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# The Case for Dual Language Programs as the Future of Public Education

[1]Jacob Werblow, Ph.D. [2]Luke Duesbery, Ph.D. [3]Helen Koulidobrova, Ph.D.

**Abstract**

The U.S. spends far more on education than any other country in the world (OECD, 2011); yet, continues to produce vastly inequitable outcomes, especially for English Learners (ELs). In this article we explore the reasons for, and consequences of, the U.S. system's continued failure to support ELs. The term, in itself, is part of the problem as it frames students' native language as a deficit upon which many linguistic models have been built. After articulating and problematizing this context, we aim to make an evidence-based argument for a concrete policy solution: the national implementation of two-way dual language programs as the model, not the exception, for the future of PK-8 education in the United States.

*Keywords:* Dual-Language; English Learners; Bilingual Education

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[1]**Jacob Werblow** is an Associate Professor in Educational Leadership at Central Connecticut State University. He was selected as the 2016 Harber Fellow in Education at Wesleyan University and a Fulbright Scholar in Kyoto, Japan in 2019. Previously, Jacob taught Sheltered English in Los Angeles and San Francisco, and helped create a locally-run charter school in Springfield, OR.

[2]**Luke Duesbery** earned his Ph.D. from the University of Oregon in 2007. He currently holds a position as Associate Professor in the School of Teacher Education at San Diego State University and is the Director for the Center for Teaching Critical Thinking and Creativity. His research interests include critical thinking, educational measurement, data graphics in assessment, and the integration of technology in assessment and learning.

[3]**Helen Koulidobrova** earned her Ph.D. in Theoretical and Experimental Linguistics from the University of Connecticut (UCONN) in 2012. As an Associate Professor in English at Central Connecticut State University, she currently also serves as the Director of the CT Bilingual and English Language Learning Research Lab. Her research interests are in formal properties (syntax/semantics), bilingualism, and policy.

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# The Case for Dual Language Programs as the Future of Public Education

## Introduction

The U.S. spends far more on education than any other country in the world (OECD, 2011); yet, continues to produce vastly inequitable outcomes, especially for English Learners (ELs). The reauthorization of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA,* 2016, Appendix A) identifies an EL as "an individual who, among other things, has difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language that may be sufficient to deny the individual: i) the ability to meet challenging state academic standards, ii) the ability to achieve successfully where the language instruction is in English; or iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society."

Since *Lau vs. Nichols* (1974), the U.S. Department of Education has been charged with improving the academic outcomes of these learners by directly focusing on language support. Despite such efforts, the achievement gap between ELs and non-ELs remains largely unchanged. Even in mathematics, this gap in achievement is staggering. For example, only 6% of ELs in the 8th grade perform at or above proficient in mathematics, which is approximately five times worse than their non-EL peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Additionally, most students who speak a language other than English begin losing their language and culture within as little as two to three years (Montrul 2008; Ng & Wigglesworth, 2007; Tomiyama, 2000) if it is not embraced by the school community. Given this fact, and that ELs are projected to make up 25% of all public-school students in the United States by 2025 (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2007), anyone concerned with the future of education in the US should ask; *Why do EL students continue to perform at such low levels? What should the school system be doing differently to ensure the success of students identified as ELs*? In this article, we attempt to answer these questions that have plagued America's system of schooling for decades.

## EL, EB, DLL – What's in a Name?

English learner (EL) or Limited English Proficient (LEP) are terms most educators and policy makers in the United States are familiar with, yet they lie at the root of how and why the majority of our nation's schools have and continue to (mis)educate this group of students. These terms are problematic because they are positioned from a deficit conceptual framework. They describe only what the learner lacks, what the system of schooling expects them to gain (English), and ignores the learner's valuable cultural and linguistic assets that are rooted in the student's identity, family, history, community, etc.

This deficit language is pervasive and is often presented without question. For example, California's Department of Education (2019) states regarding ELs, "There are many programs and services to help students who do not speak, read, write or understand English well as a result of English not being their home language. The overall goal of the various programs is to improve the English language skills of EL students, immigrant students, migrant students and provide information to their parents about services available." Note: This statement only describes the student in terms of what they lack. Furthermore, developing or maintaining fluency in one's native language(s) is neither acknowledged nor stated as a goal of the various language programs. Thus, the deficit language imposed on this group of children mirrors the policies and programs that they will likely receive.

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Over the last decade, however, asset-based perspectives have emerged. Here, the benefits of being bilingual or multilingual are acknowledged and, in fact, embraced. This has resulted in affective language policy in thousands of schools across the United States. In alignment with this line of logic, all ELs *are* Emergent Bilinguals (EBs), acquiring English through school and society as they continue to use their home language (Garcia, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008). Dual language learner (DLL), a term used by the Office of Head Start and U.S. Department of Education (2008), is another more culturally responsive term that acknowledges the learner's perceived right to have the opportunity to become fully bilingual. While DLL is often used synonymously with bilingual learners (Barac, Bialystok, Castro, & Sanchez, 2014), we prefer the term Multiple Language Leaner (MLL) because a significant number of students already know (i.e. speak or sign) multiple languages other than English when they enter formal schooling. Multilingualism is most common among students who are recent immigrants. In fact, the vast majority of people in the world comfortably use more than one language (deJong, 2011). From this view, monolingualism is a deficit.

Embracing the term 'MLL' is one small step towards acknowledging the multiple linguistic and cultural assets that many children bring with them as they enter through the schoolhouse gate. And, as more schools and communities recognize the linguistic assets that these children have, many schools have become more responsive, finding creative ways to promote educational policies that value the idea of multilingualism and are inclusive of the diverse languages spoken in the community. For this reason, we use 'MLLs' as an umbrella term to describe any group of students who are exposed to two or more languages during childhood. It is important to note that MLL students are not necessarily identified as 'ELs,' thus we use the terms accordingly in this paper.

## Maddening Models – What Instruction do MLLs Receive?

The U.S. Department of Education (2015) allows varying, even contradictory, instructional language models to be provided to MLL students. Given that the implementation of these models differs greatly between states, school districts, and even within schools, there exists a 'geography of opportunity.' In other words, depending on where MLL students live and attend school, they can be provided with an instructional model that is responsible for producing vastly different academic outcomes: fully bilingual or multilingual, semi-lingual (failing to gain academic fluency in any language), or mono-lingual (English only).

The wealth of knowledge in this field of research is clear: drastically different educational outcomes can be predicted by the type of language program students enroll in. The efficacy of the five most common language instructional models provided to MLL students are described below: 1) Mainstream Classroom, 2) Sheltered Instruction, 3) English Language Development, 4) (Traditional) Bilingual, and 5) Dual Language (Bilingual), also known as language immersion models.

### Mainstream Classroom

As previously mentioned, not all MLL students are identified as 'ELs,' but for those who are, language supports provided in the mainstream or traditional classroom have long since been inadequate (Thomas & Collier, 2003). Today, most teachers can expect to have ELs in their classrooms; however, little evidence suggests that they are prepared to teach this population of students. In a textbook analysis of 25 popular pre-service teacher education texts, supporting ELs was less than 1% of the content, and sometimes not present at all (Watson et al., 2005).

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Once entering the profession, teacher professional development in this area remains inadequate. A survey of a nationally representative sample of teachers found that only 27% reported attending professional development specific to supporting ELs in the past 12 months. Of the six professional development topics measured by the survey (e.g., content of subjects, use of technology, etc.), teachers ranked 'supporting ELs' as the least popular topic (U.S. Department of Education, 2011-2012). Even within districts that serve a majority of Latin@ students, this dilemma is present. In a more recent survey of 300 California educators in a large urban school district, of which nearly 3/4 of the student population was Latin@, over 70% of educators agreed that their pre-service coursework did not adequately prepare them for designing assessments to measure language development. The same percentage felt that they were not adequately prepared to differentiate their instruction to students with multiple levels of English fluency (Santibanez & Gándara, 2018).

This lack of attention given to supporting ELs in teacher preparation and professional development is often reinforced by inadequate school policy. Unlike Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), required by federal law to allocate appropriate services to every student with special needs, EL students do not have the same level of support and protections. For example, public schools may not be required to provide bilingual education service if there isn't a maximum number of identified 'ELs' in the same language to mandate the service. Furthermore, many states have an expiration date on such a program. For example, in Connecticut, bilingual services are not required in schools that enroll less than 20 'ELs' in the same language group. In other words, one school could have 19 'EL' students in Spanish, 15 in Portuguese, and 13 in Arabic, and not be required to provide bilingual supports to any of those students. Furthermore after 60 months, the 'EL' students in Connecticut who are lucky enough to receive bilingual programming are mainstreamed, regardless of their English language proficiency.

Other states, however, use a much broader criterion to determine student services. In Texas, for example, any school district enrolling 20 or more 'EL' students in the same grade level is required to provide bilingual / language services for those students, regardless of the native language spoken. In this way, an 'EL' student in Texas may be more likely to be provided language programming and have access to it for longer periods of time - up to seven years, whereas the same student in Connecticut may not have access to bilingual services at all. In this way, tens of thousands, if not millions, of students are currently left to flounder in a mainstream English-only environment because of discrepancies in state policy.

**Sheltered Instruction**

Sheltered Instruction (SI) is used to describe instructional models in which the academic content is scaffolded to the level of a students' English proficiency. SI models are also commonly referred to as English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) and taught by teachers who are certified in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Two popular SI models are Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) (http://begladtraining.com) and SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) (Echevarria, & Graves, 2014). Neither model, however, is supported by sound research. Only one large-scale study (Education Northwest, 2014) of Project Glad has been conducted, but the study did not go through peer-review and its design only compared a treatment group of ELs to their peers placed in a mainstream classroom. Regarding SIOP, the U.S. Department of Education (2013) warns that there is no quality research to suggest that it has any positive effect on students. Evidence has long suggested that students who receive ESOL instruction who later are placed in mainstream English classrooms have higher levels of dropout rates (Thomas & Collier; 1997).

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**English Language Development**

English Language Development (ELD) is an essential component of any quality language program supporting students learning English. The purpose of ELD is to move students along the continuum of English language development and bring them to fluency. Unlike the sheltered classroom in which the focus is on learning the content through the English language, the focus in the ELD classroom is learning the English language through the content. ELD is explicit instruction of the English language, where curriculum-specific vocabulary / academic language is front-loaded prior to the lesson taught and then students are provided with explicit opportunities to practice the new vocabulary following the lesson or activity (Genesee et al., 2006).

In the United States, however, scripted ELD programs are often implemented as stand-alone instructional language programs. In this way, the effectiveness of the programs is insufficient and, often, produces negative outcomes. For example, several studies from UCLA's Civil Rights Project (see Gándara & Orfield, 2010) found that Clark Consulting and Training's ELD curricula were associated with a slew of problems, including the further segregation of EL students and lower academic achievement (see www.clarkconsultingandtraining.com). We raise this issue to shed light on the fact that ELD, as an independent, packaged program, can be fraught with problems, even though the concept is widely accepted as essential to learning language.

**(Transitional) Bilingual**

Bilingual education is a broad term, often used to describe any language model where a student's native language is initially incorporated into the instruction of academic content in conjunction with English. The ultimate goal of such a model is to reduce the reliance on the first language (Language 1: L1) and eventually switch to the second language (Language 2: L2), hence the term 'transitional.' This model faces two problems. First, students often lose their L1 fluency if it is not supported as they are 'successfully' transitioned into a mainstream English classroom (Montrul 2008; Ng & Wigglesworth, 2007). Second, when transitional bilingual education is fully implemented (this often does not occur due to a teacher's lack of capacity), it is utilized with such little consistency that it is often difficult to determine its effectiveness (deJong, 2011). For example, bilingual education might mean that students are pulled out of their mainstream classroom (where they likely receive little to no assistance in native language) for an hour or two or, perhaps, a few days per week. In another school, however, bilingual education may mean a teacher code-switches between two languages during instruction, gradually reducing the amount of L1, in lieu of L2.

Since states with bilingualism statutes do not mandate the manner of implementation, school districts typically have full freedom in deciding what bilingual education curriculum looks like – never in controlled comparison with other programs and other curricula. In practical terms, a transitional bilingual program is helpful, but it does not result in multilingual fluency. Even if a bilingual student is eligible to remain in the program for a number of years, the focus of the program is still to transition students into an English-only environment. operation The aforementioned makes both transitional bilingual education and English-only instruction 'inadequate' (Thomas & Collier, 2003). The four language models described above are currently the most common being used in the U.S., however, their process has been criticized as 'subtractive schooling' (Valenzuela, 1999), whereas the primary function of education for ELs is to transition them as quickly as possible into mainstream English-only classrooms.

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**Dual Language (Bilingual) Models**

One important reason why the methods described above are insufficient is that they are rarely implemented long enough for MLLs to reach grade level proficiency in a second language. Research consistently suggests that it takes a minimum of five to seven years to attain academic fluency in a second language (Baker, 2006; Schacter, & Cummins, 2003). This helps make the case for dual language models, as they are the only one of the five aforementioned language instructional models aligned to sound research.

The term 'dual language' has been described in different ways in the literature. We have chosen to adopt the broader definition to describe the following four types of models: *a) developmental bilingual programs*, where language minority students are grouped by the same language and academic instruction is provided in the students' native language and English as a foreign language; *b) two-way immersion*, where an equal number of English speakers learn alongside native speakers of another language and both groups of children, together learn academic content in both languages; *c) heritage language immersion*, where an entire group of native English speakers are provided instruction in English and in the heritage language of that group (e.g., Hawaiian); and *d) foreign language immersion*, where an entire group of native English speakers from various cultural/racial groups are provided instruction in English and the second language (Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2000; Howard et al., 2018).

Christian (2001) posits that dual language models share three goals: high academic or accelerated achievement (at or above grade level); bilingualism and bi-literacy for all students; and a goal of biculturalism, or at least multicultural competence. Operating under these goals, all dual language models contain the following (Howard et al., 2018):

i) grade-level academic content standards equal to traditional models of school;
ii) delivery of academic content through instruction in both English and the other language, without translation or repetition;
iii) dual language instruction over an extended period of time (e.g., at least from Kindergarten through fifth grade); and
iv) dual language instruction in at least 50% of school curriculum, at every grade level.

This makes dual language programs an additive process where adding a new language comes without losing students' home language (Thomas & Collier, 2003).

**Research and Growth in Dual Language Programs**

Dual language programs represent a paradigm shift in the conceptualization of schooling from the traditional model of education. These models are unique as they operate under the premise that acquiring a second language should be an additive process, with the goals of biliteracy, bilingualism, and biculturalism as the goal. Given the apparent benefits of dual language immersion, these models are growing at a high rate. Consider that, in 1991, there were only 119 dual language schools in the nation (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2001). Now there are an estimated 1,000 to 2,000 dual language schools (Steele et al., 2017).

Thomas and Collier (2003) call dual language models "the key to the successful future of U.S. Education" (p.1). Their national, longitudinal, district-wide study (2002) explored school effectiveness of EL students from low socio-economic backgrounds in Texas. Students selected for the study had performed poorly on English proficiency

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tests in first grade. Using a matched-group comparison five years later, the authors found that EL students enrolled in dual language programs performed at the 51st percentile on standardized test scores in English, significantly higher than the 34th percentile attained by their peers enrolled in transitional bilingual programs. The authors conclude that school districts that implement dual language immersion programs can expect EL students to close the achievement gap by one-fifth to one-six each year.

A meta-analysis of 17 studies further quantifies the benefits of dual language programs (Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005). Although it is worth noting that EL students enrolled in any type of bilingual program (transitional and developmental) outperformed their peers assigned to English-only classrooms (such as ESL or Sheltered Instruction) by a quarter of a standard deviation, students in dual language programs (developmental / bilingual programs) significantly outperformed their peers in all other models.

The findings of a more recent, longitudinal study in Portland, OR, further strengthen the case for dual language programs (Steele et al., 2017). Using a sample of approximately 28,000 students, 10% of whom were drawn from a lottery to attend dual language programs in Pre-K / Kindergarten in the 2004-2005 school-year, Steele et al. tracked students' performance through eighth grade. The results are profound: students attending dual language programs outperformed their peers in English by approximately seven months in fifth grade and nine months in eighth grade. This means that, by the end of eighth grade, all students assigned to dual language programs, regardless of their native language, outperformed their peers in traditional schools on standardized test scores by one academic year.

The growing evidence in support of dual-language programs is enough to have recently gained the attention of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition. The report examined all evidence to date concerning dual language programs and concluded that dual language programs are superior to all other types of language programs in providing opportunities for ELs to reach higher levels of academic achievement (Boyle et al., 2015). To many dual language advocates, however, these findings are not surprising. A wealth of evidence has pointed to the superiority of dual language programs for some time (see Alanis & Rodriguez, 2008; Cortina, Makar, & Mount-Cors, 2015; Lindholm-Leary, 2012; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005; Steele et al., 2017).

**Myths about Multiple Language Learners and Programs that are Expected to Fail**

Before further exploring the benefits of dual language programs, we turn to addressing some of the common misunderstandings about language learning. Espinosa (2013) identifies several common myths related to MLLs, two of which we present here. It is often believed that: a) learning two languages during early childhood confuses, overwhelms, and delays children in learning English; and b) young children, for whom English is a not a native language, are able to simply learn by immersion. Yet these views directly contradict one another: It is either the case that young children can be immersed in a new language and continue their development 'undisturbed,' or the new language will interfere with the process of acquisition of the first one. Neither view, however, can be further from the truth.

Rather, evidence suggests that MLLs are not negatively impacted from exposure to two languages during the early years of development (Barnett et al., 2007; Center for Early Care and Education Research, 2013). MLLs learning English in childhood exhibit

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linguistic patterns reminiscent of processes observed in adult second language (L2) acquisition (Schwartz, 2004) and thus need to be linguistically supported. This is in part why English-only schooling models have proven destructive to these students' academic outcomes, native language preservation, and cultural identity (Crawford & Reyes, 2015; Gandara & Orfield, 2010; Tomas & Collier, 2003; Werblow, Ayalon, & Taverner-Perez, 2017; i.a.), as mentioned previously.

**Two-Way Dual Language: The Future of Public Education**

Although any dual language model is more beneficial than the other common language instruction models (Alanis & Rodriguez, 2008; Boyle et al., 2015; Cortina et al., 2015; Lindholm-Leary, 2012; Rolstad et al., 2005; Steele et al., 2017), we advocate for two-way dual language models as the best policy solution for promoting equity between MLLs and children who speak English-only because of the added value of cultural and linguistic integration. The two-way model is unique in that English speakers are provided with the opportunity to learn alongside an equal number of their peers who are native speakers of the other language, commonly referred to as the 'partner' or 'target' language. This model combines culturally responsive teaching, research-based language acquisition strategies, parental and community involvement, and qualified teachers and leadership; leading to the development of bilingual and bi-literate students (Alanis & Rodriguez, 2008; Mendez et al., 2015).

Although two-way dual language models can organize language instruction in different ways, the most common is for students to spend half the school day learning in English and the other half the day learning in the target language (often referred to as the 50:50 model). Another popular dual language model is the 90:10, where students receive 90% of their instruction in their native language and 10% in the target language at the start of Kindergarten, or PreK. The percentage of time spent in the target language then increases each year until upper elementary, when the ratio becomes a 50:50 model.

Regardless of the type of two-way model employed, both languages may be taught by the same teacher if he/she is bilingual certified or taught by more than one teacher. Of note, electives and specials count in the model, so two-way dual language schools keep an equal emphasis on both languages. Given these requirements, in order to be maintained with fidelity, two-way dual language programs need to be highly structured and supported by the administration, teachers, parents and community (Cortina, Makar, & Mount-Cors 2015; Ray, 2009). Thus, two-way models are substantially and structurally different from transitional bilingual education programs that commonly offer a pullout program to ELs for a few hours a week (described earlier) or segregate these students from their non-EL peers for the majority of the school day.

Dual language models are dynamic. They can exist in multiple languages, even within the same school. For example, the San Diego-based Language Academy is a K-8 public school that offers two concurrent programs: a two-way immersion program where half of the students are native Spanish speakers and half are already fluent in English, and a foreign language program in which a group of English speakers are immersed in French. These two language models, while at the same school, receive separate instruction from kindergarten to fifth grade and then are merged for grades six through eight and provided with a traditional pull-out language instruction model. In this way, students are afforded cross-cultural pollination and advanced language development opportunities. Many of the students enrolled in this type of model obtain Advanced Placement (AP) credit in their non-English language (Spanish or French) by the end of eighth grade, and excel across all other academic content areas as well. In San Diego, these students feed into the high school currently ranked second best in SAT scores in

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the city, despite the fact that more than 95% of the student population qualifies for free and reduced lunch. This serves as a model for what is possible, even under a state law that restricted teaching children in languages other than English (see California proposition 227, 1998).

In terms of student grouping, two-way models are inclusive, allowing ELs and native English speakers to learn together, on largely equal terms, even though it is likely that one group will be learning slightly different skills from the other within certain domains. Thus, two-way models benefit both types of learners. Native English-only speakers already at grade-level perform higher on average than their mono-lingual peers and MLLs tend to close the achievement gap faster (Steele et al., 2017; Thomas & Collier, 2003). Compare this to the segregation of ELs in other language programs, such as Clark's (2009) model of Structured English Immersion, where EL students can be segregated from their non-EL peers for up to five hours a day (Werblow, Ayalon, & Taverner-Perez, 2016). This model was criticized for promoting "The Mexican Room" (Gándara & Orfield, 2010) and, as a result, invites civil rights violations practically and in principle.

Two-way models deeply embed multiculturalism into the fabric of the school. By nature of the model, academic content is taught through at least two languages. In terms of the value of time, two-way models are substantially better aligned with the research on second language acquisition – quality dual language programs enroll students for at least six years of schooling (Howard et al., 2018).

Two-way dual language models also present an integrated, thematic curriculum where academic content is taught through interdisciplinary themes and assessed in both languages (Howard et al., 2018). Here, both language and content receive a certain amount of attention on behalf of the teacher. In this way, these models somewhat resemble the SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) (Echevarria, & Graves, 2014), while not suffering from its many apparent shortcomings, such as being "theoretically confused" (p.41) and "dumbed down" (p.42) (Crawford & Reyes, 2015). Furthermore, traditional elementary schools often do not organize the curriculum through interdisciplinary themes.

Another strength of two-way dual language programs is that they produce more active school-parent collaboration (Alanis & Rodriguez, 2008; Cortina, Makar, & Mount-Cors, 2015), as all forms of communication from school to home are delivered in at least two languages. In the example of the San Diego Language Academy stated earlier, all school-to-home communication is sent in English, French, and Spanish. Another benefit specific to the two-way model is in students increased cultural capital: Native English-speaking children receive the benefits of travel, as they learn about the languages and culture of people different than themselves (Thomas & Collier, 2003), and native speakers of the target language are given meaningful opportunities to learn alongside their native English-speaking peers in a schooling model that also acknowledges their own culture and language equally.

In the San Diego Language Academy example, it is worth noting that the eighth-grade trip abroad takes all students, Spanish/English and French/English, to both France and Spain for a month. Over time, students enrolled in these models show greater appreciation of different cultures and how they impact the world, than do their peers in traditional schools (Maxwell, 2015). Few would disagree that exposure to other cultures is beneficial to developing greater understanding and compassion for others. It is obvious that these social and cultural benefits occur inherently within two-way dual

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language immersion programs, with or without external resources needed for international travel.

The benefits of dual language models are numerous. Despite some obvious challenges with potentially higher initial start-up costs (e.g., purchasing new textbooks in the target language, hiring more bilingual certified teachers, etc.), school principals claim that there is no significant difference in operating costs or resources between dual language and traditional public schools (Steele et al., 2017). Table 1 presents a comparison between two-way dual language programs and the common language model alternatives.

Table 1.
*Two-way dual language vs. traditional education: A conceptual comparison*

| School model | Two-way dual language | Traditional education (e.g., Sheltered English, English Only, Mainstream, Transitional Bilingual, etc.) |
|---|---|---|
| Perspectives on second language acquisition | Additive - An additive process for all students with the goal of bi-literacy, bilingualism, and bi-culturalism | Subtractive - A subtractive process specifically for ELs, with the goal of transitioning into mainstream English classroom |
| Grouping | Inclusive (integration) - ELs and English Only Students learn together throughout the day | Exclusive (Segregation) - ELs are segregated from their English-speaking peers for up for 5 hours a day |
| Multiculturalism | Deeply embedded into the school's fabric | Cursory (add-on: holidays, celebrations, etc.) |
| Value of time | Long-term value of language acquisition (at least six years) | Short-term value: Transition to English-only as quickly as possible |
| Curriculum | Thematically integrated | (often) decontextualized |
| Assessment in.. | Both languages | English-only |
| School-family communication | Bilingual / Multilingual | English-only (typically) |
| Cost ($) | Some evidence suggests: No significant difference in cost, after start up. | |
| Program outcomes by 8th grade | *Bi-literacy, bi-lingual, bi-cultural, an average of at / above grade level achievement for all students* | *Semi-lingualism / mono-lingualism for all students; an average of continued educational disparities for ELs vs. non-ELs* |

## Limitations Worth Acknowledging

Although the research on two-way dual language programs is plentiful and reaching its 3rd decade of consistent findings, there are some important limitations to consider if progress is to be made in closing the gap between research, policy, and practice. First, there continues to be a widespread shortage of certified bilingual teachers across the U.S. Bilingual and world language teachers have been identified as a 'high-need area' by the U.S. Department of Education (2016) for decades, despite the fact that many of the largest school districts in the U.S. actively recruit large numbers of language teachers from abroad. Second, school districts/communities planning to scale up two-way dual language models as the standard linguistic model will likely face added start-

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up costs. These related costs may be substantial and are not limited to transportation (bussing), teacher capacity, teacher recruitment (TESOL and bilingual certified), bilingual resources/materials, and professional development. Third, it can be challenging to maintain the appropriate balance of students who are dominant in the heritage language versus their English-dominant peers without district / regional support (Werblow et al., 2017). Although these limitations are sizable, in no way do they outweigh the benefits of dual language education. The alternatives to dual-language immersion remain inequitable in every sense.

## Recommendations for Policy / Practice

For school districts / communities considering establishing or expanding a dual-language program, we provide the following suggestions. First, enacting any successful large-scale change requires at least a small group of committed stakeholders who have acquired some degree of support or buy-in from the local district. Early on, this group might consider raising the following questions: Which languages from our community will be offered? How will students be selected? How many students will have access? Which school(s) will host the dual language programs and which will not? How will the program(s) maintain equal representation of native English speakers and native speakers of the target language? These questions are only the tip of the iceberg. However, they are not insurmountable because they have already been answered in thousands of communities all over the nation. Next, planning a visit to a successful dual-language school in the area can help strengthen hope that such a model can be replicated and that contact can be made with allies in the region who are willing to help. Third, there are several free resources available on-line that provide a roadmap for creating dual language programs, one of which is Howard et al.'s (2018) *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education.*

## Conclusion

Given the U.S. Department of Education's (2019) mission to "promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access," bi-literacy, bi-lingualism, bi-culturalism, and high academic achievement are outcomes that all school leaders should take seriously. Given the strong evidence that supports these models in producing such outcomes, we attempted to present a sound argument that dual language immersion is the superior model for the future of schooling in the United States.

Two-way dual language models are superior both in terms of school-level inputs and outputs. Regarding inputs, two-way models are culturally and economically integrated. In terms of outputs, two-way models produce more culturally and economically equitable academic outcomes in more than one language. Furthermore, dual-language is the only language model in the U.S. that treats multi-lingualism as an asset and where all students are treated as MLLs.

For these reasons, we argue that dual language programs should become standard of practice, not the exception, in the United States and around the world. The growing popularity of dual language programming in cities like Portland (Oregon), New York, San Diego, Salt Lake City, give us hope for more to come. Opening new dual language programs cannot be done overnight and several factors, such as careful planning, continuous professional development, and parent involvement, are required to ensure that dual-language programs are both sustainable and successful (see Alanis & Rodriguez; 2008). In thousands of schools across the nation, this model of schooling is playing a part in helping make the U.S. a more equitable and culturally responsive

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nation. As more teachers, parents, students, and administrators become more knowledgeable about this model, more dual language schools will take root and grow.

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