

## **Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness: Empowering Spanish-speaking English Learners through Dual Language**

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*As the population of Spanish-speaking, English learners (ELs) in the United States increases, it is imperative for K-12 schools in urban areas to become responsive to this diversity of student population. This paper purports to demonstrate that it is essential that schools take a culturally and linguistically responsive approach to address this urban critical issue by implementing a dual language (DL) program. While there are a variety of different programs that exist to provide support for ELs as they enter into the school system, there is one that proves itself to be a plausible solution to best meeting the needs of this Spanish-speaking, EL population of students. This article highlights a two-way 90:10 DL program. This current study adds to the field by mapping out what program models and characteristics previous research studies have shown to be the most beneficial to Spanish-speaking EL success while further examining if these research findings are being currently implemented in five, large urban school districts with high populations of Spanish-speaking ELs.*

*Keywords:* urban, dual language, bilingual education, English learners, LatinX

Issues of urban education are of utmost importance to be addressed and solved for the success of the youth of our nation. As Milner and Lomotey (2014) explain, “inadequate teaching practices, inadequate funding, poor administrative decisions, underdeveloped counseling and psychological services as well curricular opportunities that are unchallenging for and unresponsive to students are all inside-of-school factors that urban schools need to address” (p. xv-xvi). Milner and Lomotey (2014) discuss that there are two different levels at which urban education is at crisis, crisis at the micro-level and crisis at the macro-level. This article highlights the crisis that exists with English learners at the micro-level with educational program models and practices that fail to meet the needs of English learners and at the macro-level through the gap that exists between the research and policy that has decreased the impact that could be made on the successful outcome of English learners in urban schools. As policy makers, board of education members, central office administration, administrators, and teachers strive to best meet the needs of the English learner students in urban schools, knowledge of and implementation of evidence-based programs to reach this success are of utmost importance.

As of fall 2015, English learners were most highly populated in urban school districts, totaling 14% of the school enrollment in cities (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2018a). According to the United States Census Bureau (2012b), in 2010 over 50 % of the foreign born population in the United States were from Latin America. Further, 77% of all English learner students enrolled in public schools fall of 2015 reported Spanish as their language in the home (NCES, 2018a). English learners grew from 3.8 million students enrolled in U.S. public schools in 2000 to 4.8 million in 2015 (NCES, 2018a). According to the NCES (2018c), the gap between English learners and non- English learners on the reading scores of 2017 was 37 points

for fourth graders and 43 points for eighth graders. Additionally, the NCES (2018b) showed a gap of 26 points between English learners and non-English learners in fourth grade math scores and 39 points in eighth grade for the 2017 school year. The analysis of data leads to the acknowledgement that a solution must be put into place for English learners in urban schools to help them be successful.

For this present study, descriptive data were collected to examine the following research questions: (1) What are the different program types being offered to English learners (ELs) in five large, urban school districts? (2) What percentage of language instruction is allocated to English in dual language (DL) programs in five large, urban school districts? Upon providing a review of the literature, highlighting what program types and language allocations would be most culturally and linguistically responsive to Spanish-speaking EL students; an explanation of the theoretical framework, LangCrit is provided. An in-depth analysis and discussion of the data is supported by salient recommendations to support EL students.

### **Literature Review**

This section will begin with a brief history of how DL programs began in the United States and the impact national perspectives have had on its subsequent path in the U.S. educational system. Included in the review will be research studies that have indicated that DL programs, when well implemented, have the ability to best serve ELs. Further, the researchers will explain the specific program types and language allocations that exist within DL programs. A review of previous research studies will provide the framework for what specific characteristics of DL programs are the best choice for being culturally and linguistically responsive to Spanish-speaking ELs.

### **History of Dual Language in the U.S.**

In the 1700s and 1800s, immigrants arrived to the United States to find themselves in a time period of openness to speaking multiple languages (Thomas & Collier, 2012). In fact, in 1776, “only 40 percent of people living in what was then the United States were Anglophone. These people spoke scores of African, Native American, and non-English European languages,” (Shell, 2001, p. 6). However, an atmosphere of language restrictiveness emerged in the late 1800s that lasted through the end of World War II when bilingual schools re-emerged with the first DL school taking shape in Miami in the early 1960s (Thomas & Collier, 2012). By the 1970s and 1980s, DL programs were few in the United States but then more than doubled in the 1990s from 119 to 278 (Watzinger-Tharp, Swenson, & Mayne, 2018). Particular policies at the federal and state level have had a direct impact on the ability or inability of states to increase their DL programs.

At the federal level, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) led to ELs being subjected to the same high-stakes testing as their peers proficient in English, which in turn discouraged the implementation of bilingual programs (Pac, 2012). In fact, the high-stakes testing accountability that coupled NCLB led to the complete dismantling of bilingual education in certain circumstances and the replacement of bilingual programs with English-only programs (Menken & Solorza, 2014). At the state level, states such as California, Arizona, and Massachusetts had at one point in time restrictive policies regarding bilingual education urging instead English-only instruction (Borden, 2014). In contrast to these policies, other states such as Utah and North Carolina had specific policies or initiatives that encouraged DL programs (U.S. Department of Education [ED], 2015). As of 2018, Utah had established 195 DL programs in the state and North Carolina over 170 DL programs (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2018; Utah State Board of Education, 2018). As the popularity of DL programs increased in certain

areas of the country, research as well increased regarding the outcomes of DL schooling (Block, 2012; Collier & Thomas, 2009; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Lindholm-Leary, 2016; Lindholm-Leary & Genesse, 2010, Steele et al., 2017; Thomas & Collier, 2012; Thomas & Collier, 2017; Vela, Jones, Mundy, & Isaacson, 2017; Watzinger-Tharp, Swenson, & Mayne, 2018). The following sections will review more in depth the findings of these research studies as well as give an explanation of the various program types that exist for EL support and within DL programming.

### **Dual Language Programs**

There are a variety of program types that have been and are available to ELs enrolled in K-12 settings. Some programs are considered subtractive models while others are considered additive models. Subtractive models of EL support are programs where the main focus is for English proficiency, while subtracting the student's first language. Subtractive bilingualism, as Thomas and Collier (2012) explain, "refers to the students gradually losing their first language as the second language is acquired. This can lead to cognitive loss because of the crucial interconnection of first language with cognitive development" (p. 17). Subtractive programs include the following models in K-5 settings ranging from most support to no support: Transitional Bilingual Education—Late-exit, Transitional Bilingual Education—Early-exit, English as a Second Language (ESL) Content/Sheltered Instruction, Structured English Immersion, ESL Pullout, and Submersion in English Mainstream (Thomas & Collier, 2012). Additive programs focus on students adding the English language while continuing to develop their home language. With these programs, students can thus be viewed as Emergent Bilinguals (EBs). The utilization of the term EBs takes a culturally responsive approach by viewing students through a term that emphasizes students' development of both their native language and English. This approach builds on the strengths EL students bring with them to school. Utilizing an additive program to provide support for ELs has proven the most effective way to help ELs become proficient in the English language (Thomas & Collier, 2012). DL falls within a program model described as additive. ELs in DL programs "master much more of the curriculum, academically and linguistically than English learners in ESL-only programs. They experience full gap closure rather than partial gap closure" (Thomas & Collier, 2012, p.1). In a large, urban school district, Steele et.al (2017) conducted a study to determine the causal effects of DL on students' test scores in the areas of math, reading, and science. Additionally, Steele et al. (2017) examined the causal effects of DL on the reclassification of ELs. After randomly assigning students to groups, it was found that native English speakers and native speakers of other languages alike "outperform their peers on state accountability tests in reading by about seven months of learning in Grade 5 and nine months of learning in Grade 8" (Steele et al., 2017, p. 302S). Additionally, Steele et al. (2017) concluded that ELs who are in DL programs with a partner language, the term used in this article to refer to the language other than English taught in the DL classroom, that matches their native language "show a percentage point reduction in the probability of being classified as an EL as of about fifth grade and a 14 point reduction in sixth grade" (p. 302S).

Vela, Jones, Mundy, and Isaacson (2017) collected data of third grade ELs in an urban school district in southern Texas through the measure of the state exam in reading and math. The sample consisted of around 2,000 EL students from the 2014-2015 school year. Vela et al. divided the total sample into program type enrollment: transitional bilingual program, an English-only instruction program, or a two-way DL program. From the original sample, a randomized sample of 72 students was used for the study, majority classified as low socioeconomic status and LatinX. The findings in reading were not statistically significant based on program type (Vela et al., 2017). In math, however, the findings were significantly different

based on program type, with DL programs scoring significantly higher than transitional bilingual education and English-only instruction (Vela et al., 2017).

Watzinger-Tharp et al. (2018) examined the effect of DL on academic achievement in math in both one-way and two-way immersion programs including multiple languages such as Chinese, French, and Spanish. The sample included all students enrolled in Utah's public schools that were in the third grade in the 2011-2012 school year and the fourth grade in the 2012-2013 school year. Watzinger-Tharp et al. (2018) concluded that students in the fourth grade DL program showed more growth in math than those students that were not in a DL program. Thomas and Collier (2012) conducted a longitudinal research study in North Carolina that focused on seven school districts across the state that had cohorts of students who had reached at least the third grade. Third grade is significant as it is the grade in which state testing officially begins. The students were enrolled in a two-way DL immersion program with the majority of the schools implementing Spanish as the partner language. The researcher Wayne P. Thomas described the findings as such, "the effect sizes associated with these dual language schools are consistently the largest and most pervasive across all participant subgroups of any I have seen in my professional career" (Thomas & Collier, 2012, p. 67). The student sample included a total of 85,662 students during the 2008-2009 school year. The results of the study done by Thomas and Collier (2012) demonstrated that students in the DL programs outperformed their comparison groups not in DL programs in both reading and math. Additionally, Thomas and Collier (2012) found that students in two-way programs outperform their comparative peers by middle school if not sooner. It is important to note that Thomas and Collier (2012) disaggregated the data for the EL subgroup to also show that ELs enrolled in DL outperform ELs not in DL programs in both reading and math state testing. Collectively, the research displayed in this section showed the academic benefits possible from DL programs that were additive by nature rather than subtractive. Within DL programs, however, different models exist and need to be examined from a closer lens to analyze which program type provides the best learning environment for ELs.

### **Dual Language Models: One-Way and Two-Way**

One-way or two-way, refers to the student population enrolled in the DL program. One-way is the program type where majority of students in the program have the same home language (Thomas & Collier, 2017). This language group could be made up of mostly native English speakers or it could be a one-way program that is made up of mostly a group of students that speak a language other than English (Thomas & Collier, 2017). The reason behind one-way could be if the school population is predominantly one language group and does not allow for a two-way model where student groups are combined into one classroom.

In contrast to a one-way program, a two-way program is where groups of students from two different home languages come together into one classroom and learn through these two languages (Thomas & Collier, 2017). In order for a DL classroom to be labeled as two-way, Thomas and Collier (2012) explain that at least a third of the students in the program need to be either native English speakers or native speakers of the partner language. In areas where a two-way immersion (TWI) is able to be implemented, this program model has the potential to be a best fit for ELs for a multitude of reasons. One important benefit is the impact this mixture can have on language development. In a DL classroom where there is a mixture of students that are native English speakers and native speakers of the partner language, authentic and meaningful interaction can occur that facilitates the acquisition of second-language learning (Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2010). Another important benefit is that:

As the model integrates students from different native language backgrounds (and frequently from different socioeconomic and racial/ethnic backgrounds as well) and

provides an enriched education for all students, TWI avoids the stigma of segregation and remediation associated with many other programmes designed for English language learners (ELLs). (de Jong & Howard, 2009, p. 81)

Further, placing students that are Spanish-speaking with peers that are native English speakers leads to sociocultural and emotional benefits and allows for positive relationships to grow as students in DL programs “have more favorable attitudes toward being bilingual and toward students who are different from themselves than do students in the English mainstream classroom” (Thomas & Collier, 2012, p. 2).

Building positive relationships is essential for ELs as “the fact is that every individual, as well as every culture, is always in a relationship with other individuals and cultures, through which their identity is either confirmed or negated, allowed to flourish or suffocate-in a word, shaped” (Svetelj, 2018, p. 398). Shaping a positive perception of the LatinX culture and language is critical. In fact, Ogunnaike, Dunham, and Banaji (2010) demonstrated in their study that a shift in language can ultimately shift attitudes as they found that “attitudes squarely belong amongst those contents of mind that can be influenced by language. Language, in this sense, is much more than a medium for conveying preferences; it is intimately involved in constructing and shaping their very nature” (p. 1003). By placing ELs in a TWI program, they are able to be surrounded by native English speakers instead of segregated from them, further creating a classroom environment where they can act as peer tutors to their native English-speaking classmates, giving ELs validity to the worth of their home language and their worth in society (Thomas & Collier, 2012). The sociocultural and emotional benefits of a two-way DL program are critical in shaping the successful outcome of ELs.

### **Language Allocation**

DL programs are referred to as 90:10 DL programs, 50:50 DL programs, and sometimes as in between as 80:20 or 70:30. When described in this way, the numbers are describing the distribution of languages in instruction. In a 90:10 model, 90% of instructional time is in the partner language and 10% of the time in English in the beginning years of the program and gradually moves to an equal language distribution by grades 4-5 (Thomas & Collier, 2012). In 50:50 programs, students begin from the start with English and the partner language being distributed equally and it remains as such throughout the elementary years (Thomas & Collier, 2012). Stakeholders need guidance in deciding which language distribution model would be best. The 90:10 model has shown to have many positive outcomes for both native English speakers and native speakers of the partner language. Collier and Thomas (2009) explain that “the highest achievement occurs in 90:10 bilingual classes that emphasize strong academic and cognitive development in the” partner language in the beginning stages of the program implementation (p. 73). When analyzing data from achievement gap closure on ELs from four different program types (one-way 90:10, one-way 50:50, two-way 90:10, and two-way 50:50), Collier and Thomas (2004) found that “two-way 90:10 programs reach the highest levels of achievement in the shortest amount of time, and one-way 50:50 programs need continuation of the program throughout the middle school years to completely close the achievement gap in English” (p.15). For ELs in the one-way 90:10 and two-way 50:50 programs, the percent of achievement gap closed by fifth grade was 70-100% while ELs in the two-way 90:10 program had 95-100% of achievement gap closed by fifth grade (Collier & Thomas, 2004, 2009). Of importance to note, Collier and Thomas (2004) also looked at the variance in outcomes of EL achievement closure in three dual language programs noting that two of these programs closed the gap by 6 Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) a year and one program closing the gap by 3.5 NCEs a year. The difference between the school with the gap closure rate of 3.5 NCEs and the other two schools

with the gap closure of 6 NCEs was that the program with the lower gap closure separated the ELs from the native-English speakers in the program for an English language arts block. Thus, implementation variations can have a major impact on variations of EL outcomes.

While closing the academic achievement gap is of importance, proficiency outcomes in the partner language are of equal importance considering the program goals are to reach bilingualism and biliteracy. When looking at program model variations on language outcomes in the partner language, Lindholm-Leary (2001) found that the language allocation between 90:10 and 50:50 yields different outcomes. Specifically on the outcomes of Spanish proficiency of Spanish speakers, students in the 90:10 model had higher levels of proficiency in Spanish with no detriment to English proficiency even though they received less English at the start of the program compared to the 50:50 model (Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

In regards to student perceptions, Lindholm-Leary (2016) investigated students' perceptions of bilingualism and its impact on cognitive functioning and social relationships. For the study, Lindholm-Leary (2016) surveyed language proficiencies, bilingualism, and social and cognitive functioning of 788 students in 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade DL programs from 11 different schools including elementary, middle, and K-8 programs. Both Spanish/English and Mandarin/English programs were included in the study. Out of the 788 students, 645 were in the Spanish/English DL program and there were participants from both the 90:10 model and 50:50 model, with 68% LatinX students in the Spanish/English programs and half of those being classified as ELs at program entry (Lindholm-Leary, 2016). Further, 43% of Spanish/English students were participating in free/reduced-price lunch program. Of interest to this present study are outcomes of Lindholm-Leary's (2016) study on the difference between 90:10 and 50:50 program types. Lindholm-Leary (2016) found that "In every instance where there were significant differences, students in 90:10 programs scored higher than students in 50:50 programs" (p. 68-69) and that students that participated in the 90:10 model "had higher language proficiency in Spanish and higher ratings of bilingualism (according to both self and teacher ratings)" (p. 69).

Additionally, Block (2012) investigated both student and parent perceptions of the impact that DL programs had on building positive relationships with Spanish-speaking family and community members. In Block's (2012) study, 193 LatinX students in the fifth and sixth grade participated. The participants were from two districts in Los Angeles County, and 90 of the 193 were in a 90:10 dual language program (Block, 2012). Of those 90 students, 62 were labeled as ELs when starting the program and nearly all of the EL students in the study were eligible for free and reduced lunch. Block's (2012) findings from the study were there was a greater perception of an increase in communication and building of relationships with Spanish-speaking family members and community members for those students and parents in the DL programs than those not in DL programs. Additionally, the study by Block (2012) added to the field by showing that schools that provide DL can be "agents in enabling students through the learning of highly developed language skills via dual immersion programs to communicate more effectively in their families and communities so that their immediate social contexts may better provide the requisites to develop resiliency" (p. 253). Even when surrounded by difficult circumstances Block (2012) explains that:

Children develop resiliency when they experience relationships of caring and connection with adults, when they are surrounded by high expectations (mediated through intergenerational guidance), and when they have opportunities to participate actively and contribute in their social contexts. (p. 236)

Thus, providing learning contexts where LatinX students can develop high levels of bilingual proficiency can lead to positive and necessary relationships with their Spanish-speaking family and community members that can support sustainable success of these students over the long

run. This study is extremely beneficial to the field as it tells a counter-story of the narrative of English-only movements that encourage English mainstream classes for ELs.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The current study is viewed through the lens of Critical Language and Race Theory, or LangCrit (Crump, 2014), and is an extension of Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT had its beginnings in 1970 with works by Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman who recognized that racial reform was progressing at a far too slow rate in the United States (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). One important insight that came with CRT is that racism is so entrenched within the American society that it has become hard to recognize and therefore a challenge to rectify (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). A second premise of CRT is the objective of questioning the current way of being through counter-stories to create a new narrative recognizing that “our social world, with its rules, practices, and assignments of prestige and power, is not fixed; rather, we construct it with words, stories, and silence” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, p. xvii). LangCrit takes this one step further by integrating language and discusses the complex intersections of the seen and the heard (Crump, 2014). LangCrit “is a critical theory of language and race that challenges fixed assumptions related to categories such as language, identity, and race and argues that these categories are socially and locally constructed” (Crump, 2014, p. 220). LangCrit is relevant to this study as reflection and analysis is a must when exploring the contexts of language, bilingual education, and EL program options in the U.S. educational system. Morita-Mulklarney (2018) used LangCrit to analyze the intersection of language and race with EL leaders by “looking at how institutions of English language learning inform racial and linguistic constructions of ELs, which can promote or restrict equitable access for EL students” (p. 372). For the present study, it is critical to examine how schools can play a role in enabling or disabling identity possibilities that exist for bilingual, LatinX children through placing them in and providing them with programs where they can negotiate their own identity or in programs and with programs that aim to keep their identity fixed and maintained by the status quo. By analyzing and reflecting upon program types that best meet the cultural and linguistic diversity of ELs, perhaps a new narrative can be born. By recognizing the intersectionality of identity, language, and race, a deconstruction of perspectives in addressing EL needs and the dismantling of ineffective EL program structures can potentially occur.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this research study is to examine the characteristics of services and programs being currently provided to ELs in five large, urban school districts. Additionally, if any of these districts were implementing DL programs, the researchers wanted to examine what percentage of each language was being allocated into the instruction. The following research questions guided the study: (1) What are the different program types being offered to ELs in five large, urban school districts? (2) What percentage of language instruction is allocated to English in DL programs in five large, urban school districts? This section includes the sample selection, sample characteristics, and how data was examined from each school district.

### **Sample**

As urban areas were of most interest in this study, the researchers used the United States Census Bureau website to begin the sample selection process. The search for largest cities in the U.S. in the United States Census Bureau (2012a) website yielded a report titled “Largest Urbanized Areas with Selected Cities and Metro Areas” as the most recent report at the time of the search. These cities were then cross-referenced with the report from the National Center for

Education Statistics which indicated the largest populations of EL students in the U.S. (2018a). This produced five metropolitan cities, Chicago, Illinois; Dallas, Texas; Houston, Texas; Los Angeles, California; and Miami, Florida.

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR) database was utilized to select the largest school districts in those five selected cities. Within the database, the researchers searched for school districts in each of the five cities and states utilizing data from the 2015-2016 survey year, the most recent year available on the database. The school districts were then cross-referenced one more time with the Common Core of Data (CCD) from the NCES (2019) database to identify more recent descriptors of these counties. The results from the CCD (NCES, 2019) showed that four of the five school districts in the 2016-2017 school year had urban designation, with the school district in Miami being described as suburb, meaning it was designated as urban fringe of a large city. Using Milner's (2012) descriptions of urban schools, Miami was not excluded from the sample, as it meets the parameters of being an urban emergent school district.

Using the OCR database, the researchers gathered a variety of characteristics important to the context of this current study regarding urban schools and Spanish-speaking ELs from each school district to report in this section. The following characteristics were collected from each district: total schools in district, total Title 1 schools, total student population, percentage of student population labeled as LatinX, total percentage of students labeled as Free and Reduced-price Lunch (FRPL), total amount of students and the percentage of school that were labeled as ELs, the percentage of female and male students labeled as ELs, the percentage of EL students that were LatinX, and the percentage of the total LatinX population that were labeled EL. Sample descriptors are included in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1

*School District Characteristics by Total Number of Schools, Percentage of LatinX Students, Student Population, and Free and Reduced Lunch Percentage (FRPL)*

District	Total Schools	#Title 1	Student Population	%LatinX	%FRPL
A	240	225	158,941	70.1	87.8
B	784	716	539,634	73.9	78.9
C	283	262	215,989	62	76.4
D	485	428	358,179	69	71.6
E	584	513	392,303	46.1	84

*Note.* Data from retrieved the Office of Civil Rights Data Collection (2018).

Table 2

*School Characteristics by Gender, LatinX Population and Total Enrollment*

District	Total Students	Total %	%Female	%Male	%LatinX	% of LatinX population EL
A	68,375	42.8	42.2	43.8	95.9	58.8
B	145,699	28.8	25.2	28.7	90.5	33
C	65,635	30.2	29.5	31.3	91.6	44.9
D	72,907	20.2	19	21.6	87.9	25.9
E	68,942	17.3	16.3	18.6	84.1	31.8

*Note.* Data retrieved from Office of Civil Rights Data Collection (2018).

## Data Analysis

To examine the different program types offered to EL students and specific DL program characteristics if DL was offered in all five school districts, the researchers used information accessible on each school district's website. The websites were analyzed to determine if any DL programs were offered and what type(s) were offered if one was indicated. Secondly, the researchers looked for specific descriptions of these program types. Lastly, in districts that offered DL programs, the researchers attempted to find the specific characteristics such as one-way immersion (OWI), two-way immersion (TWI), and language allocation where available at each district website.

## Results

The following data were collected from all five school district websites. The researchers' aim was to find exactly what programs were offered to ELs. Additionally, in districts where DL programs were offered, the researchers attempted to find the total amount of DL programs implemented as well as the specific characteristics such as student make up of program (OWI or TWI) and the specific language allocation of the program (90:10, 50:50, or another variation).

### School District A

According to the School District A website, both ESL and DL programs were offered to ELs. Within the DL program, both OWI and TWI existed. There were 135 elementary schools that offered OWI and 51 elementary, 4 middle, and 1 high school that offered TWI. The language allocation for these programs was not readily found. One language allocation model was located for TWI schools starting in the 2017-2018 school year. According to this information from a presentation given by the district, pre-K through first grade would follow what would be similar to a 70:30 language allocation, 70% of instruction through Spanish and 30% of instruction through English. Math was designated for instruction in English and the rest of instruction, including Science, Social Studies, Reading and Language Arts was designated to be instructed in Spanish. For second through fifth grades, the language allocation would be 50:50. Math and Reading and Language Arts instructed in English and Science, Social Studies, and Reading and Language Arts instructed in Spanish.

### School District B

According to the website from School District B, the following programs were available for ELs in elementary schools: DL TWI, DL OWI, Language and Literacy in English Acceleration Program, and Mainstream English Program. For ELs in secondary schools, the options were: DL TWI, DL OWI, Language and Literacy in English Acceleration Program, Secondary Newcomer Program with Primary Language Instruction, Accelerated Program for Long-term ELs, and Mainstream English Program. For DL programs, this county offered the program in the following languages: Spanish, Arabic, Armenian, French, Korean, and Mandarin. The following number of programs and models were offered in Spanish at the elementary level according to the School District B website: (47) 50:50 TWI, (4) 70:30 TWI, (2) 90:10 TWI, (2) 50:50 OWI, (2) 70:30 OWI, (3) Transitional Bilingual Education, (1) 50:50 WLI, and (1) 70:30 WLI. At the middle school level the following programs existed: (12) TWI without language allocation listed (School District B, 2018). At the high school level, the following programs existed: (1) TWI, (1) OWI. In its entirety, there were 76 different programs implemented in this county.

### **School District C**

According to the website from School District C, the following programs were available to ELs at the elementary level: Spanish Transitional Bilingual and DL programs for Spanish-speaking students, a Bilingual Cultural Heritage Program for Vietnamese-speaking students, a Mandarin Chinese Immersion, an Arabic Immersion, a French Immersion, and ESL programs. At the secondary level, the School District C website stated the following programs were offered: ESL/Sheltered English, Sheltered Content programs, and Bilingual programs at certain designated DL schools. For the 2018-2019 school year, there were 35 elementary schools that offered the 50:50 language allocation in Spanish and 9 elementary schools that offered the 80:20 language allocation in Spanish. The county website does not specifically state whether the programs are TWI or OWI. A description of TWI is given on the website. Further, there were five Spanish DL programs offered at the middle school level and 1 Spanish DL program offered at the high school.

### **School District D**

According to the website from School District D, English for Speakers of Other Languages, Curriculum Content in the Home Language/Bilingual Curriculum Content, Alternative Language Arts, Project New Beginning, and DL Programs were available for ELs. The DL Programs in the county were described as being also known as two-way bilingual education and that the aim of all DL programs was a 60:40 language distribution with 60% of instruction being given in English and 40% of instruction being given in Spanish. There were two programs responsible for implementing the DL programs of the county, the Elementary Bilingual School Organization program and the Extended Foreign Language program. The Elementary Bilingual School Organization program offered 7 DL programs at the elementary school level and the Extended Foreign Language program offered 63 DL programs, 46 at the elementary level, 4 at the K-8 level, 11 at the middle school level, and 2 at the high school level.

### **School District E**

The following programs were offered to ELs: Transitional Bilingual Education, Transitional Program of Instruction, and Dual Language Education. In the 2016-2017 school year DL programs were offered in 15 schools, nine being neighborhood schools, three charter schools, and three magnet schools. The district offered both OWI and TWI, with OWI serving mostly ELs. The district had approved the addition of five more neighborhood DL programs for the 2017-2018 school year. The language allocation was as follows: three schools followed the 90:10 language allocation, one school followed the 90:10 and 50:50 language allocation, 10 schools followed the 80:20 language allocation, and one school followed the 50:50 language allocation. For the 90:10 language allocation, 90% of the instructional time was dedicated to Spanish and 10% to English while the 50:50 language allocation had the instructional time distributed equally to the two languages.

### **Discussion**

The focus of this study was to examine five urban school districts to determine the types of DL programs being offered. While there are different program models that school districts have chosen as an attempt to meet these needs such as English mainstream classes, transitional bilingual programs, and DL programs, much research has shown the long-standing positive benefits that DL programs have on EL students. Specifically, this article highlighted the two-way, 90:10 DL program for Spanish-speaking ELs. The researchers recognized the

intersectionality between language, identity, and race and therefore situated this current study through the lens of LangCrit. to examine descriptive data from five large, urban districts, looking specifically at what program types were being offered to ELs and what percentage of language instruction was allocated to English if the districts offered DL.

The findings yielded that there were a variety of programs available to support ELs at each district including ESL, Transitional Bilingual Education, and DL. It was of concern that subtractive models of bilingual education are still being offered as one of the primary means of support. School District A offered the most DL programs showing most alignment with the literature in providing additive bilingual education models as a way to serve ELs while School District E had the least amount of DL programs offered out of the five districts. There were many variations in DL program offerings, with School District C and School District D having specified the goal of TWI for the DL programs that shows a correlation to literature recommendations in serving two language groups in DL programs when feasible. Majority of DL programs in School District B were TWI and majority of DL programs were OWI in School District A. In regards to language allocation in the DL programs, there existed many variations. School District B and C offered more 50:50 programs than 90:10 which does not align with the positive implications the literature has discussed 90:10 models can have with ELs. School District D offered programs with the least amount of instructional time in the partner language, which was concerning that there was not a minimum of a 50:50 balance in language allocation. School District E most closely aligned with the literature surrounding language allocation of 90:10 by offering the majority of its DL programs with an 80:20 language allocation.. The findings from our study emphasize the importance of a bridge being built by researchers to the stakeholders of EL policy and program implementation. While the researchers were encouraged by the amount of two-way DL programs being offered, especially large amounts of DL programs in general in certain districts, the 90:10 language allocation is still not the most widely used in these five large, urban districts. Additionally, subtractive programs are still being implemented as options for ELs.

### **Limitations**

There were limitations to the current study. The findings of the program types and language allocations are dependent upon the information located on the school districts' websites. The researchers attempted to the best of their ability to represent accurate data based off of the information they found on these sites. To fully understand why subtractive programs are still offered and why certain DL programs (OWI or TWI) and language allocations (90:10, 50:50) are implemented in each school district, it could be beneficial for further studies to be done at these locations. Interviews with school district personnel could allow for additional information that may be necessary to understand the why behind current program models and language allocations such as policy, funding concerns, pressures from high-stakes testing leading to more English instructional time, or challenges from a shortage of qualified teachers.

### **Conclusion**

The present study focused on investigating what program models were being utilized in five large urban districts to provide support for their EL population. The findings from the current study show that there are still a variety of programs being used to provide support, some of which are DL programs. More 50:50 than 90:10 language allocations are being implemented currently in the DL programs. DL programs can be a plausible solution for best meeting the needs of EL students. As ELs population is most concentrated in urban areas, urban schools can greatly benefit from implementing two-way DL programs where the partner language matches

the EL's home language. DL programs allow ELs to maintain and further develop their home language while also developing the English language. The mixture of ELs and native English speakers in a two-way DL classroom is critical for the social and cultural well-being of the ELs as all students learn empathy for diverse cultures and ELs recognize from a young age the value and worth of their language and culture as it is embraced in the classroom. ELs can feel like an important part of the school atmosphere and can shine as leaders in the classroom for the language gift they have. A 90:10 model can provide for the best academic results, create higher levels of proficiency, and provide for stronger relationships with Spanish-speaking family and community members, potentially providing for resiliency. Urban schools can provide environments conducive of success for Spanish-speaking ELs by taking a culturally and linguistically responsive approach to their unique learning needs. The current analysis from this study shows that large urban districts are taking steps in the right direction of being culturally and linguistically responsive to the unique learning needs of ELs through the implementation of DL programs as a plausible solution to this critical issue.

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