



DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS AND ENGLISH LEARNERS

Arizona language policy prohibits English learners (ELs) from enrolling in dual language programs (programs that deliver instruction in two languages) until they have been reclassified as fluent English speakers.

There are many myths about language learning, which include:

- English immersion is the best way for ELs to acquire English.
- ELs can soak up English like a sponge.
- ELs are not ready to learn content subjects until they have learned English.

What do we know about **dual language programs** and English Learners?

- ELs who are provided with dual language programming academically outperform English speakers^{1,2}
- It can take around 7 years for ELs to become proficient in English³
- ELLs who are taught academic content (e.g., math, science, language arts, etc.) in their first language build skills that enable them to transfer the information into their English⁴
- There are cognitive and non-cognitive benefits to being bilingual⁵

KEY TAKEAWAYS: English learners need access to dual language programs without targeted English Development, which is not supported by research, as early as possible.

¹ <https://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/2866/2029>

²Umansky, I., & Reardon, S. (2014). "Reclassification Patterns among Latino English Learner Students in Bilingual, Dual Immersion, and English Immersion Classrooms." *American Educational Research Journal* 51 (5): 879–912.

³ Hakuta, K. (2011). Educating language minority students and affirming their equal rights: Research and practical perspectives. *Educational Researcher*, 40, 163-174.

⁴ Hakuta, K. (1990). Language and cognition in bilingual children. In A. Padilla, C. Valdez & H. Fairchild (Eds.), *Bilingual education: Issues and strategies* (pp. 47-59). Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.

⁵ Adesope, O. O., Lavin, T., Thompson, T., & Ungerleider, C. (2010). A systematic review and meta-analysis of the cognitive correlates of bilingualism. *Review of Educational Research*, 80, 207-245.