

add.a.lingua frequently asked questions: community 90-10 two-way



Our [add.a.lingua educational models](#) regard family members as partners in the endeavor to educate students in an immersion setting. The following [frequently asked questions](#) speak directly to families choosing [add.a.lingua dual language immersion \(90-10 two-way\)](#) for their children.

why is dual language immersion most effective beginning at a young age?

- Babies are born as “world citizens,” able to distinguish any sound in spoken language.
- Toddlers learn through interaction with their families and their immediate surroundings (Vygotsky, 1978).
- School-age children make sense of new concepts by relating those new concepts to what they already know.
- The human brain is more open to linguistic development prior to adolescence, and students therefore more easily attain higher levels of proficiency and more native-like pronunciation.
- Research suggests that learning a second language allows students to more easily attain additional languages.

why does add.a.lingua two-way 90-10 dual language immersion model insist on students learning to read and write in Spanish prior to English?

- In most communities within the United States, English is considered the majority culture language. Research explains that because English is the dominant language, instruction in a two-way setting can establish the importance of the the minority or immersion language by ensuring students learn initial literacy skills in that language prior to English. (*Pease-Alvarez, 1993; Portes & Hao, 1998, Veltman, 1988*). This sequential instruction of literacy allows Spanish-dominant students to learn the “language of school” in their native language while ensuring sufficient time and intensity of instruction in the immersion language for English-dominant students.
- The underlying strategies and concepts of decoding necessary for reading, like scanning sentences left to right or the ability to decode words based on sound/letter or symbol correspondence are transferable among languages. Students learning to read first in Spanish ultimately transfer those skills to their understanding of English text. Most dual language immersion students read at or above grade level in both languages by second or third grade.

why would families choose the 90-10 two-way add.a.lingua dual language immersion model as an educational option?

- Research shows that children are able to easily learn one, two, or multiple languages early in life (Cenoz, 2003).
- Learning more than one language gives children cognitive advantages and increases cultural awareness (Cloud et. al., 2000).
- Research shows that Spanish-dominant students that are educated in two-way contexts achieve higher scores on standardized tests in English in the areas of reading and math in comparison to students learning in traditional ELL settings. (Ramirez et al., 1991; Willig, 1985...Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2006), (Howard, Sugarman, Christian, Lindholm-Leary, & Rogers, 2007).
- In fact, intensive, well-constructed additive bilingual educational programs (add.a.lingua 90-10 two-way) positively impact students from both language groups and often, “Ensure the highest test scores in all subjects; research has found the higher the proficiency in a second language, the higher the child’s test scores will be in

add.a.lingua frequently asked questions: community 90-10 two-way



will immersion teachers assign my children homework in Spanish or English?

- Whenever possible, the [add.a.lingua 90-10 two-way educational model](#) suggests sending homework in English and Spanish to families based upon home language dominance so that parents can participate in helping their children when they do not speak either the immersion or primary language.
- Throughout the initial literacy process (K-2nd grades), however, immersion teachers send books home in Spanish so that their students can practice reading skills outside the classroom. A parent or caregiver can sit next to children learning to read in **any** language and encourage them. Asking children to act as the “teachers” or “experts” in the Spanish or English language gives them confidence. They appreciate having knowledge about something you might not.
- As dual language immersion students progress through the grade levels, teachers may assign some homework in Spanish or English depending on the language of instruction and course distribution. (see the [instructional language and course distribution chart](#)). However, the concepts the homework entails are clearly laid out in both languages via newsletters or email explanations. In this way, families can understand assignments their children must complete and the subject content areas being covered.
- Once dual language immersion students attain middle and high school grade levels, they receive most subject content instruction in English with two to three courses instructed through Spanish (see [secondary continuing information](#)).

how can I help key people in our family's life understand our decision to choose the dual language immersion as an educational option?

- Educating the people of influence in the lives of children (grandparents, older siblings, extended family, close friends) regarding dual language immersion research, specifically how different dual language immersion models address children learning to read in both English and the immersion language, is critical. Many people in the United States have not had a positive experience with learning a second language. It is important for them to understand that immersion is a more effective way to learn additional languages and in NO WAY undervalues the importance of being educated in English.
- Inviting these people to informational meetings and to observe in your children's immersion classroom, allows them to truly understand the process of learning a second language while also reassuring them that your children are receiving a quality education.
- Allowing your children to read to concerned grandparents or other adults in both the immersion language and English can also greatly alleviate worries. Even those who are initially adamantly opposed to the idea of immersion often take great delight in your children's language skills upon being read to, attending an informational meeting, or visiting an immersion classroom.

add.a.lingua frequently asked questions: community 90-10 two-way



how can I prepare my children to enter an add.a.lingua dual language immersion program?

- Tell your children what to expect. Help them to understand that “going to school” means learning another language along with all the other interesting skills they will gain (reading, writing, spelling, etc...).
- Explain to your children that they will NOT understand every word their teacher is saying when first entering the immersion classroom. Explain that over time, perhaps without even being aware, they will understand and even begin to use the immersion language themselves. For now, encourage your children to think of the first few weeks of school as a game – observing the teachers and then following their lead.
- BE POSITIVE. It is natural for many children to resist leaving you upon beginning school, regardless of whether or not the classroom they enter is dual language immersion. Many preschool students cry initially and are perhaps more reserved at school as they process the “newness.” Behaviors such as crying and/or acting shy are often extremely normal responses.
 - o Students who enter the program in kindergarten and first grade may have the same types of responses. Because the brain is “exercising” more, as children initially begin to acquire a second language, many students will cry and adamantly oppose the added “work.” Even students who have begun the program in preschool may struggle in kindergarten and/or first grade, as they adjust to being immersed in their second language for longer periods of time.
 - o Your positive attitude will make a huge difference to your children. Immersion students observe their parents’ responses to the program and eventually adjust their attitudes accordingly. Students who receive regular encouragement and assurance from their parents that learning a second language in an immersion setting is the right choice for their family, ALWAYS settle into the program.
 - o The same children who resist an immersion experience at the beginning are often the ones who are vocally grateful for their ability to speak a second language in the higher grade levels.

how can I support the administrators, teachers, and school board members partnering with add.a.lingua and articulating dual language immersion educational models?

- Because language immersion is a unique educational option in most communities, families have many questions that require answers. While going to other families whose children are enrolled in this type of educational setting to share experiences and find support can be invaluable, it can also lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding.
- WHENEVER doubts, concerns, or questions arise, go directly to your children’s teacher or add.a.lingua program administrator for answers.

add.a.lingua frequently asked questions: community 90-10 two-way



what do I need to understand about my children's add.a.lingua dual language immersion experience?

- Just as toddlers learning their native language, immersion students pass through “stages” as they acquire their second language. As children connect learning in an academic environment with the immersion language, they are able to comprehend and gradually produce more of their ideas and thoughts in not only the target language but also their primary language.
- Children learning another language in an **add.a.lingua dual language immersion program** intuitively understand that language is the means through which they communicate with real people in real-life situations. Immersion students typically will **not** “perform” on cue when asked by family members to “say something” in Spanish (for English-dominant children).
 - o REMEMBER: your children “switch” languages almost automatically, depending on their environment (classroom or real-life context) and with whom they are speaking.
 - o In the initial stages of language acquisition, immersion students may not be able to share what they learned in school. In preschool through a large portion of second grade, most immersion students are unable to directly translate or interpret concepts learned in school for their parents in the non-immersion language. Because immersion students are learning content and their second language simultaneously in an interactive academic and social setting, they do not learn direct translations as in some more traditional world language instructional settings. As students cognitively develop, however, they are more and more able to address new concepts in either language.

references



- Bournot-Trites, M. and U. Tellowitz. (2002). *Report of Current Research on the Effects of Second Language Learning on First Language Literacy Skills*. Commissioned by The AtlanBc Provinces EducaBonol FoundaBon. Halifax, NS: The PrinBng House.
- Bock, Paula. "Infant Science," *The Seattle Times Pacific Northwest Magazine: The Baby Brain*. <<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/pacificnw/2005/0306/cover.html>>.
- Cenoz, Jaone. (2003). *The additive effect of bilingualism on third Language acquisition: International Journal of Bilingualism*. Blackwell Handbooks in Linguistics. (pp. 115-143). <http://ijb.sagepub.com>
- Dutro, S., & Moran, C. (2003). Rethinking English language instruction: An architectural approach. In G. G. García (Ed.), *English learners: Reaching the highest level of English literacy* (pp. 227-258). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Dutro, S. (2006) Providing language instruction. *Aiming High Resource*, published by the Sonoma County Office of Education.
- Cloud, N., Genesee, F. & Hamayan, E. (2000). *Dual Language Instruction: A Handbook for Enriched Education*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Fortune, T. W. (2001). *Understanding immersion students' oral language use as mediator of social interaction in the classroom*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN.
- Fortune, Tara Williams, and Menke, Mandy R. (2010). *Struggling Learners & Language Immersion Education: Research-Based, Practitioner-Informed Responses to Educators' Top Questions*. Minneapolis: CARLA Publication Series. Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition.
- Fortune, T.W., Tedick, D.J. & Walker, C.L. (2008). *Integrated language and content teaching: Insights from the language immersion classroom*. In Fortune, T., & Tedick, D. J. (Eds.). *Pathways to multilingualism: Evolving perspectives on immersion education*. (pp. 71-96). Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters, Ltd.
- Gibbons, p. (2009). *Scaffolding EL learners to be successful writers*. In English learners academic literacy and thinking: Learning in the challenge zone, pp. 106-129. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Lightbown, Patsy M. & Spada, Nina. (2006). *How Languages are Learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lyster, R. (2007). *Learning teaching languages through content: A counterbalanced approach*. Amsterdam, John Benjamins.
- Potowski, K. (2004). Student Spanish use and investment in a dual immersion classroom: Implications for second language acquisition and heritage language maintenance. *The Modern Language Journal*, 88(1), 75-101.
- Ranney, Dillard, Schornack, and Maguire (2013). under review at MinneTESOL Journal: Analyzing academic language in texts.
- Zwiers, J. (2008). *Building Academic Language: Essential practices for content classrooms, grades 5-12*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Copyright ©2014 add.a.lingua. All rights reserved.

No part of this work may be copied, reproduced, published, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or distributed, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), without the prior written permission of add.a.lingua.