

Spanish Immersion Program

Kindergarten Orientation
March 23 and 31, 2010
For First Grade 2010-2011

Introductions

- Campus Administrators
- Immersions Teachers

Immersion Defined

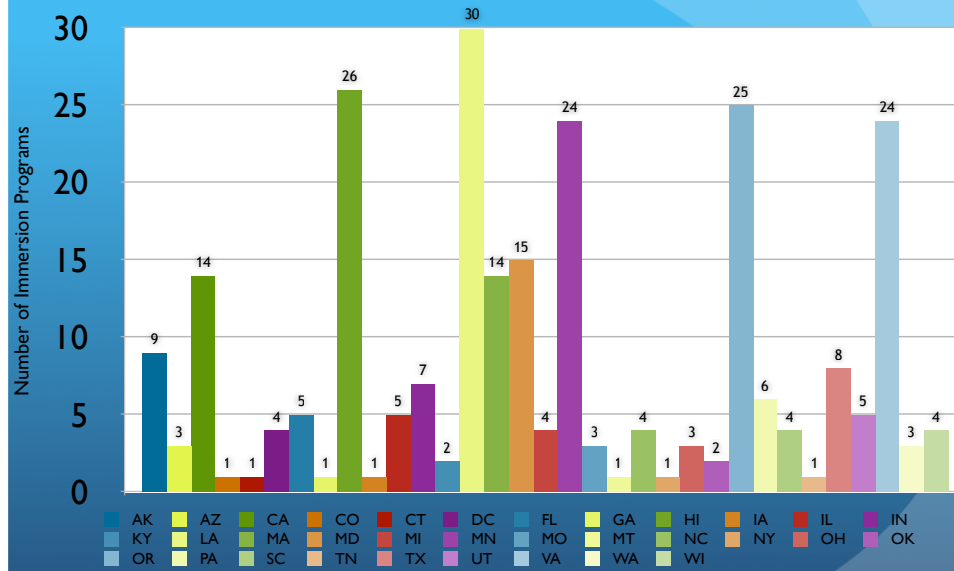
A method of instruction in which the regular school curriculum is taught through the medium of the language.

Alamo Heights utilizes a ONE-WAY EARLY TOTAL immersion approach—all schooling is conducted in the immersion language. Students assigned to the class are proficient English speakers.

History of Immersion

- * AHISD—1998-99
- * U.S. and Canada—1980s Both one-way and two-way programs

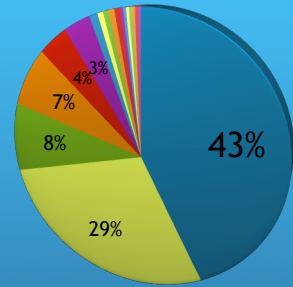
Language Immersion Programs by State



**Foreign Language Immersion Programs Features and Trends Over 35 years by Ashley Lenker and Nancy Rhodes, Center for Applied Linguistics, 2007.

LA = 30; OR= 25; HI=26; VA=24; TEXAS=8

Percentage of Immersion Programs by Language of Instruction



- Spanish
- French
- Hawaiian
- Japanese
- Mandarin
- German
- Ojibwe
- Arabic
- Italian
- Russian
- Yup'ik
- Cantonese
- Chinook
- Danish
- Diné
- Greek
- Norwegian
- Swedish

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Languages of Instruction in Total and Partial Immersion Programs

Language of Instruction	Number of Programs	Percentage of Total
Spanish	132	42.6%
French	90	29.0%
Hawaiian	26	8.4%
Japanese	22	7.1%
Mandarin	12	3.9%
German	10	3.2%
Ojibwe	3	1.0%
Arabic	2	0.6%
Italian	2	0.6%
Russian	2	0.6%
Yup'ik	2	0.6%
Cantonese	1	0.3%
Danish	1	0.3%
Diné	1	0.03%
Greek	1	0.3%
Norwegia	1	0.3%
Swedish	1	0.3%

AHISD Offerings

- * Grades 1-5—self contained classrooms
- * Grades 6-12
 - ◆ 6 = Science and Social Studies
 - ◆ 7 = Social Studies & Sp Lang. Arts
 - ◆ 8 = Spanish II PAP
 - ◆ 9 = Spanish III PAP
 - ◆ 10 = Spanish IV PAP or IV AP
 - ◆ 11 = Spanish V AP
 - ◆ 12 = Spanish VI

Brain Research



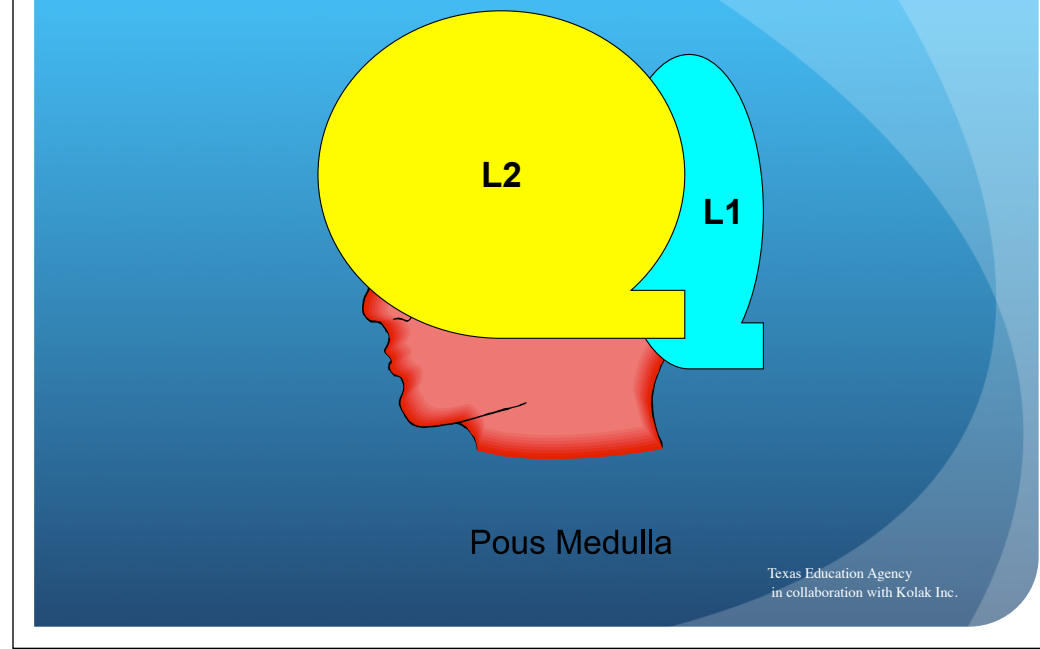
Second language acquisition has an open window for brain connection from birth to age ten; therefore, beginning a dual language program at an early grade level would appear the most recommended practice for school personnel and parents.

Texas Education Agency in
Collaboration with Kolak Inc.

According to the brain research, second language acquisition has an open window for brain connection from birth to age ten; therefore, beginning a dual language program at an early grade level would appear the most recommended practice for school personnel and parents.

In an effort to allow students to fully benefit from this “open window,” districts are encouraged to implement various language programs other than the bilingual programs required under Chapter 89 of the Commissioner’s Rules as early as kindergarten.

Access of Cognitive Skills



Subtractive bilingualism as a model was endorsed through the metaphor of the balloon myth. It was believed that the brain had limited space for language. Many people mistakenly thought that learning more about one's native language took up needed space in the brain to learn English and vice-versa. Further, it was believed that knowledge and concepts learned in one language had to be "relearned" in the other. As a result, students of English were encouraged to leave their native languages behind to fill their brain with English, the more prestigious language. We now know that this is simply untrue. Cummins' ice berg theory led to a better understanding of how languages are processed in the brain.

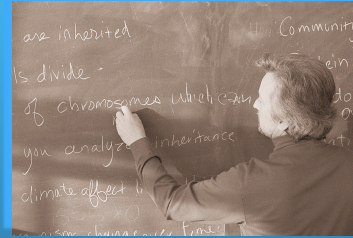
Cummins' ice berg theory provided a counter-argument to the balloon myth. Cummins' proposed that knowledge and skills in one language can transfer into another. The languages are not stored as separate entities, but rather, as complex co-mingling files of data that can be understood and expressed by **accessing common underlying proficiencies (CUP)**. Simply said, knowledge and skills in one language are accessible. It just takes time to learn enough language to express the understandings in one language into another.

It was also believed that learning two languages at an early age could be too taxing on the growing child. Brain research has debunked that myth.

Language Development



Conversational/
Social Language



Cognitive
Academic Language

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First, BICS and CALP refers to the nature of language with regards to social context.

BICS, or Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills, refers to the language that people use in everyday conversation. BICS is used in casual settings among friends and family. It is often referred to as “playground language” for younger students.

CALP, or Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, refers to the language used for academic tasks such as comparing, contrasting, summarizing, or inferencing. CALP also includes the academic language of the disciplines, the highly specialized language that is used to conceptualize the teachings and understandings of the given subject matter. CALP is used to establish affiliation in particular schools of thought and to bring legitimacy to the ideas shared in academic or power-laden settings. It is important to remember that age appropriate CALP in at least one language is a requirement for continued academic success.

Most students use their native language as a resource to develop their second language. It has also been found that at times, the reverse is true as well. (Chamot, XXXX)

Underlying Assumption

- * Knowledge learned through one language paves the way for knowledge acquisition in the second language. Thus students who learn content in one language are expected to demonstrate content knowledge in the second language once they acquire the language skills to express that knowledge.

Underlying Assumptions

- * Students need an extended amount of time to fully develop a second language.
- * 5-7 years
- * Long-term cognitive advantages of bilingualism will not accrue until the student has sufficiently developed both languages.
- * These advantages usually surface between 3rd and 5th grades.

Biliteracy Issues

- * There is positive transfer between L1 and L2 in Phonemic awareness, reading phonics, word recognition, word strategies, use of cognates, monitoring comprehension. However, some students need direct instruction before they can utilize the similarities.
- * Biggest obstacle is lack of vocabulary in L2.
- * Some reading strategies are common to both languages, others are specific to the phonetic and grapheme systems .

Early L2 Instruction is Good

- * Early exposure takes advantage of natural language-learning ability
- * Early soci-cultural openness
- * Pedagogy and learning styles are compatible in early grades

BUT...

- * Early start does NOT guarantee higher levels of achievement than delayed start
- * Delayed L2 can be equally effective in some situations
 - ◆ Older students are faster learners
 - ◆ Older learners have well developed L1 literacy skills that can transfer

Goals of AHISD

Immersion

- * High levels of literacy in both Spanish and English
- * High academic achievement—same curriculum as others
- * Development of cross-cultural understanding and pre-social skills



**The First Year
Student &
Teacher
Perspective**



**Parent
Perspective**

IMMERSION FOR ALL?

* YES

- ◆ Unless student has a *diagnosed* language development or auditory processing problem

Red Flags

- * These apply to all students, not just those considering the immersion program.
 - Students who have not mastered the kindergarten skills in English
 - Students who have been retained
 - Students with poor listening skills

FRUSTRATIONS

- * Class size is larger than non-immersion classrooms.
- * Volunteer opportunities are more limited.
- * Some parents “panic” because they cannot help students with their homework.
- * There is more homework in Spanish Immersion.
- * Transition from kindergarten to first grade is sometimes difficult. That can be more pronounced in an immersion setting.

Selection of Students

*BOARD ADOPTED PROCEDURES

- ◆ Open only to students who attend kindergarten at Howard Early Childhood Center
- ◆ Siblings are automatically admitted—provided the older sibling is currently enrolled in the program OR completed the five years in the elementary program
- ◆ Parent/Guardian must attend one orientation session for child to be eligible for the lottery.

Selection of Students

- * Attendance area—when possible, students will be assigned to the school in the area in which they reside
- * If there are not sufficient applicants to fill the class using this criteria, students may be assigned to the other elementary school. Parents will be responsible for providing transportation to the school.

LOTTERY Procedure

* Straight lottery by campus

Commitments

- * There is at least a 5-year commitment to this program. I will be supportive of both my child and the program.
- * If more applicants are received than positions available, there will be a lottery to determine actual participants.

Commitments (Continued)

- * There could be a lag in acquisition of English reading and writing. Experience has shown that the lag disappears by the 5th grade. This is most commonly evidenced on achievement tests scores.
- * It is especially important to read in English every night at home to establish the foundation for English reading and writing skills.

Commitments (Continued)

- * Knowing that special support programs (Title I, Dyslexia, etc.) may not be available to my child until the beginning of third grade. Exceptions to this may be students who qualify for special education and gifted programs.

Commitments (Continued)

- * This program is offered at both Cambridge and Woodridge.
 - ◆ 2 sections at Cambridge
 - ◆ 2 sections at Woodridge
- * Could be assigned to either campus
- * There will be 24-26 students in the class.
 - ◆ Note: Most non-immersion classes have 18 students.

Timeline

- * Begins April 1, 2010
- * Ends—April 16, 2010
- * Must be received in the AHISD Curriculum Office by 4:30 p.m.

Timeline

- * Lottery—Week of April 19-22, 2010
- * Notification—Week of May 3, 2010
- * Commitment forms due in Curriculum Office no later than May 14, 2010, 4:30 p.m.

A square graphic with a blue gradient background, transitioning from a lighter blue at the top to a darker blue at the bottom. The word "Questions?" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered horizontally and slightly above the vertical center. The graphic is enclosed in a thin black border.

Questions?

Spanish Immersion Contact Information

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