

1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on:

- **defining key terms**
- **describing the benefits of bilingualism for individuals**
- **describing the benefits of bilingual education for a school**
- **reviewing programming options**
- **reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of an early start**
- **reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of a late start**
- **major research findings regarding bilingual education.**

Defining key terms

Bilingual

Challenges in using the term

The term *bilingual* is used to describe both individuals and groups of people who have varying degrees, including very high or low levels, of proficiency in two or more languages. Determining what constitutes a high degree of proficiency or fluency in one language or another is difficult. Large numbers of people speak even their strongest language with varying degrees of proficiency. Even if someone is highly proficient in one type of social or academic language (or register of speech), he or she may not be proficient in other types. Furthermore, in situations where bilingualism involves two or more languages perceived as having high status, bilinguals and bilingualism are usually presented in a positive light. In contrast, if one of the languages is perceived as having low status, bilingualism and bilinguals can be perceived as problematic by those lacking in-depth knowledge of language learning.

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Definition as used in this guide

The term *bilingual* describes individuals and groups of people who use two or more languages for inter-cultural communication in varying contexts. In a bilingual education context, a bilingual is a student who is meeting curriculum expectations in those subjects taught either primarily through the first language (L1) or primarily through the second language (L2). This implies that students are also ‘biliterate’, having the ability to read and write in two or more languages at an age-appropriate level.

Bilingual education

Challenges in using the term

The term *bilingual education* is used by some people to refer to those programmes that support bilingualism, and by others, to those programmes that undermine bilingualism (additive versus subtractive bilingualism).¹ In some regions, programmes that teach immigrant children primarily through the societally dominant language are referred to as *bilingual education* despite the fact that these programmes may in the long term suppress the students’ L1 in favour of the dominant language (subtractive bilingualism). The same is the case in some countries with numerous language groups where a former colonial language or a regional *lingua franca* is the dominant language of instruction, whilst the languages of various other ethnic groups are used to a lesser degree, or not used at all, as a medium of instruction. Cultural contexts vary, as do the challenges various societies face in delivering bilingual education. Bilingual education has in some regions become for many people such a misunderstood and negative concept that proponents of additive bilingual education have rebranded the concept using a new term such as ‘dual language education’, simply in order to avoid the negativity associated with the previously used term.

Definition as used in this guide

Bilingual education supports individuals in becoming and remaining bilingual (additive bilingualism). At least two languages are used to teach different content subjects such as Mathematics or History throughout the final if not all the years of school life. Bilingual education supports students in developing:

- age-appropriate levels of L1 competence in reading, writing, speaking and listening
- age-appropriate levels of advanced proficiency in L2 reading, writing, speaking and listening

¹See the work of Wallace Lambert.

- grade-appropriate² levels of academic achievement in non-language school subjects, such as Mathematics and Science, taught primarily through the L2 and in those taught primarily through the L1
- an understanding and appreciation of the L1 and L2 cultures
- the capacity for and interest in inter-cultural communication
- the cognitive and social skills and habits required for success in an ever-changing world.

Note: Although the above definition constitutes a high expectation, it does not imply that lesser forms of bilingual education should be rejected. Instead, it is proposed that societies and their stakeholders work towards improving the provision of quality bilingual education in a manner that respects the linguistic rights and needs of all language groups.



Personal perspective

Navigating diversity

Ejigayehu Zewdie works as a Project Manager at the British Council in Ethiopia. She recounts some of the challenges of developing additive bilingual education programmes in her national context:

Twenty-one regional languages (in addition to the official language, Amharic) are used as media of instruction at the primary level, and this in a country where some 90 regional languages are spoken. In Ethiopia there is a lack of teachers able to teach in regional languages and a lack of teaching materials (for some regional languages the first step was the adoption of a script for writing them). In some regions and areas there are schools that have groups of children who speak different languages at home, which raises the challenge of defining which of the children's first languages should be used as a medium of instruction.

CLIL

Challenges in using the term

CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) programmes are used to refer to a wide range of programmes from those that use the L2 for teaching one short content module or one content subject such as History or Science, to those programmes that use the L2 for teaching half or more of the curriculum.

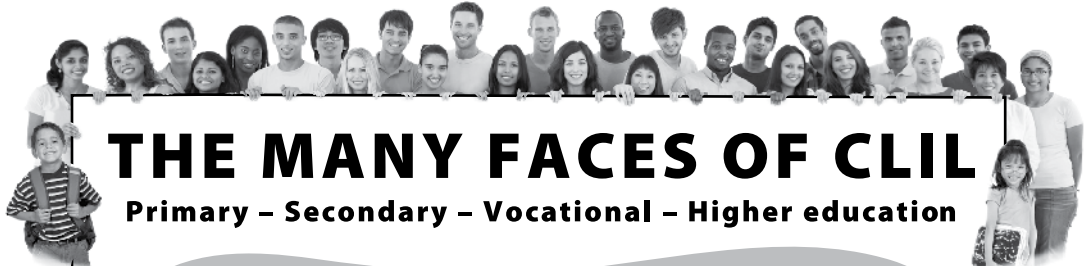
²A grade is a synonym for a particular academic year, e.g. Grade 1 or Year 1.

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Thus, descriptions of context take on a particular importance when comparing conclusions from various CLIL research studies.

Definition as used in this guide

CLIL is a dual-focused teaching and learning approach in which an additional language or two is used in content classes for promoting both content mastery and language acquisition to pre-defined levels. In addition, the goals listed under *bilingual education* also apply to CLIL. Thus, CLIL seeks additive bilingualism.



THE MANY FACES OF CLIL
 Primary – Secondary – Vocational – Higher education

FLEXIBILITY

<p>Short term and high intensity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLIL camps • work-study abroad • student exchanges • family stays 	<p>Long term and high intensity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • double immersion • two-way immersion • total immersion
<p>Short term and lower intensity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modules • international projects • local projects 	<p>Long term and lower intensity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partial immersion • several content subjects • one content subject

L1 (first language)

Challenges in using the term

With increased migration of people within and across regions and nations, many parts of the world are becoming more linguistically mixed and complex. With regard to language, it is increasingly difficult to use one term that applies broadly to a whole society. Furthermore, the term *L1* raises issues of identification (self, others, government bodies); levels of competence; frequency and extent of use and non-use; cultural and linguistic affiliation; power; and citizenship; all of which add further layers of meaning to the concept of *L1*.

Definition as used in this guide

The term *L1* refers to a student's first acquired and strongest language. For simplicity's sake, when referring to a situation in general, it is assumed that the *L1* is also the society's numerically dominant language.³ At the same time, it is recognised that for individual students from immigrant or minority backgrounds the *L1* can be their second (*L2*) or even third language (*L3*).

L2 (second language)

Challenges in using the term

The same challenges apply to the use of the term *L2* as is the case for *L1*.

Definition as used in this guide

The term *L2* refers to a student's second language. For simplicity's sake, in this guide *L2* refers to an additional language (in addition to the *L1*) that is used as a medium of instruction. At the same time, it is recognised that for individual students from immigrant or minority backgrounds, the *L2* can be their third (*L3*) or even fourth (*L4*) language.

Mother tongue

Challenges in using the term

In and across different contexts, the term *mother tongue* is open to a wide range of interpretations on a personal, state and international level. Some people have one mother tongue, another father tongue, and possibly a third grandparent tongue. In other environments, some children may first learn a societally dominant language, and only later as an adult learn what in more natural, tolerant or supportive circumstances would have been their mother tongue.

³In some circumstances, this is not the case. For example, in some African countries, minority speakers outnumber native speakers of the politically dominant and official language(s). Examples can be found from other continents.

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Definition as used in this guide

Mother tongue is the first and primary language through which a child is initially socialised by his or her parent(s) or guardian(s). It is recognised that a child may be socialised more or less equally through two languages at one time.

Principal

A *principal* is the primary leader and manager of a school. He or she is in charge of all school staff and operations. In some countries she or he is referred to, among other titles, as the school director, headteacher or headmistress/headmaster.

Stakeholder

A *stakeholder* is any person, group or organisation that can be affected by the school's bilingual programme or that can affect the programme. Thus, a stakeholder is any person, group or organisation that can support and work with the school to build the programme or that can feel threatened by and work against the programme.

Describing the benefits of bilingualism for individuals

All of the potential benefits of bilingualism are too numerous to list in this guide. They are tied to such diverse fields as culture, economics, personal relations, health, international relations, language awareness, marketing, national security, social cohesion, trade, travel and tourism. The following sections describe some of the potential benefits for the individual, and by extension for society.

Increased mental processing capacity

Bilinguals may be better at processing a larger number of cognitive demands in a shorter timeframe. They may be able to handle more tasks at once.

Greater control over information processing

It is thought that bilingual individuals can ignore irrelevant information more easily than monolinguals when they are working on a given task. In the information-rich world of today, it is valuable to be able to determine which information is worthy of attention and which is not. In order to solve a problem effectively one needs to use relevant information and ignore the irrelevant. It is important not to allow irrelevant information to inhibit thinking. Thus, the improved ability of bilingual individuals to ignore irrelevant stimuli can contribute towards effective thinking and decision-making.

Improved memory

It is thought that the bilingual mind has superior episodic and semantic memory when compared to the monolingual. Episodic memory, as its name suggests, is about episodes or events and includes information about such

elements as time, place, feelings and activities. Semantic memory includes general knowledge about, for example, ideas, facts and problem-solving. Improved memory should allow learners to work with greater amounts of information while expanding their understanding and knowledge-base, thereby improving learning in general.

Greater metalinguistic awareness

A bilingual mind draws on its metalinguistic awareness (awareness of the component parts and nature of language) to understand that words can have more than one meaning, or vary in their scope of meaning from language to language. Bilinguals are more likely to identify ambiguity in communication as they seek precision in the meaning not just of words, but of underlying concepts. This can help them to solve word problems in Mathematics or contribute to greater sensitivity in interpersonal communication.

Increased mental flexibility

Bilingual children may have earlier access to a wider range of interpretations of information than monolinguals. This offers the potential for greater cognitive flexibility. Flexibility is considered an important skill in ensuring personal happiness and an important characteristic sought after by employers.

Improved health

The knowledge of more than one language is thought to slow down mental decline by two to four years as a person ages. This may be due to the more complex neural circuitry of bilingual individuals, which could be compared to the workings of a national electric power grid: the more complex the grid, the more options are available to bypass a failing part of the circuitry and maintain power to the system as a whole.⁴

Improved inter-cultural skills

Bilingual secondary school, college and university graduates are likely to have an advantage in benefiting from international communication, mobility, perspectives and discoveries. Moreover, as it is thought that bilinguals have improved cross-cultural skills, they may be well placed, provided they have the other requisite skills, to undertake the cross-cultural communication which is necessary in addressing the complicated cross-boundary issues that have important consequences for all nations and the world at large – pollution, war, terrorism, migration and contagious diseases.

⁴See the work of Ellen Bialystok and her colleagues.

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Increased opportunities for trade

Having a common language increases opportunities for international trade and thus trade flows. Equally, a lack of language and cultural skills is thought to lead to lost opportunities. It has been estimated from business surveys that in Europe, for example, billions of euros and tens of thousands of potential jobs per year are lost because of a lack of language and cultural skills.

Increased income

In situations where societies value two or more specific languages, bilinguals can earn more and have access to more job opportunities than monolinguals. However, the degree of economic gain from bilingualism for individuals varies according to region, nation, gender, sphere and level of employment, and depends on the value placed by a society on the language(s). Many employers seek high levels of proficiency in the L2. However, even limited L2 knowledge can bring considerable financial benefit in such areas as tourism.

Describing the benefits of bilingual education for a school

Added value for students and parents

Because additive bilingual programmes seek to deliver on the same academic goals as regular schools and help students to become bilingual, they can create extra value for parents and students. Both groups see that they will lose nothing through bilingual education and stand to gain an extra language. Moreover, an intellectually rigorous programme fosters increased learning in general. Finally, parents are likely to associate the potential benefits of bilingualism with the school.

A motor for reform

Establishing a bilingual programme requires a school to revisit its mission and vision statements, its pedagogical and management practices, its strategic plan and stakeholder relations. If this is done in a stakeholder-inclusive manner, current understandings are discussed and stakeholders take part in joint learning initiatives. Constructive discussions and joint learning opportunities can translate into improved programming. This in turn is likely to lead to improved student learning.

Protection against declining enrolment

The popularity of these programmes helps a school to keep students and staff in times of declining enrolment.

Increased number of visitors and exchanges

Bilingual schools draw additional attention. Although this needs to be carefully managed, increased contact and exchanges constitute new learning opportunities for students and staff.

Increased student and staff motivation

The rapid pace at which students learn the L2 in the bilingual programme is motivating for both students and staff.

Increased access to learning and teaching resources

By using two languages of instruction, a school exponentially increases the number of teaching and learning resources available to staff and students.

Reviewing programming options

Researchers have identified hundreds of different models or variations of additive bilingual education.⁵ Broadly speaking, these can be grouped as: one-way immersion programmes (including double immersion); CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) programmes; and two-way immersion (dual language) programmes.

One-way immersion and CLIL

One-way immersion and CLIL programmes use two or more languages primarily separately in different content classes as the medium of instruction for content subjects such as Mathematics or Geography. Immersion programmes involve several years of a child's/young person's education and at least 50% of teaching/learning time is devoted to learning through the L2. Some people also refer to these as CLIL programmes, whilst others see CLIL programmes as offering only one or a few subjects through the medium of the L2 or L3 during one school term or over several academic years. CLIL initiatives distinguish themselves through the flexibility of the approach. In immersion and CLIL programmes one language is usually the society's dominant language, and the other is perceived as having high status.

⁵For a more thorough overview of these programming options and the many nuances involved in interpreting research results and in managing the delivery of bilingual education, see the work of Hugo Baetens Beardsmore, Colin Baker, Jasone Cenoz, Do Coyle, Ofelia García, Fred Genesee, Nancy Hornberger, Guangwei Hu, Keith Johnson, Sharon Lapkin, Kathryn Lindholm-Leary, Roy Lyster, David Marsh and Merrill Swain.

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Double immersion

Double immersion is an exceptional form of one-way immersion. In double immersion students study just under half of the curriculum through one language that is not their L1, and just under half of the curriculum through another language which is also not their L1 (e.g. an English-speaking child in an English-speaking neighbourhood studying an equal number of subjects through Hebrew and French). A small portion of the curriculum is delivered through the L1.

Usually, one-way immersion programmes are divided into three broad categories:

- early immersion
- delayed or middle immersion
- late immersion.

Early immersion

Early immersion programmes begin in kindergarten (at ages 4, 5 and/or 6)⁶, or in Grade 1 (Year 1) when children are 6 or 7 years of age. Two primary forms of early immersion are most common – early total immersion and early partial immersion. In **early total immersion** programmes, all or almost all instruction during the initial years is provided through the L2. In Grade 3, the L1 is introduced as a subject. From Grade 4 onwards, subjects are increasingly taught through the L1. By Grade 6 (beginning at age 11 or 12), 50% of instructional time is used for teaching/learning through the L2 and 50% through the L1. In **early partial immersion** two languages are used for instruction from the start of schooling, for 50% of instructional time each.

Delayed or middle immersion

Delayed or middle immersion usually begins in Grade 4 (at age 9 or 10) or Grade 5 (at age 10 or 11). Prior to programme entry, students have usually received 30–60 minutes daily of L2 instruction from Grade 1 onwards. In Grades 4–6, they receive about 50–60% of instruction through the L2. The percentage of time allotted to teaching through the L2 often drops to 50% or less in the following grades.

Late immersion

In late immersion, students study the L2 as a second language from Grades 1 to 6 for 30–60 minutes a day. In Grade 7 (beginning at age 12 or 13) and Grade 8, 80% of instruction is delivered through the L2 and 20% through the L1. In Grades 9–11, approximately 45% of instruction is delivered through the L2 and 55% through the L1.

⁶The age at which students begin school in some countries may not be aligned with the above models.

In the above types of immersion programmes, languages are kept relatively separate with a given subject taught primarily either through the L1 or the L2.

Two-way immersion

In two-way immersion (dual language) programmes, approximately half of the students speak the society's dominant language as an L1, whilst the other half speaks one and the same minority language as an L1. Normally, half of the school curriculum is taught through one language and half through the other. For example, in the United States there are Spanish–English, Korean–English and Putonghua–English two-way immersion programmes. These programmes give students regular contact with native speakers of the additional language they are learning, and thus facilitate cross-cultural contact, co-operation and learning. They help equalise the power-base of the two language groups, as each has expertise that can benefit the other. However, the power of English in the United States has been such that some schools have chosen for a few years to use the additional language as opposed to English for a greater percentage of teaching/learning time per day to counterbalance the reality that students are often surrounded by English outside school. This can be considered a conscious effort to give both languages equal status.

Goals in immersion and CLIL

One-way and two-way (dual language) immersion and CLIL initiatives generally seek to achieve the goals listed on pages 2–3 regarding bilingual education. These goals stress the additive nature of bilingual education and address the concerns of the majority of parents who wish to ensure that children in these programmes are academically successful, that they learn as much content as students in regular L1 programmes, that they develop L2 proficiency, and that their L1 continues to develop as if the students were in a regular L1 programme.

Immersion and CLIL are both content- and language-integrated approaches. These initiatives use the standard regional or national curriculum or have received the right to use an internationally recognised high-status curriculum. In primary school, students often enter these programmes with little or no L2 proficiency. In later grades/years students usually have a working knowledge of the language prior to programme entry. The L2 is acquired primarily through education, although in contexts where the L2 is very much present in the community, considerable out-of-school learning can take place. The same can be the case with schools that foster regular contact and communication with L2 speakers. The classroom operates within the local cultural context, and makes links to both the L2 and L1 cultures. In addition to teaching content classes through both the L1 and the L2, language classes are provided in both the L1 and the L2.

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Reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of an early start

In schools seeking to support students in developing additive bilingualism including biliteracy, starting to learn several or almost all subjects through the L2 in kindergarten or in the early grades of primary school can have the following advantages, disadvantages, and resource implications.⁷

Advantages of an early start

- Young learners have a natural facility to acquire new languages.
- The student-centred, activity-based, experiential approaches commonly used in primary education are highly suitable for L2 learning.
- Young learners will develop a solid foundation in the L2 that can set them on a road of continuous L2 learning, preparing them for further studies through the L2 and an L3.
- Students can transfer L2 literacy skills to reading and writing in the L1 and L3.
- Students can use both the L2 and the L1 to do research.
- Students may develop a bilingual and possibly bicultural frame of mind.
- Initially, only class teachers who teach all subjects are required. Class teachers are natural integrators of subjects and of content and language, which is a key methodological practice fostering student learning in these programmes.
- A school or education system that launches a programme in Grade 1 has time to build skills among teaching staff as students move one grade at a time through primary and secondary school.

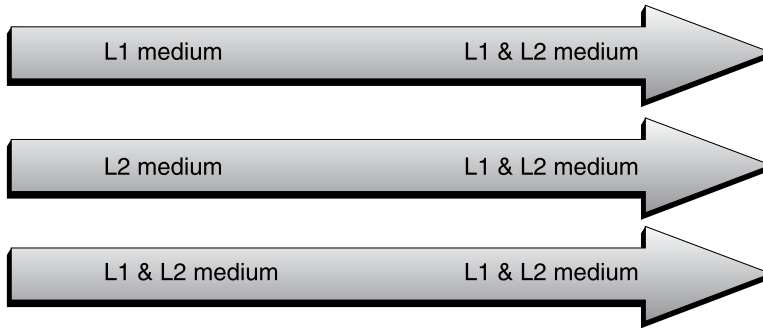
Cross-language transfer of skills

The transfer of L1 skills to the L2 (or vice versa) applies first and foremost to alphabetic languages (based on phonemes e.g. Spanish) and to syllabary languages (based on syllables e.g. Japanese). The back and forth transfer of literacy skills between a logographic language (based on morphemes and words) such as Putonghua (Chinese) and an alphabetic language such as English requires more research. Although it is thought that some transfer of some skills can occur, teachers working to develop biliteracy in both an alphabetic language and a logographic language likely have to give greater attention to developing literacy skills in both languages. (See the work of Fred Jun-gwang Chen; Min Wang, Keiko Kodab and Charles A. Perfetti; and Min Wang, Charles A. Perfetti and Ying Liu.)

⁷This section builds on a 2010 consultancy report by Genesee and Mehisto.

Additive/strong bilingual education

Additive/strong bilingual education programmes have different L1:L2 balances at different stages, but both L1 & L2 are used as a medium of instruction during later years.



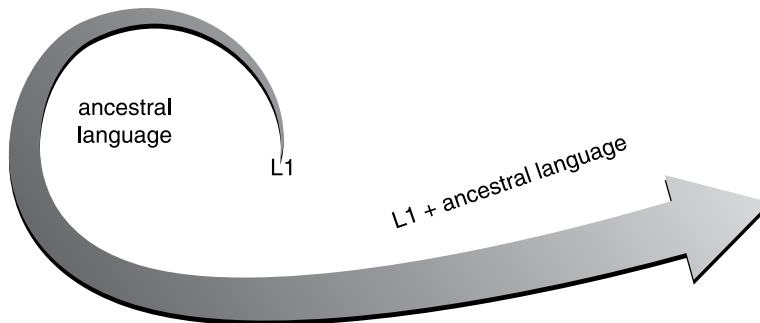
Educators largely separate the L1 & L2 by teaching a given subject primarily through one or the other language. However, educators take into account that both the L1 & L2 are *dynamic* whilst also continually interacting in the learner's mind. This invites the judicious use of the L1 by teachers teaching through the L2 and vice versa.



Additive/strong bilingual education can include an L3. It can also support immigrant communities in reinforcing their children's use of their communities' languages. It can support these students in drawing on their L1 in the learning of other languages and content.



Additive/ strong bilingual education can be *recursive* in nature. In such circumstances communities revitalise their ancestral language (see the work of Ofelia García).



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Disadvantages of an early start

- Some parents are uncomfortable having a young child learning through an L2.
- Teachers and learning resources would need to be available from the early years of schooling up to a student's graduation from secondary or vocational school.
- Large numbers of teachers teaching through the L1 may be left without employment and may undermine the programme.
- Some parents, teachers, government officials and politicians may fear that the L1 might be negatively affected (in additive bilingual contexts this is normally not the case).

Support and resource implications of an early start

The following are required:

Parents

- a sufficient number of parents choosing and supporting bilingual education
- advice and possibly some training on how to support children learning through an L2

Leadership/management

- a policy decision within a school or at a higher level
- leadership and support from education authorities
- school administrators and support staff who understand and know how to plan for and support the L2 programme
- sufficient numbers of principals who understand the leadership and management implications of running a bilingual programme

Staffing

- sufficient numbers of primary-level teachers who are trained to teach subjects through the L2, and who believe that bilingual education is suitable for a wide range of students

Training

- sufficient numbers of qualified trainers and mentors who can support teacher professional development
- professional development programmes (including curricula and materials)
- teacher-training institutions with a pre-service programme for teaching content subjects through an L2

Learning materials

- high-quality learning materials in different content areas such as Mathematics and Science that are appropriate for students learning those subjects through the L2.

Reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of a late start

In schools seeking to support students in developing additive bilingualism including biliteracy, starting to learn several subjects (or for a few years almost all subjects) through the L2 in the later grades of primary school or in the early grades of secondary school can have the following advantages, disadvantages and resource implications.

Advantages of a late start

- A late start can be as effective in helping students to develop L2 proficiency as an early start, if sufficient quality L2 input and output opportunities are provided for several years.
- A late start is more easily accepted by those parents who are concerned about early-years L1 development.
- Students can transfer L1 literacy skills to the learning of the L2 and to learning through the L2.
- Concentrating L2 instruction into later years will require fewer teachers proficient in the L2, less learning-materials development and purchasing, and fewer principals who are trained to lead and manage bilingual programmes.
- Older learners are generally more effective learners than young children.
- Older students can be more motivated learners as they may better understand the value of the L2.

Disadvantages of a late start

- The first few months of learning through the L2 are, according to teachers, difficult for older students.
- The first year may require considerably more work from students and the L2 programme will compete for space and attention with existing priorities in the students' lives.
- High-achieving students may be more likely to choose the programme and the programme may become elitist, undermining regular programming.
- Some of the potential inter-cultural benefits of an early start may be lost.
- Some parents, government officials and politicians may prefer an early start.

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- Secondary school content teachers are generally not in the habit of integrating several subjects, nor have they usually been trained to teach language or to integrate content and language.
- Secondary school content teachers have generally not been trained as language teachers and may find it difficult to distinguish between content and language whilst assessing students' work.
- It may be difficult to find sufficient numbers of content teachers who are proficient in the L2 and a desire for programming may lead to pressure from any number of stakeholders to proceed with unqualified staff.
- Parents, students, government officials and politicians may be concerned that learning through the L2 will affect students' grades (this is usually only the case for the first few months of these programmes).
- There is a lack of learning materials that present challenging concepts whilst using language that is appropriate for L2 learners.

Support and resource implications of a late start

The following are required:

Parents and students

- parents and students who understand and believe in the merits and possibilities offered by a bilingual programme (older students are more likely to resist programming than younger students)

Management/leadership

- a policy decision within a school or at a higher level
- leadership and support from education authorities
- school principals and other staff who understand and know how to plan for and support the L2 programme
- a rich L2 language-teaching curriculum and programme in the early years that prepares students to learn content through the L2 in later years
- the teaching of some short modules through the L2 in the early years to prepare the way for teaching content through the L2 in later years
- an enhanced L2 language curriculum that supports the learning of academic language and concepts from content classes
- organised and well-structured opportunities for contact and communication with speakers of the L2

Teachers

- sufficient numbers of qualified teachers for teaching content subjects through the L2

- co-operation between content and language teachers
- sufficient numbers of language teachers in the early years who have been trained to prepare students for learning content through the L2

Trainers

- sufficient numbers of qualified trainers and mentors who can support the professional development of teachers
- professional development programmes (including curricula and materials)
- teacher-training institutions with pre- and in-service programmes for teaching content through an L2

Learning materials

- high-quality learning materials in different content areas such as Mathematics and Geography that are appropriate for learning those subjects through the L2
- enriched language learning materials that support the learning of academic language and concepts from content classes.



Personal perspective

Thoughts about an Arab–English bilingual programme

Al Monshateh Dira, principal of Ahmad Bin Majid Private School in Oman, suggests:

Sound knowledge of the L1 (Arabic) is essential to make steady progress in learning English. By starting to teach through English early, children can rely on their natural ability to learn languages quickly. It is easier to learn an L2 at this stage. However, it is **important to continue to teach through Arabic** also. Teaching phonics has helped our students learn both Arabic and English. The **L1 and L2 extra-curricular programmes** are as important as the academic ones.

Study materials should be selected with care to deepen the students' understanding of Arabic culture. Our school promotes exchange programmes, so students have opportunities to communicate with young people in other countries. This builds global understanding and helps our students to better understand and feel pride in their own culture. Bilingual education helps students to think globally in addition to locally, helping them compete in the labour market.

We provide **extra support** to those students who may be struggling with their L1, L2 and/or the learning of content.

Major research findings regarding bilingual education (by Fred Genesee, McGill University)

There have been many extensive and systematic evaluations of bilingual programmes around the world. These evaluations have produced information that is invaluable for school principals because they provide a scientific, empirical basis for programme development, implementation and further evaluation. This section summarises important findings from evaluations of bilingual education from various centres around the world. These findings pertain to students in bilingual programmes who are members of the **majority language** and culture group of the larger national community in which they live and are educated; for example, Spanish-speaking students in English immersion/bilingual programmes in Madrid or English-speaking students in French immersion programmes in the UK. They do not necessarily describe what would happen in programmes for minority-language students in bilingual education, for example Welsh-speaking students in the UK or Basque-speaking students in Spanish bilingual programmes.

First major finding: L1 proficiency

Majority-language students in bilingual programmes attain the same levels of proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening in their L1 as similar students being educated entirely in the L1. Students in bilingual programmes also attain the same levels of achievement in academic domains, such as Mathematics and Science, as similar majority-language students in L1 programmes even though they have been taught these academic subjects in their L2. Moreover, there is no consistent relationship in the long run between how much instruction in and through the L1 students receive and their proficiency in their L1. That is to say, majority-language students with less exposure to the L1 do not achieve at lower levels of proficiency in the L1 than students with more exposure to the L1.

Implication: Bilingual education is not a zero-sum game whereby achievement in the L2 detracts from students' L1 development. Thus, school principals do not need to worry that students' L1 development or academic achievement will suffer as a result of education in two languages. However, principals need to help teachers and parents to minimise unjustified concerns regarding L1 development through discussions that are informed by research evidence.

Second major finding: L2 proficiency

Students in bilingual programmes achieve significantly higher levels of functional proficiency in the L2 than students who receive conventional foreign/second language instruction, and they are able to pursue academic studies in the L2

without difficulty. Students' proficiency in the L2 is generally related to the amount of instruction they have in and through the L2 – students in total immersion outperform students in partial immersion, for example. Thus, more exposure to the L2 usually results in greater proficiency without reducing students' L1 competence.

Implication: Schools should offer substantial, quality exposure to the second language to ensure maximum development of that language.

Third major finding: L2 competence levels

Notwithstanding evidence that students in bilingual programmes attain very advanced levels of functional proficiency in the L2, they seldom achieve native-like levels of competence in the language. Research shows that students' L2 proficiency can be enhanced if they have opportunities to learn and use that language outside school and if the curriculum provides systematic and focused instruction in areas of the L2 that they have trouble acquiring (such as verb tenses, use of prepositions and pronouns). (See Lyster 2007 for further readings).⁸

Implication: Principals can support staff in planning for and creating well-structured opportunities for students to communicate, and to network in the long term, with speakers of the L2. In addition, content teachers require ongoing professional-development opportunities to support students in increasing their academic language proficiency. Staff benefit from principals who maintain a focus on these issues.

Fourth major finding: Suitability for a wide range of learners

Bilingual programmes are suitable for majority-language students with a wide range of learner characteristics, including students who are often at risk for low academic achievement. This includes students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, students with low levels of academic or general intellectual ability, and students with poorly developed L1 language skills. These students achieve the same levels of proficiency in their L1 and in academic domains in immersion programmes as similarly disadvantaged students in L1 language programmes. At the same time, they achieve significantly higher levels of proficiency in the L2 than students who receive traditional foreign/second language instruction.

Implication: Principals can develop programmes that are equitable and open to students with diverse learning competencies. They can work to build a school ethos that demonstrates a belief in the capacity of all students to succeed. 'Elite' programmes can be vulnerable to criticisms, such as: 'they undermine other programmes or schools'; making bilingual programmes accessible to all students avoids such criticisms.

⁸Roy Lyster (2007). *Learning and Teaching Languages through Content: A Counterbalanced Approach*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

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Fifth major finding: Languages from different-language families

Bilingual programmes for majority-language students are equally effective with languages from different-language families; for example, English immersion for Japanese-speaking students in Japan; Estonian immersion for Russian-speaking students in Estonia; and Hebrew immersion for English-speaking students in Canada.

Implication: School principals can be equally confident that bilingual education can work in their community regardless of the specific characteristics of the languages involved.

Sixth major finding: Appreciation and understanding of L1 culture

Majority-language students in bilingual programmes develop the same appreciation and understanding of their L1 culture and community as students in L1 programmes. At the same time, depending on the nature of the curriculum, they can also develop greater understanding and appreciation of the L2 culture.

Implication: Bilingual education can be a useful tool for promoting inter-cultural understanding, tolerance and appreciation. The extent to which a programme achieves this depends on how much cultural content is included in the curriculum and how many well-structured opportunities are created for inter-cultural communication.