



Dual Language Academy Curriculum Questions & Answers

Our school partners with Boston College's TWIN-CS network, which provides ongoing mentoring and professional development opportunities for our school staff. As an Omaha Catholic School Consortium school, we are focused on continuous improvement, and we are grateful for the access to the latest research in dual language instruction.

What advantages are there for my child in a dual language program?

- Students develop full oral, reading and writing proficiency in two languages
- Students are not only able to read and write at grade level in two languages, but to eventually perform higher on standardized tests in the areas of Reading, Math and English
- Students develop very positive attitudes about other languages and cultures, making friendships that cross ethnic boundaries

In general, these advantages are the same for both English and Spanish speakers, but research shows that a two-way immersion model helps English language learners become more confident and proficient.

How do students in dual language programs compare academically to students in other types of educational programs?

Long-term studies of the academic achievement of students in dual language programs showed that overall, both native English and English language learners scored at or well above grade level in both languages by middle school. And, both groups performed at comparable or superior levels compared to same-language peers in other educational settings. English language learners who had learned

English in a dual language program scored significantly higher than ELL peers who had studied in other kinds of programs and also performed on par with native English students in English-only classrooms.

When will this achievement on standardized tests and in conversation be seen?

Native English speakers tend to perform at grade level in their first language once they have received formal reading instruction through that language, and their achievement is at grade level in the second language typically by 5th grade. For English language learners, scores are usually in the average range in their first language by second grade, but as a group they do not achieve at grade level in English until middle school.

For the 2021-2022 school year, the Dual Language Academy will move into its new location and begin to offer preschool through third grade classrooms. Each year an additional grade level is added and the school will continue through eighth grade as do all Consortium schools, but with a dual language focus. A majority of Consortium students graduate and transition to a local Catholic high school.

How much of their day is spent in each language?

Preschool 90% Spanish 10% English

Pre K 90% Spanish 10% English

Kindergarten 90% Spanish 10% English

1st Grade 80% Spanish 20% English

2nd Grade 70% Spanish 30% English

Future plans:

3rd Grade 60% Spanish 40 % English (beginning 2021-2022)

4th Grade 50% Spanish 50% English

5th Grade 50% Spanish 50% English

Grades 6-8-Content area specific with continued Spanish Literacy

Is there a big difference in performance between 90/10, 80/20 and 50/50 models?

The research we've seen that compares the achievement of students in 90/10 and 50/50 models found that by grades 7-8, English language learners AND native English speaking students scored similarly to their peers of the same language and economic background on achievement tests in English. When achievement was measured in Spanish, students in 90/10 programs scored higher than students in

50/50 programs. The more instructional time spent in Spanish positively affects all student achievement.

What are the characteristics of students who are successful in dual language programs?

There is no particular type of student that fails to flourish in dual language programs.

Research does show, however, that the most successful students enjoy learning new things and also have parents who strongly support the program.

Learning two languages can be challenging at times, but the most successful students and families fully embrace the goal and philosophy of dual language education.

How is this program similar to or different than what Omaha Public Schools is offering in its Dual Language elementary schools?

The foundation of our Catholic faith makes our program unique and special; we make Christ the center of our day. Additionally, given the importance of an early childhood education, we made the decision to begin with our preschool and prekindergarten programs, where they begin in kindergarten. Starting the language immersion earlier increases a child's overall academic growth.

Will other Consortium schools or Catholic schools begin dual language programs?

As collaborative members of our archdiocesan schools, we endeavor to make all schools better. Should other schools want to learn more about the program, we would be happy to share our best practices with them. Students from the entire metro area are welcome to attend our schools.

Why does the school limit the grade levels?

We selected an incremental approach that will enable us to focus our time and resources to ensure the greatest student success—strong language acquisition, bicultural education and a foundation of faith. Our plan begins with preschool, preK, and kindergarten and includes the addition of one grade level each year until we have a full Preschool-8th grade program.

How can parents support the child(ren)'s progress at school and with homework without being familiar with the other language?

Communicating in two languages is the way we do business! Parents can ask questions of the teacher or their student(s) about any projects using the native language spoken at home. Parents do not need to speak both languages in order for their child to be successful, although we hope you will want to learn a new language as well!

Teachers send weekly digital communications in both languages so parents may compare the communications to a second language. All school communications are bilingual and parents are welcome to call the school at any time and speak with the school secretary who is bilingual. If you'd like to inquire about more ways our school can help boost your own skills, please contact the school for recommended resources.

Parent involvement information below.



Dual Language Academy Parent Involvement Information

How can DLA parents get involved?

Aside from the many volunteer and social opportunities, there are many things parents can do to strengthen the home-school connection:

- Volunteer in the classroom
- Read to your child in your home language
- Encourage students to share their home language and cultural through conversation, music, dance, books, food, etc
- Buddy up with other school families
- Provide positive personal testimony for others on how your family has fit into the school
 - Specifically, leaving your positive review on Google and/or Facebook helps us tremendously
- Follow and share posts from our Facebook pages:
@DualLanguageAcademyOCSC and/or @OmahaCatholicSchoolsConsortium

YOU are an important part of our school's success. Please share your story with your own family and friends, as well as with prospective school families. As students progress through the grades, it will be exciting to see how they grow over time.