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What are research-based components of dual language immersion (DLI) programs, frameworks, or models?



Selected Evidence-Based Resources

In [Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education](#), the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) outlines key structural elements to support DLI and includes self-evaluation templates for each principle. When developing a DLI program, CAL recommends considerations for:

- Program duration:** A minimum of six years shows significant positive influence on students' academic outcomes. Although student performance gains may not be immediately observed in early elementary school, they do appear in later elementary school and continue through high school.
- Language allocation:** Common allocations for DLI include the 90:10 or 50:50 model (see Figure 1). Research that compares methods of alternating languages of instruction (such as alternating days, weeks, or content units) is not available, though for younger learners, daily use is likely to promote stronger second language development.
- Literacy instruction:** Research supports literacy instruction in students' first (or home) language rather than English in the early grades.
- Student demographics:** To support educational and linguistic equity, classrooms can be organized so that at least one third of the students speak one of the two languages taught in the DLI program.

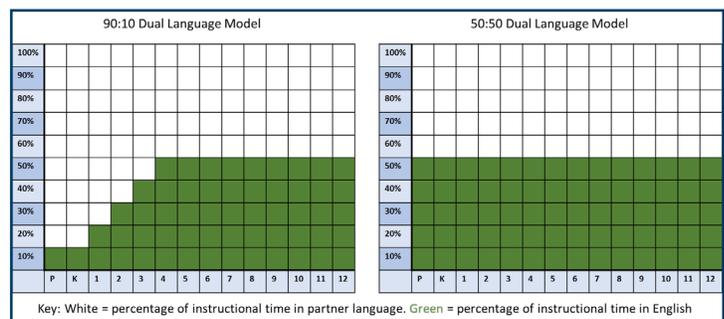


Figure 1. Instructional Time Designations in 90:10 and 50:50 Dual Language Models

In an [overview of DLI research and current state practices](#), the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition suggests that effective DLI teachers have a high level of proficiency in the languages in which they teach, an understanding of sheltered instructional practices and second language development, and skill in supporting second language learners in the content areas. Professional learning opportunities can focus on those skills to support teachers.

In a follow-up analysis to a 2017 What Works Clearinghouse-rated [randomized controlled trial study](#) noting the longitudinal benefits of DLI programs, [Steele et al. \(2018\)](#) indicate that modest investments from the central office focused on professional development for teachers in implementing consistent instructional practices and developing or purchasing curriculum and assessments in partner languages can help build a high-quality DLI program.



Additional Resources



CAL provides a [practitioner brief of frequently asked questions](#) regarding dual language programming, including strategies to recruit and retain qualified staff.



CAL also provides resources from its [2014 National Research Summit on the Early Care and Education of Dual Language Learners](#), which include informational briefs on DLI programs for administrators, policymakers, parents, and teachers.



Thomas and Collier's (2017) [Prism model](#) suggests that children experience and need support in four major components of development in both languages for complete language acquisition to take place: sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive processes.