

How Imagine Learning English Complements Dual Language Education

October 2010

Rossana Camacho, M.A.
Instructional Designer, Imagine Learning



Meeting Student Needs with Dual Language Programs

Dual language programs are defined by the Center for Applied Linguistics as programs that “provide literacy and content instruction to all students through two languages” and promote “bilingualism and biliteracy, grade-level academic achievement, and multicultural competence for all students” (Howard et al. 2007).

Recently, dual language education programs have received a great deal of attention from parents, researchers, and policymakers, gaining popularity as an educational model that not only facilitates high academic achievement, but also fosters a strong multicultural appreciation in all students (Collier & Thomas 2004; Howard et al. 2007; Lindholm-Leary 2001).

As the English learner population in US schools continues to grow, dual language education programs have emerged as a way to provide effective and quality instruction for this culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) population. But English learners aren’t the only students who benefit from these programs. Research indicates that dual language education programs provide significant benefits for all students involved, regardless of language background or ethnicity (Lindholm-Leary 2001).

This paper will summarize the research on four principles of effective dual language programs and then show how Imagine Learning English supports the development of those key principles.

Creating Effective Dual Language Programs

Recent research by the Center for Applied Linguistics suggests that certain guiding principles make dual language programs more effective for students. These principles include the following:

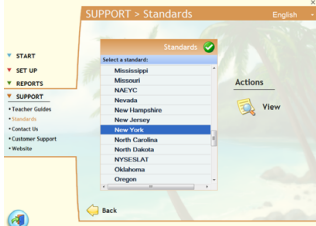



1. Responsive curriculum
2. Assessment and accountability
3. Exemplary instruction
4. Community and family involvement

Research also indicates that successful dual language programs are most effective when integrated with technology (Berman 1995; Collier & Thomas 2004; Howard et al. 2007).

1. Responsive Curriculum

Successful dual language programs have a responsive curriculum that is meaningful and cognitively engaging (Collier & Thomas 2004). An effective dual language curriculum helps students find a purpose in learning, which in turn keeps them motivated.

The following table highlights key aspects of the Imagine Learning English curriculum that are especially beneficial for dual language learners.

Effective Dual Language Curriculum	Imagine Learning English
<p>Aligns with national standards and assessments (Howard et al. 2007)</p>	 <p>Follows program objectives that correlate to national and state standards and assessments, preparing students for future grade levels and state and national tests</p>
<p>Provides relevant and cognitively engaging interaction (Collier & Thomas 2004)</p>	 <p>Uses rich context to teach meaningful vocabulary and phrases, preparing students to function in a variety of authentic interactions and satisfy basic needs in school and social settings</p>
<p>Integrates theme instruction (Berman et al. 1995)</p>	 <p>Integrates theme instruction in areas such as reading, where texts are strategically paired to build background knowledge and facilitate comprehension</p>
<p>Incorporates language objectives (Howard et al. 2007)</p>	 <p>Applies core second-language acquisition and bilingualism principles such as explicit instruction and language learning strategies to help students meet key language objectives</p>
<p>Incorporates strategic first-language support (Howard et al. 2007)</p>	<p>Teaches academic vocabulary, challenging concepts, and phonological awareness in both English and student's first language, enhancing comprehension and facilitating mastery of new skills</p>
<p>Integrates technology (Berman et al. 1995)</p>	<p>Uses innovative technology to deliver differentiated, one-on-one instruction, individual feedback, and first-language support—practices that can be difficult to implement in the classroom</p>

2. Assessment and Accountability

All students, regardless of their linguistic, sociocultural, or economic backgrounds, are expected to meet high academic standards. For this reason, assessment and accountability are critical components of an effective dual language program. Teachers and administrators must systematically collect and interpret student data in order to facilitate appropriate decision making.

Imagine Learning English uses technology to continually collect student data. As students use the program, their proficiency in curriculum areas like vocabulary, listening, comprehension, and literacy is automatically assessed and recorded. See the following table for details.


Effective Dual Language Program	Imagine Learning English
Systematically assesses student progress (Howard et al. 2007)	Continually assesses student progress and immediately records results in comprehensive reports
Interprets student data and disseminates to appropriate constituents (Howard et al. 2007)	Provides regular printouts with list of mastered and unmastered skills in student's home language, facilitating the flow of information between teachers, parents, and administrators
Uses assessment to shape and monitor program effectiveness (Howard et al. 2007)	Adapts to student progress based on proficiency in skill areas such as vocabulary, comprehension, and literacy to create customized instruction that best addresses students' knowledge gaps


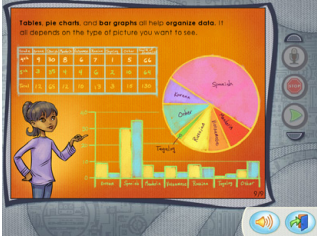
3. Exemplary Instruction

Exemplary instruction is a key component of any successful dual language program. The inherent demands of building a strong bilingual, biliterate, and multicultural foundation require excellence in classroom practice. Two of the most critical characteristics associated with good instruction in dual language programs are the ability to deliver optimal language input and the ability to provide scaffolded opportunities for language output (Howard et al. 2007).

Optimal Language Input

Lindholm-Leary indicates that language input instruction should match the comprehension level of the learner and be interesting, relevant, sufficient in quantity, and challenging (2001). Imagine Learning English provides optimal language input that is comprehensible, relevant, and challenging. See the following table for details.

Effective Dual Language Instruction	Imagine Learning English
Uses slower, simplified, and repetitive speech (Krashen 1981)	 <p>Reads stories aloud in slow, simplified language; uses spaced repetition to teach new words and phrases, maximizing language acquisition</p>

<p>Contextualizes language and gestures (Saville-Troike 1987)</p>	 <p>Uses pictures and videos to present language in context; highlights key vocabulary and phrases with visuals and gestures to enhance language and vocabulary development</p>
<p>Checks for comprehension (Long 1981)</p>	<p>Asks students to apply new knowledge in engaging, interactive comprehension activities, solidifying new concepts and strategically reteaching unmastered skills</p>
<p>Provides scaffolding in the negotiation of meaning (Saville-Troike 1987)</p>	 <p>Uses predictable patterns, meaningful chunks, and visual representations of language to scaffold instruction and facilitate communication</p>

Encouraging Optimal Language Output

The ability to encourage optimal language output is another characteristic of successful dual language programs (Howard et al. 2007). This is a crucial aspect of dual language education and requires continual opportunities for learners to engage in structured and unstructured tasks involving oral productions skills.

Imagine Learning English fosters optimal language output by carefully teaching meaningful vocabulary and phrases that allow learners to meet basic social and classroom needs (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Meaningful Vocabulary



Figure 2: Opportunities for Oral Language Production



The program also provides both scaffolded and independent opportunities for oral language production (see Figure 2). Students learn vocabulary and phrases in rich-context scenarios, produce the target vocabulary, and then are encouraged to self-assess and rerecord their speech. This sequence of instruction not only provides the necessary scaffolding for students to develop oral language fluency and confidence, but also allows learners to use metacognitive strategies to plan, monitor, and evaluate their speech.

4. Family and Community Involvement

Parent and community involvement is an important feature of successful schools and is a critical component of successful dual language programs (Marzano 2003). Most parents, regardless of their ethnic and linguistics backgrounds, have high aspirations for their children and want to be involved in their academic success (Howard et al. 2007). Research indicates that successful dual language programs

view family and community involvement as one of the basic components of academic achievement (Lindholm-Leary 2001).

Imagine Learning English uses detailed reports and printouts to keep parents, teachers, and administrators involved in students' academic success. Parent printouts are written in the student's home language and highlight both the student's accomplishments and the areas where he or she needs review and practice (see Figure 3). Teacher and administrator reports can provide information on student progress, unmastered skills, literacy development, vocabulary mastery, and program usage. These reports can be generated for students, entire classes, or even districts. The reports collate real-time data on student progress, facilitating communication among parents, teachers, and administrators about students' individual needs.

Figure 3: Parent Reports



Conclusion

As teachers continue to meet the challenges of educating culturally and linguistically diverse students in dual language programs, they must continue to utilize key principles that ensure student success. Imagine Learning English is an engaging and interactive tool that complements dual language programs by enabling teachers and administrators to implement the principles that make dual language programs successful. Imagine Learning English delivers effective language instruction that empowers students not only to close the academic achievement gap, but to meet important language objectives that will benefit them in their academic and professional future as well.

Works Cited

- Berman, P., Minicucci, C., McLaughlin, B., Nelson, B., & Woodworth, K. (1995). *School reform and student diversity: Case studies of exemplary practices for LEP students*. Santa Cruz, CA: National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning, and B.W. Associates.
- Collier, V & Thomas, W.P. (2004). The astounding effectiveness of dual language education for all. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice*, 2, 10-20.
- Howard, E. R., Christian, D., & Genesee, F. (2003). The development of bilingualism and biliteracy from Grade 3 to 5: A summary of findings from the CAL/CREDE study of two-way immersion education. Santa Cruz, CA, and Washington, DC: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence.
- Howard, E. R., Sugarman, J., Christian, D., Lindholm-Leary, K. J., & Rogers, D. (2007). *Guiding principles for dual language education* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Krashen, S. 1982. Theory versus practice in language training. In R. Blair (Ed.), *Innovative approaches to language teaching* (15–30). Cambridge: Newbury House.
- Lindholm-Leary, K. J. (2001). *Dual language education*. Avon, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Long, M. H. (1981). Input, interaction and second language acquisition. In H. Winitz (Ed.), *Native language and foreign language acquisition* (259–278). New York: Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences.
- Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Saville-Troike, M. (1987). Bilingual discourse: The negotiation of meaning without a common code. *Linguistics*, 25, 81–106.