

TWI and TBE: Definitely Different

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Purpose:

The purpose of this article is to discuss the differences between two-way bilingual (dual) immersion language programs and transitional bilingual education (TBE) programs, sometimes referred to as “regular bilingual education.” This article will outline the inherent differences that exist between the two programs. We will compare the following aspects of each: the goals and design, teacher training and qualifications, classroom environment, student population, instructional strategies and student outcomes. To lay a common foundation, we begin with a general description of the various types of programs falling under and outside the “umbrella” of dual language, as defined by the U.S. Department of Education. Our primary focus, however, will be the comparison of the 90:10 TWI (Two-Way Immersion) model to TBE programs, because both of us work in a 90:10 TWI program and therefore have expertise with that dual language model.

Dual Language Programs:

There are four different dual language program models, sharing the common characteristics of: literacy and content instruction provided through two languages for all students (monolingual delivery of instruction), program implementation which occurs over an extended period of time (minimum K-5; optimal K-12), and between 50-90% of daily instruction in the minority language. These dual language programs all share the goals of bilingualism and biliteracy.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, the four types of dual language program models are:

- 1) Developmental Bilingual - In developmental bilingual programs (commonly referred to as maintenance programs), the majority of the students are language minority (i.e. native Spanish, Chinese, etc. speakers) and study in their native language and English. The students’ native language is maintained throughout the program.
- 2) Two-Way Immersion (TWI) - In TWI programs, approximately 50% of the students are language minority and 50% language majority (i.e. English speakers). The two most commonly known models are the 90:10 model and 50:50 model.
- 3) Heritage Language Immersion –In heritage language programs (one-way immersion programs), the majority of the students are majority language students, coming from homes where a minority language was spoken at one time, usually second or third generation, and are studying the language of their parents and/or grandparents (looking to reclaim their language and culture).
- 4) Foreign Language Immersion - In foreign language immersion programs (one-way immersion), students are language majority students, studying in the minority language.

Falling outside the dual language umbrella are transitional bilingual education (TBE) programs and foreign language in the elementary school (FLES) programs, whose goals are quite different from those of dual language programs. Contrary to the goals of dual language programs, neither of these two programs strives for bilingualism or biliteracy.

- 1) Transitional Bilingual Education – In TBE programs minority language students study in their native language until enough English has been acquired and then are transitioned into English-only instruction.
- 2) Foreign Language in the Elementary School - In the FLES program, majority language students receive instruction in the minority language for a limited amount of time.

Focus on 90:10 TWI Model:

The focus of the rest of this article will be on comparing the 90:10 TWI dual language program model to TBE programs.

Goals:

The differences between the goals of TWI programs and TBE programs are just the first indicators of the much dissimilarity that exist between these two programs. TWI Programs with goals for all students to reach high levels of bilingualism, biliteracy and multicultural competence and TBE with the goal of transitioning students from Spanish into all English as quickly as possible, ultimately leading to monolingualism.

GOALS	
<i>TWI</i>	<i>TBE</i>
*Goal bilingualism and biliteracy	*Goal monolingualism
*Additive bilingual program – both student groups’ native language maintained while 2 nd language is added.	*Subtractive bilingual program – students’ native language is replaced by 2 nd language

Program Design:

In the 90:10 TWI program where we work, 90% of the instructional day in kinder and 1st grade is in Spanish and 10% in English. Each year, starting in 2nd grade, the instructional time in Spanish decreases by 10% and the English time increases by 10% until the 5th grade when it is 50:50. Our program is a K-6 program, and students continue in the 7th and 8th grades, following the 50:50 ratio. Our student population is approximately 1/3 Spanish speakers, 1/3 English speakers and 1/3 bilingual students.

PROGRAM DESIGN	
<i>TWI</i>	<i>TBE</i>
*Instructional minutes in both languages clearly defined at each grade level	*Instructional minutes can vary by teacher, school and/or district
*For language minority students, this is a maintenance program	*For language minority students, this is an early exit program
*For language majority students, this is an immersion program	*Does not exist for language majority students

Students:

There are great differences in the student populations of a TWI program and a TBE program. To begin with, in a TWI program, you have a mix of both minority language and majority language students. They are integrated for all content instruction creating interdependence between the two groups and allowing for negotiating meaning. During Spanish time, for example, the Spanish-speaking student is the expert and supports his/her English counterpart. During English time, it is the English speakers turn to be the expert and offer his/her support to his/her Spanish-speaking peer. This creates an equalization of the status of the two languages as well as promoting high levels of self-esteem for both groups of students.

In contrast, in a TBE program, language minority and language majority students are not integrated for content area instruction. They are mixed for other areas of instruction like PE, music and less academically demanding activities. The status of the two languages is very different as well. The English language is often given greater status since it is the ultimate goal of the transitional program. This can often create an inner conflict for the language minority student because his/her native language is not valued and, in turn, his/her culture is not valued. These negative feelings can be internalized and result in lower levels of self-esteem and confidence.

Another difference between the two programs is the language barrier between the student populations. In a TWI program, the language barrier between the language minority and language majority students quickly diminishes. Since both groups of students are learning a second language, they work together to communicate and negotiate meaning. The result is a greater cross-cultural understanding between the two groups. Contrary to the TWI program, in the TBE program, there is a solid language barrier between language minority and language majority students. Since the goal of the TBE program is to acquire English, the majority language students are not encouraged or motivated to learn the minority language.

The way students are grouped is also different in a TWI program. In TWI, students are purposefully arranged and grouped in heterogeneous language groups for all instruction. Language minority students are placed next to language majority students to increase language production and provide opportunities where students model the target language on a continuous basis. This also occurs when students are working collaboratively on classroom projects and assignments. This provides students with various language models, other than just the teacher and translates to higher levels of self-esteem and higher levels of second language acquisition.

In most TBE programs the population of the classroom is made up of all language minority students therefore grouping for content instruction is in homogenous language groups. During English instructional time this results in only one English language model, the teacher. If teachers desire heterogeneous language groups, they must go outside of their own classrooms to access this. Even in TBE programs with classroom compositions that include language minority and language majority students, students are still grouped in homogenous language groups for content instruction.

STUDENTS	
<i>TWI</i>	<i>TBE</i>
*Language minority and language majority students are integrated for all content area	*Language minority and language majority students are separated for content area

instruction on a daily basis	instruction
*Self-esteem and pride are elevated for all students	*Self-esteem can be negatively affected for language minority students
*Cross-cultural respect and appreciation is built into the TWI model	*Cross-cultural respect and appreciation may/may not be addressed by teacher
*No language barrier between language minority and majority students	*Language barriers exist between language minority and majority students
*Teacher and students are language models	*In monolingual TBE program, teacher is only model of second language
*Heterogeneous language groups for all instruction	*Homogenous language groups for content area instruction
*Heterogeneous language groups innate to program design	*In monolingual TBE program, teacher must seek second language models outside of classroom

Teachers:

Teacher qualifications and training are an essential component of any program and directly affect student achievement. In TWI programs, as in TBE programs, teachers must be highly qualified. They must possess an understanding of second language acquisition, bilingual education theories, knowledge of culture and subject matter, a variety of instructional strategies to make content comprehensible, assessment skills and the ability to create links with families. The TWI teacher, however, needs to not only fully understand the second language acquisition process as it relates to language minority students, but also as it related to language majority students and the differences between the two. TWI teachers must specifically understand, and be committed to, TWI philosophy and systematically adhere to the program goals and design. Because language and culture are strongly linked, in the TWI classroom culture is a central focus. All lessons are presented with a multicultural perspective acknowledging and validating the diverse cultural backgrounds of the students. Unlike in the TBE program where a lesson is a language, content or, language and content lesson, in the TWI program, **every** lesson must be both content and a language lesson. Because at any given moment, 50% of the students are being instructed in their 2nd language, every lesson must be implemented using sheltered language strategies such as Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English/Spanish (SDAIE/S) and/or Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD). The TWI teacher must apply his/her knowledge of second language acquisition at all times. The TWI teacher is constantly assessing students' progress in their L2 based on students' receptive and expressive language, and in turn, modifying and adjusting instruction based on students' needs. In a TBE program sheltering is typically done during the English instructional portion of the day only, but in a TWI program, it is woven into 100% of the instructional day.

Teachers possessing native, or native-like fluency in the minority and majority language is the goal of any high quality bilingual program. However, in the TWI program it is a requirement that every teacher

effectively model and promote high levels of academic language and bilingual cognitive thinking skills. Their role is not just to use the language to teach content, but to also teach the language.

Oftentimes in the TBE program, since the goal of the program is mastery of the majority language (English), this message is covertly relayed to children. This may result in students not valuing their own language, culture, families, and, in some cases, even causing embarrassment of cultural identity. In contrast, teachers in TWI programs focus on promoting bilingualism and multiculturalism, resulting in an elevated status of the minority language and culture.

TEACHERS	
TWI	TBE
*Teaches language and content with each lesson	*Teaches language or content lessons
*Must possess native/native-like proficiency in the minority and majority languages	*Must possess moderate proficiency in the minority language and native/native-like proficiency in majority language
*Serves as a role model of minority and majority languages	*Serves as a model of majority language
*Uses minority and majority languages to teach core curriculum in both languages	*Uses minority language to provide access to core curriculum
*Teaches English and minority language as a second language	*Teaches English as a second language
*Promotes bilingualism, biliteracy and multiculturalism	*Promotes transition into majority language

Curriculum and Instruction:

As stated above, every lesson in the TWI classroom is both a content and a language lesson. In order to achieve the specific language objectives woven into each content lesson, TWI teachers must implement lessons with a multi-sensory approach. TWI teachers must include visuals, realia, Total Physical Response (TPR), and hands-on learning with each lesson. In a TBE program, these strategies are optional during content lessons.

Every lesson in a TWI program must be scaffolded to ensure equal access to the curriculum for both language minority and language majority students. In addition, in the TBE program, the teacher may easily pick up the reading series Teacher’s Edition (TE) and implement the program as is. For the TWI teacher, this requires further lesson development. He/She must take the TE and then analyze how he/she will scaffold the material so that his/her second language learners will comprehend the lessons, while also challenging the native speakers of the target language. This process is repeated with each and every content lesson.

Monolingual lesson delivery is another essential element to the TWI classroom. Although code switching is a normal part of language, in a TWI program it is not acceptable for instruction. This requirement has resulted in TWI teachers having to become conscious of their own code switching habits. TWI students usually code switch because they are still acquiring the second language; therefore students will greatly benefit from teacher modeling correct usage of the second language. TWI teachers encourage monolingual speech in both academic and social settings to promote further growth in students' L1 and L2. In contrast, in a TBE program, code switching and concurrent translations are often utilized.

All students acquiring a second language need sheltered and challenging input and multiple opportunities for language use. One of the best ways to facilitate this is through cooperative learning, which can be optional in a TBE program. However, in a TWI program, cooperative learning is an essential instructional practice. Students must purposefully be heterogeneously grouped throughout the day in order to maximize second language acquisition.

Curriculum in a TWI program needs to be thematically integrated in order for students to make connections across curricular areas. This facilitates second language acquisition and cognitive development. Curriculum in TWI programs should reflect and value the students' culture as well as promote positive cross-cultural interactions, which is directly aligned to the goals of TWI programs.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION	
<i>TWI</i>	<i>TBE</i>
*Each lesson must have a content and a language objective	*Lessons either have a content or a language objective
*Lessons must incorporate multi-sensory approach	*Multi-sensory approach optional with content lessons
*Core curriculum must be scaffolded for second language learners	*Core curriculum may, or may not, be scaffolded
*Monolingual lesson delivery – absolutely no code switching	*Code switching may be used
*Cooperative learning is part of core program	*Cooperative learning is optional

Outcomes:

One of the greatest outcomes for TWI students is that there is no risk of losing their native language and culture. Both the minority and majority language students maintain their native language while acquiring their second language, benefiting from bilingualism and multiculturalism. Studies indicate that these students outperform English only students on standardized tests. A high level of bilingualism leads to transferability of skills, which plays a significant role in student outcomes. Language minority students develop strong academic skills, in all content areas, by continuing to maintain their native language. All of these skills are transferred to the majority language, thus creating a cognitively competent bilingual student.

The stronger a child's academic ability in their L1, the stronger they will be in their L2. The above mentioned relates to higher levels of self-esteem and confidence, a deeper understanding, respect and acceptance of other cultures, reduced student drop out rate, increased student likelihood of attending college and better prepares them to be citizens in the global workplace.

On the other hand, students in TBE programs often lose, or only achieve limited proficiency and literacy skills, in their native language causing a disconnect with their culture and oftentimes, limited achievement in their second language.

OUTCOMES	
TWI	TBE
*No risk to native language	*Native language not maintained
*High academic achievement in both minority and majority languages	*Focus on academic achievement in majority language
*Promotes home culture and values multiculturalism	*In early years, promotes home culture, then promotes majority culture

Conclusion:

TBE and TWI programs are often grouped into the same category. However, having taught in both programs, we have found that there are inherent differences that distinguish one from the other. TWI programs are definitely different, and we believe definitely better for our students.

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