

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS THAT ENSURE EQUITY IN CHALLENGING TIMES

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Don't Forget Why Dual Language Exists

USE BACKWARDS DESIGN

Dual language & bilingual education were born out of injustice & the commitment to the ideals of this country. We must not forget the courageous, equity-based, grassroots efforts that designed an educational approach for language learners that addressed programmatic considerations, evidence-based strategies, the full schema of resources needed for success, and continuous monitoring - the same strategic and quality educational experience that would prepare all students for life.

IDENTIFY & LEARN FROM CHALLENGES

The new *normal* for many students during the COVID19 pandemic included grieving the loss of loved ones and coping from the personal impact of protests around the nation. It also included insufficient: food, health care, communication with others, digital learning devices, Internet connectivity, prior knowledge to navigate digital tools, connection between school content & home reality, home language supports, engagement w/ the academic community, hope for a better tomorrow, and more. Clear processes and policies for the identification and dismantling of these inequities through the redispersion of resources (human, fiscal, community, development, materials, etc.) and voice during the design of DL program's path forward is critical.

Look to your most struggling voices to find inequities that must be addressed

COMMUNICATE

Continued uncertainty over school, health, jobs, safety, and life, felt by families will require ongoing communication to avoid escalating tension for families and staff. Communicate: (1) hope for a better tomorrow, (2) to identify families' needs for that better tomorrow, (3) updates on what is (un)known, (4), and update families on plan to ensure students will be safe from COVID-19 & racial unrest. How to best communicate? Follow a predictable schedule for providing your community with updates that include: robocalls, emails, website updates, school signs, mailers, social media, youtube messages, teachers, community partners (internal, public, and private/religious), across the languages represented by your student demographics. Families will want to know how and when decisions will be made and the resources that will be available to them to ensure the better tomorrow that language learners deserve.



CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Plan for the time, capacity-building, tools, funds, & policy changes needed for REAL equity

Multiple contingency plans with flexibility to respond to safety & health are needed. DL programs will need flexibility in rotating schedules, adjusting self-contained vs. side by side, & coordinating school vs. remote learning sequence. Planning should .NOT include shifting to a LESS effective program model that is not already designed to accelerate learning, equity, & social justice. The contingency plans shared thus far that most flexibly align to the needs of DL programs are: (1) alternating days or 1/2 days, (2) one course at a time (provided integrated thematic units are in place, and (3) one-room schoolhouse.

REBUILD CULTURE/CLIMATE



Do NOT overlook the fact that most students, families, staff, and leaders are exhausted, scared, and frustrated with a situation & world so out of control. Your communities will be different. Using mirrors, windows, and doors (first with staff & then students) provides structure for the school community to: (1) Listen, (2) affirm & acknowledge diverse perspectives, (3) shine light on the limitation of that perspective. DL Leaders/staff need awareness of how to embody humanity & inclusivity, input from diverse perspectives, training & tools for building an anti-racist climate for learning, and guidelines for safety (physical, emotional, racial, linguistic, etc.).

ANTICIPATE THE NEEDS



It is reasonable to anticipate gaps when students return. These gaps provide greater urgency to demand and leverage the most powerful EVIDENCE-BASED approaches for DLs: using assets & funds of knowledge, cross-linguistic connections, integrated thematic units aligned to ALL 3 pillars, clear language/content/social justice objectives, comprehensible input, scaffolds matched to proficiency, etc. We reject the notion of "instructional triage". (Kerms & McClarity, 2020). Prior research & emergency school closures show advanced effect sizes for strategic use of spiraling (J. Gonzalez, 2020) and tutors (R. Slavin, 2020).

DUAL LANGUAGE CONSIDERATIONS



PLC's focused on DL students' progress in the LOTE, literacy, & content, and adjusting the strategies to improve outcomes as well as DL teacher coaching designed to maximize face-to-face time is critical. Coordinating instruction at school and extending/connecting to home, partnerships for added practice in the LOTE, and engaging authentic resources are also needed. LEAs with DL programs will need accountability for systematizing strategies that ensure continued equity and access (e.g. equal investment in improving structural challenges that have been highlighted in the pandemic, like: staffing/funding, unviable curricula, assessment practices that defy evidence-based approaches, etc.).

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