing challenges
3. Importance and challenge of acquiring DLI curricular resources
4. Program sustainability, expansion, and accountability

Immersion Benefits

Cognitive/academic benefits. Participants discussed several types of benefits for students participating in DLI programs. Cognitive/academic benefits featured prominently with participants from five out of the six districts. One DLI teacher connected personal experiences and the likely experiences of many students' parents with the traditional foreign language instructional model in high school and college-level courses: "We realize what a dismal failure that [earlier, traditional] system was. And I think that participating in a bad system, they realize, 'Wow, this is really what I needed to do.' And, if they can't do it, of course they want their children to do it." By sharing personal experiences of the traditional model of foreign language instruction and voicing what many others may have thought about that model, the teacher expressed the belief that the DLI model is the "right" model to acquire a language. A teacher from another district commented on the long-term benefits of the model and the half-day instruction in partner language/English; it was important to her that members of both majority and minority cultures would benefit from DLI program involvement. Additionally, a teacher from that same district expressed a need to know more about the benefit of DLI programs for students of lower socio-economic status as well as students from different racial backgrounds.

Benefits of second language learning, including student engagement and enthusiasm for the partner language, were noted by educators from five out of the six participating school districts. One teacher saw language learning benefits for her EL students during the early stages of implementation:

> It's also been nice to see the students making the connections between the two languages. I think that the EL students are picking up English vocabulary at a quicker

rate than I've seen my EL students do in the past [in English only instructional contexts]. And I think that's due to [the fact that] they hear the vocabulary in my room, but then they're also hearing that in the [partner language] room, so they can make connections between [the two languages].

Even though the benefits perceived so far were related only to vocabulary, this teacher favorably compared the progress of EL students in the DLI program with the progress of previous EL students in a traditional, English-only classroom. Another teacher made a similar observation, pointing out that EL students were learning new academic vocabulary in their native language:

> The students who are [partner language] speakers are enjoying it. They already speak [partner language], but they are learning more vocabulary, because at home they have a limited [partner language] vocabulary. And obviously the English speakers are learning a lot of new words.

Although these benefits of second language learning were perceived through the prism of vocabulary acquisition, the teacher noted the participating students' involvement and enjoyment. Additionally, the teacher distinguished between the vocabulary students acquire while speaking at home (i.e., informal language) and the vocabulary students were exposed to and acquired at school (i.e., academic language).

Social/cultural benefits. Teachers and administrators from five out of the six districts discussed the social/cultural benefits of immersion. For example, an administrator commented that DLI programs were "offering [partner language]-speaking parents a way for their kids to be leaders." Another administrator

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similarly emphasized that the program would be an opportunity to provide a more positive school atmosphere for EL students. A teacher from a district that had begun implementing their program commented on the power of having another language of instruction alongside English: "We have so many [partner language-speaking] kids, and I've always felt that we've done them a disservice by not honoring their language more." This teacher seemed to feel that because her school's DLI program included partner language instruction in a native language of many of their students, the program would better "honor" those students' skills, reframing their native language as a competency rather than a deficiency.

The teachers from all participating districts broadly pointed out the cultural impact of DLI on their schools and students, and emphasized the programs' goals of enhanced cross-cultural understanding, cultural awareness, and cultural competence. For example, DLI teachers shared beliefs that their schools are not currently doing enough to meet students' global needs; as one teacher from a district in the planning stages of their program stated, "We have just not been meeting their global needs in any way." This teacher saw DLI as a means to meeting that end, saying, "The whole language component [of the DLI model] meets a 21st century skill that we have not been able to offer our kids." Teachers from another school district perceived the cultural benefits of these programs in terms of students' "increased interest in global awareness, higher tolerance of cultural differences, and the possibility to get to know people different from themselves." The common thread among the participants was the perception that DLI programs would promote cultural competence, cultural awareness, and cross-cultural understanding in the long term, particularly through enhanced language skills

and opportunities to learn about both culture and language in more diverse settings.

Recruitment and Staffing Challenges

DLI educators representing all six of the participating school districts shared thoughts on challenges related to staffing new DLI programs, particularly the difficulties of securing qualified teachers fluent in the partner language and providing support for existing staff. Two administrators discussed their plans to attract and retain DLI teachers for their programs in the future via partnerships with local colleges. One administrator remarked, "We're trying to grow our own, our students that are going into education. I'm going to target them and say, 'Hey, we're growing this program,' and if that's something they're interested in, then they can come back." Additionally, administrators from three of the districts expressed a need for experienced district-level DLI directors and/or school-level DLI coaches to help guide program development. One administrator observed that Indiana should "put their money where their mouth is" with regard to DLI programs. In spite of state grant funding, the district's resources had been stretched thin in preparing for program implementation; current funding levels would not allow for hiring new instructional directors or coaches with DLI expertise.

The DLI teachers also discussed their own perceptions of the challenges related to staffing their new programs. Many programs included teachers who had taught in the school or district for many years; these teachers would teach the English portion of the curriculum alongside a partner language teacher recruited from outside the district. Some of these veteran teachers participating in our research expressed that they

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felt "nervous" about their school/district being able to secure high-quality partner language teachers in time to participate in summer professional development and collaborative planning time. For their part, several of the partner language teachers discussed their experiences with beginning to teach in the DLI programs; one DLI teacher noted that, being new to a school or district, partner language teachers in general would "need time to assimilate, because the DLI program in and of itself is just so new." As this teacher indicated, the expected challenges of starting a new teaching position are compounded by needing to professionally prepare for an instructional program new to the school/district itself.

Whole school support. DLI educators representing all six districts also discussed the challenge and/or importance of fostering understanding and acceptance of DLI programs for school staff outside of the programs. In all of the districts, DLI programs were structured as programs-within-schools; when fully implemented, only a portion of the students at each grade level would have access to the program (based on parents' preference or a lottery if sufficient interest). All programs started with DLI classes in kindergarten with plans to add a grade level each year; in some districts, one-half of classrooms (from kindergarten onward) would receive DLI instruction, and the other half would continue with traditional English-only instruction. With this 50/50 classroom split, DLI teachers and administrators wondered how non-DLI teachers might perceive DLI programs. Still in the program-planning phase, some DLI teachers discussed the difficulties they faced with getting other teachers "on board" with the new program. One teacher shared:

[Other teachers] feel like, 'That's not [going to] affect me, because I don't have EL students in my class,' or 'That won't be in my grade level for three or four years.' They almost have a kind of negative perception of [the program] right now, or they're upset because every year one person from each grade level [will] get bumped to a different grade level or bumped to a different building if no teachers leave to make room for another [partner language] teacher at that grade level.

This teacher went on to say that staff buy-in had been the "biggest frustration" in planning the school's DLI program. Comparably, an administrator from another district shared that non-DLI teachers had these same concerns initially, but now (during program planning) non-DLI staff were "excited" about the program. The administrator shared that non-DLI staff feared "that we were going to get rid of all the English-speaking teachers and hire only [partner language]-speaking teachers" as the DLI program grew. After those fears had been allayed by administrators, the non-DLI staff had become more supportive. Another administrator stated that, in retrospect, conducting DLI professional development with the entire school staff would have been ideal, rather than limiting it to DLI teachers; they felt that this lack of training regarding the DLI model had "bred some negativity" among non-DLI staff toward the program. As these comments indicate, creating school environments where DLI programs will be accepted and celebrated by all staff can be complicated.

In spite of these difficulties, many of the DLI

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educators firmly believed that, ideally, the programs should have support from the entire staff. One administrator expressed the desire for the school to become "a full dual language school," and elaborated, "What a boost for my teachers who have only ever taught English. What a great, great thing for them, to collaborate with someone and have their students be bilingual. Wouldn't that be amazing?" This administrator perceived the DLI program as an ideal model to expand to all classrooms, to the benefit of all staff and students. Two DLI teachers from another school echoed this sentiment during their focus group conversation, with one sharing,

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According to this teacher, staff were beginning to show support for the DLI program by enrolling their own children—a ringing endorsement, this teacher thought, for the DLI model from teachers who valued dual language instruction. Both teachers and administrators expressed concerns on how DLI programs might fit into existing school environments; they wondered how to foster acceptance among non-DLI staff for the programs and felt that non-DLI staff should embrace and recognize the value that DLI programs brought to their schools.

Planning time and professional development.
Educators in five out of the six districts discussed

the importance and/or challenge of common planning time and collaboration for DLI teachers, as well as the benefits of professional development (i.e., site visits) for DLI teachers and administrators. Teachers from one school where the DLI program had been implemented expressed that "[common] planning time has been a struggle," particularly during the busy months of the school year. A teacher from another DLI program described feeling "lucky" that both DLI teachers worked well together. This teacher further emphasized the importance of DLI team to "have trust" in each other and "be there" for one another, because implementing their DLI program had been a "rollercoaster of emotions." These teachers both believed that common planning time for DLI staff had not been adequate, and that DLI teachers should have trusting and supportive professional relationships.

Teachers from five out of six districts shared that, as they learned about DLI instruction, site visits to and/or observations of other DLI programs, classrooms, or teachers had been valuable. When teachers were asked what an "ideal" DLI program or school might look like, one named an Indiana school with long-standing immersion programs and described being impressed during a site visit by the "extensive" dual-language library. This teacher also had observed the prevalence of bilingualism/biculturalism throughout the school, including "specials teachers who incorporated language and culture into their content." Other teachers wished for time and budgetary support to visit well-established DLI programs, both in Indiana and in other states.[3] Another teacher shared,

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Other teachers similarly commented, saying it had been helpful (prior to implementing their own programs) to participate in site visits and see "DLI classrooms in action." These teachers went on to say that they wished for more opportunities with existing DLI classrooms and teachers—to discuss observations and program "logistics." Across our interview and focus group data, this trend emerged: site visits and interaction with educators from well-established DLI programs were particularly valuable professional development experiences for new DLI teachers.

Characteristics of DLI educators. Administrators did not explicitly discuss the benefits of additional time/training for DLI teachers new to their schools or districts. However, administrator focus groups took place prior to DLI program implementation. As they planned their programs, administrators expressed their thoughts on ideal DLI teacher characteristics. Administrators shared that they looked for many of the same qualities that they would for any teaching position (i.e., knowledge of effective instructional strategies, "passion" for working with children and their families). Additionally, they sought out DLI teachers who would be creative or "out-of-the-box" thinkers and those who had a "global mindset," with understandings of other cultures. The teachers echoed many of the same themes discussed

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[3] Educators from several of Indiana's DLI programs had either visited or corresponded with DLI programs in Utah and were using the Utah Dual Language Immersion program as a model for the 50/50 allocation of instructional time between the two languages (Utah Dual Language Immersion, 2017).

by administrators, namely, that DLI teachers should exhibit the same qualities as any good classroom teacher. For example, they stated that DLI teachers should be "flexible" and should have "good classroom management [skills]." They also emphasized the importance of DLI teachers' willingness and ability to collaborate or "be a team player." Since these teachers were planning or implementing DLI instructional models in which the English and partner language teachers would share students, they felt it was important to maintain close collaborative relationships.

Teachers and district-level administrators also shared qualities they would look for in a successful principal for a DLI program (i.e., "passionate" about DLI, "be a good salesperson" in advocating for the program). Two teachers from different schools expressed appreciation for principals who were "open to learning" about DLI programs, with one commenting: "We have a principal who was reluctant at first, but was, and is, open to learning about the program—is willing to go there. [They] really believe it's the right thing to do." For schools with a DLI program running alongside a traditional program, teachers and administrators discussed the unique nature of the principal as communicator and peacemaker. One administrator described this challenge as follows: "[Teachers] that don't speak [non-English target language], they think their job is going to be replaced, so going back to the principal, you got to calm the waters." The administrator continued by saying that this issue could be alleviated largely through communicating effectively with teachers about the DLI program's goals and trajectory and through "listening to teachers' concerns."

Importance and Challenge of Acquiring DLI Curricular Resources

Teachers in five out of the six participating districts discussed the importance and challenge of finding high-quality curricular resources

for their classrooms, noting that the partner language DLI teachers shouldered more of the responsibility for identifying and/or creating resources in their language of instruction. To illustrate, in a focus group discussion, one of the English-instruction DLI teachers in early-stage program implementation said, "I think [partner language teacher] has been hit especially hard with it. I think [they are] doing a lot of not only curriculum development, but [they are] also doing a lot of the administrative stuff that probably should have been done before we even started teaching." In another interview, with a DLI program still in the planning phase, an administrator commented similarly, saying, "Resources are important. I don't want [the teachers] making everything; we don't have time for that." A teacher from another program shared this administrator's concern: "So much of your time is spent creating or preparing resources. . . so if I could give some advice, make sure that teacher has plenty of support." After the program had begun implementation, this teacher noted that considerable time had been spent on preparing curriculum, and additional support in this area would be helpful. According to all of these DLI educators, finding and employing high-quality curricula for their programs were important to them, but they were concerned that securing and/or creating such resources proved to be time-consuming, particularly for the partner language portion of the curriculum.

Program Sustainability, Expansion, and Accountability

Teachers and administrators from five out of six of the participating districts voiced their views on issues of program sustainability, expansion, and accountability. Administrators expressed their views and concerns about program sustainability and expansion in a less enthusiastic manner than the teachers. For example, one of the administrators discussed the difficulty of making promises to parents about the program's future,

saying, "It's hard to make promises to people about six years from now. We know what we want to do, but…." Another administrator shared that long-term sustainability plans are a work in progress. Teachers were, in general, more positive about future opportunities for their students, their program, the school, and the community overall. While teachers were aware that future funding might be an issue, the teachers' goals were to maintain parental interest and to attract more students into their DLI programs. When asked about their program's five-year goals, teachers from one district expressed the desire to have a fully staffed program with aligned standards for language and content. Furthermore, the five-year goal for teachers from another district indicated impacts beyond the classroom, (i.e., increased partner language presence in the community, increased student interest to travel to the partner language country).

Concerning program accountability, the DLI teachers were aware that they would be accountable for student achievement, which is measured through assessments in English. For example, DLI teachers expressed concerns about students' standardized test scores and how scores would level out, considering that benefits of DLI generally become more apparent in grades 5 and 6 (Collier & Thomas, 2014). Familiar with the research that suggests DLI academic benefits generally appear later, these teachers assumed that their DLI students might score below grade level on standardized tests administered in earlier grades. For example, teachers from one program reported that standardized test scores in their schools were already below the state average. As one teacher stated, "Our test scores right now, even without the DLI program, are significantly below what the expected level is." When discussing program accountability, some teachers from a different school mentioned concerns that their DLI kindergarten students will need to follow the same standards as non-DLI students. Overall, most teachers were not

sure what to expect in terms of language learning and language development and the connection to program accountability.

DISCUSSION

With regard to the challenges and benefits of implementing DLI programs, the perceptions of the educators in our study reflect previous scholarship on DLI programs. The following section elaborates on these findings, with connections to existing research.

DLI Educators Identify Benefits of Instructional Model Aligned with Research
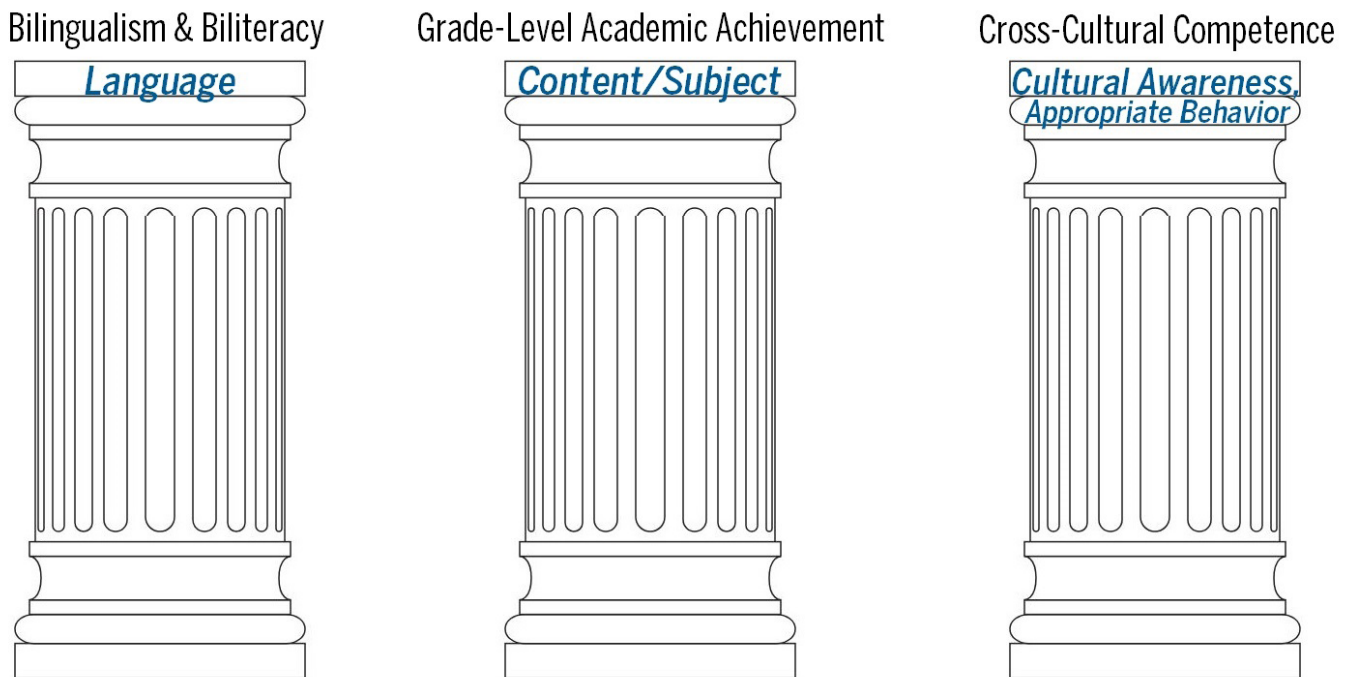
This brief's findings reveal that participants recognized the cognitive/academic benefits of the DLI model (including benefits related to second language learning, and social/cultural benefits). The research literature points to specific student benefits (e.g., full gap closure and high academic achievement; and graduating proficient bilinguals) as well as school/district benefits (e.g., the DLI model as a vehicle for school system reform) (Soltero, 2016; Thomas & Collier, 2017). Previous research indicates enhanced cognitive development and higher student engagement as the two most important outcomes of DLI instruction (e.g., Watzinger-Tharp, Swenson & Mayne, 2016; Palmer, 2007). Similarly, our study illustrates that these DLI educators acknowledged higher student engagement as an important benefit. Our participants also identified the benefits of learning a second language; again, this recognition aligns with the research literature that classifies the DLI model as a means to achieving additive bilingualism for all students (Thomas & Collier, 2017). Moreover, our findings indicated that the DLI educators believed in the program's academic and social benefits for participating EL students; native languages would be "honored" through partner language instruction and English acquisition

would develop more quickly as would academic skills in their native language. These beliefs align with research on outcomes for EL students involved in DLI programs; EL students in DLI programs are empowered (Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2005) and experience higher levels of academic achievement than EL students in traditional classrooms (Lindholm-Leary & Hernandez, 2011; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). The findings indicate that educators involved in early implementation of DLI programs perceive the more general academic benefits (e.g., fluency in two languages, higher levels of achievement, cross-cultural awareness) while, at the same time, lack familiarity with the more specific program benefits (e.g., closing the academic achievement gap among various student populations; the twofold cognitive benefits of learning a second language and also experiencing that language beyond basic vocabulary skills) (Thomas & Collier, 2017).

Enhanced Cross-cultural Competence as a Secondary Outcome for DLI Programs

Cross-cultural competence is one of the three pillars in dual language education (Howard et al., 2018). These three pillars, which also include bilingualism/biliteracy and grade-level academic achievement, distinguish the DLI model from other instructional models (see Figure 2). However, achieving a balance among these three pillars has proven to be difficult; cross-cultural competence seems to be an afterthought in DLI program implementation. The DLI educators involved in this research demonstrated awareness of their programs' goals related to cross-cultural competence in a broad sense (e.g., programs would "meet students' global needs" or increase "global awareness"). Our findings revealed that participants perceived the importance of the cultural aspects of the DLI programs, though

FIGURE 2. THREE PILLARS OF DUAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Bilingualism & Biliteracy — *Language*

Grade-Level Academic Achievement — *Content/Subject*

Cross-Cultural Competence — *Cultural Awareness, Appropriate Behavior*

(Center for Applied Linguistics)

they did not explicitly reveal if those aspects had been sufficiently addressed in the early implementation of their own programs. As their statements indicated, they seemed to link their DLI programs' cultural awareness objectives primarily to the language learning aspects of the instructional model. In order to achieve that balance among the three DLI programmatic pillars, policymakers and administrators should emphasize the role of cross-cultural instructional content in DLI programs. Additionally, program guidance should underscore the value of cross-cultural learning among EL and non-EL students in the two-way immersion model (i.e., the value in enhancing the status of minority groups).

Planning and Professional Development for Successful Program Implementation

The DLI educators discussed the challenges of preparing for DLI program implementation, including aligning curricular standards with language learning goals, professional development for teachers and administrators, and acquisition of qualified staff and resources. For example, the DLI educators, particularly the teachers, expressed their concerns regarding curriculum, specifically the alignment of state standards with language proficiency goals that are not codified by state law. The DLI teachers were aware that their students were expected to meet the same benchmarks as all students (as measured by standardized tests in English), and some seemed uncertain as to how partner language acquisition would operate alongside existing targets for academic learning. Their concerns may stem from the limited guidance provided by state-level agencies on such matters; according to the guidelines for receiving grant funding, IDOE does require progress monitoring and assessment in both languages but there is no specific assessment recommended for such purposes (IDOE, 2017b). Furthermore, similar

to many other states, Indiana has used the WIDA English Language Development Standards for English Learners to guide instruction for EL students, but the standards related to instruction in languages other than English currently apply only to what has traditionally been conceptualized as foreign language learning (e.g., language courses in middle and high school) (IDOE, 2018). In the absence of clear guidance on assessments and standards, the DLI educators seemed anxious about how their programs would be evaluated for state accountability purposes. These concerns may stem from prior knowledge/experience with the policies of the No Child Left Behind Act; when this legislation was active, some scholars noted that bilingual and dual language instruction became secondary to instructional models focusing only on swift English acquisition (Menken & Solorza, 2014; Palmer & Snodgrass Rangel, 2011; Wiley & Wright, 2004;).

The issue of professional development for DLI teachers and administrators featured prominently in our findings. Professional development—for both teachers and administrators— specific to the DLI model, as well as a full year of planning prior to program implementation have been lauded as key steps in successful DLI program implementation (Hamayan, Genessee & Cloud, 2013; Soltero, 2016). Our findings indicated that the participants perceived site visits to other DLI programs as the most beneficial type of professional development. They believed the most effective way to learn about the DLI model was to see other schools/programs implementing DLI programs. Many teachers in our study wished for more opportunities to observe well-established DLI programs and learn from experienced DLI teachers.

While the DLI educators did express a desire to learn more about the instructional model through site visits and professional development, both administrators and teachers did not seem

to think that DLI teachers recruited to their programs needed specific prior knowledge about DLI practices, second language acquisition, or language/content standards and assessments. Rather, they emphasized that DLI teachers should have many of the same qualities as any effective teacher—flexibility, creativity, knowledge of best practices in instruction and classroom management, and a collaborative mindset. This focus on the need for high-quality teachers in DLI classrooms, rather than teachers with training and prior experience with the DLI model, corresponds with our finding that all participating districts faced challenges in securing qualified partner language teachers. This hiring challenge is not unique to Indiana; there is a nationwide lack of qualified DLI and world language teachers (Ovando & Combs, 2018). Furthermore, while DLI programs do not serve only EL students, many of Indiana's programs serve significant numbers of EL students in their particular schools or districts, and Indiana educator licensure requirements do not currently include specific coursework to prepare educators for working with EL students (IDOE, 2011; Tanenbaum, et al., 2012). Although hiring partner language teachers without DLI experience did not appear to be a concern for administrators, they did wish for district- or school-level DLI directors or coaches to have direct knowledge of the instructional model; they did not perceive themselves to be qualified or sufficiently prepared to serve in these roles. This finding further emphasizes the need for DLI-specific training for administrators and teachers. Educators overseeing DLI in their schools/districts seemed to perceive the programs as an add-on rather than an integrated part of their own professional responsibilities.

Acquiring high-quality DLI curricular resources was perceived as an important yet challenging aspect of early DLI implementation. The DLI educators seemed to believe that the successful implementation of their DLI programs depended on the quality of the instructional materials chosen by their school/district, and recognized that creating resources could be especially time-consuming for teachers. Some teachers expressed that partner language teachers shared a greater responsibility in identifying and creating instructional materials. Even though the two teachers shared instructional duties and the same group of students, partner language teachers seemed to be tasked with the demanding work of acquiring curricular resources. This finding may indicate that DLI educators may not understand the extent to which their collegial, collaborative efforts are a key component of effective DLI program implementation (Calderón & Carreón, 2000). Although a DLI program may follow broad grade-level curricular frameworks, the DLI teaching team should be knowledgeable and flexible to organizing the curriculum in ways that correspond to their own contexts (Hamayan et. al., 2013).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations (depicted in Figure 3 and summarized below) are provided for policymakers and practitioners in DLI programs in Indiana and beyond:

- School/district administrators should mandate DLI-specific professional development.
- School/district administrators should provide collaborative planning time for DLI program staff, prior to the implementation of the DLI programs, so they can develop curriculum and find a balance of language and content in English and in the partner language.
- School/district administrators should mandate professional development on the structure, goals, and student impacts of the DLI model for all staff in schools with DLI programs.

FIGURE 3. HOW CAN POLICYMAKERS SUPPORT DLI PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION?

- Policymakers should provide structured guidance on standards-based curricula (e.g., approved programs, recommended resources, alignment of language learning benchmarks with content standards) for the two languages as well as accountability measures (e.g., benchmarks for student growth in each language) for the DLI programs, including measurement of English and target language proficiency. As state education policies adapt to the recent adoption of federal regulations under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), practitioners would benefit from policymakers' guidance to help them sustain and grow DLI programs, particularly with regard to standards-based curricula for partner language instruction and accountability (e.g., both meeting DLI program goals/benchmarks and achieving grade-level state-mandated benchmarks).

- Policymakers and school/district administrators should promote DLI program fidelity to research-based best practices, with particular attention to pedagogy for cross-cultural understanding and to the three pillars of the DLI model.

- Policymakers and state officials should work with teacher preparation programs (universities) to address the existing shortage of qualified DLI teachers. Note: Several Indiana universities have the necessary coursework in place to prepare DLI teachers, even though Indiana does not currently have a specific licensure requirement for DLI teachers.

- Policymakers should establish a mandatory scheme of continuous professional development for DLI teachers and administrators that would enable them to implement DLI programs successfully in their schools/districts.

CEEP

Suggested Citation

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Acknowledgements

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