

English Learners in North Carolina, 2009
A Report by Wayne P. Thomas and Virginia P. Collier

Executive Summary Prepared for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Background	<p>In recent years, North Carolina has experienced a tremendous increase in students whose first language is not English. Although there are increasingly well-developed English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) programs, graduates of these programs still exhibit substantial achievement gaps when compared to students whose home language is English. As a result, the state has become interested in the possibilities afforded by dual language programs. NCDPI contracted with Wayne P. Thomas and Virginia P. Collier of George Mason University, who are nationally recognized for their studies of English language learners, to examine the effectiveness of these programs in North Carolina. This report represents the first phase of a longitudinal study to evaluate educational programs for English learners in the Public Schools of North Carolina.</p>
Dual Language Education Defined	<p>The programs studied in this report are two-way dual language programs which include English Language Learners and native-English speakers educated together in both English and another language. The curriculum (<i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i>) is presented in English for part of the instructional time and in a second language at least half of the time. All state-level tests are administered in English.</p>
School Districts and Schools Included	<p>The data sample analyzed in this study consists of all available information on the students in the school districts that have been operating dual language programs for at least four years: Chapel Hill-Carrboro, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Winston-Salem-Forsyth County, Greene County, Durham County and Chatham County. Testing data was analyzed for 2008.</p> <p>The schools interviewed were Carrboro Elementary and Glenwood Elementary (Chapel Hill-Carrboro), Collinswood Elementary, Oaklawn Elementary, and Smith Elem/Middle (Charlotte-Mecklenburg), Ashley Elementary (Winston-Salem Forsyth), Snow Hill Primary and West Greene Elementary (Greene County), Southwest Elementary (Durham County), and Siler City Elementary (Chatham County), and Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter.</p> <p>Siler City was not included in the testing analyses since students had not reached the third grade in 2008. Casa Esperanza was not included because it was not able to provide all the necessary school data required.</p>
Part I Needs Assessment	<p>The 2008 statewide achievement levels in reading of three major groups were compared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited English Proficient Students(LEPs) divided into current LEPs and former LEPs • Language Minority Students(LMNLs) who were never classified as LEP • Non-Language Minority Students(Not LMs) who are native English speakers

Part I Findings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Former LEPs score higher than current LEPs 2. There exists a significant achievement gap for former LEPs when compared to white native-English-speaking students 3. Reading achievement scores of former LEPs are approximately equal to those of the LMNLs for each Grade. 4. Black students who are native-English speakers are scoring much lower in Reading than white native-English-speakers and significantly lower than the former LEPs as well.
Part II Two-way Dual Language Schools Overview from Interview Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most programs are a strand within a school • Nine of 10 programs have plans for moving into middle school • Most are Spanish-English • Nine have close to an equal number of non-English language and native-English speakers at each grade level • Several have black students and students of low socioeconomic status in dual language classes • All offer significant staff development to teachers and other personnel • All have waiting lists for native English speakers <p>Detailed descriptions of each school are provided in the report.</p>
Part III Analyses by Education Programs	<p>The NC End-of-Grade test scores in Reading for school year 2007-08 in grades 3-8 were examined by program (dual language classes compared to non-dual language classes) and by selected student groups.</p>
Findings—Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students in dual language schools and dual language classrooms outscore non-dual language students 2. Dual language students' average reading scores exceed the statewide average scores in each Grade 3. After Grade 4, dual language students approach and exceed the average statewide scores of students who are a year ahead of them in school.
Findings—Student Groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current LEP students in dual language classes outscore those in non-dual language classes from Grades 3-8. 2. Former LEP students in dual language classes tend to score at or above the levels of students in non-dual language classes. 3. Language minority-not-LEP students in dual language classes score at the level of non-dual language students in the same schools but below the levels of non-dual language students in Grade 5. (based only on 23 students) 4. Black students who are not language minority and are native-English speakers excel in dual language classrooms, outscoring black native-English speaker in non-dual language classrooms. They generally are at or near Grade level achievement as defined by average scale scores for each Grade. 5. White native-English speakers who are not language minority in dual language classes outscore their counterparts in non-dual language classes.

<p>Summary of Overall findings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dual language instruction has the prospect of substantially raising the test scores of language minority students, especially LEPs, and of black students. ● Although the data sets analyzed are cross-sectional (2008 testing only with other databases from 2006-2009) and since the analyses are statistically descriptive, the findings are especially suggestive for the following reasons : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They consistently favor dual language instruction across all groups and situations 2. The effect sizes observed with dual language instruction are consistent with effects found in other large-scale research studies 3. The groups in this study most positively affected by dual language classes are those that educational and psychological theory says should be most affected by a cognitively stimulating educational program.
<p>Researchers' Recommendations</p>	<p>Based on the findings, dual language education should be encouraged, developed further, studied longitudinally, and supported in North Carolina school districts that are interested in using this innovation to reform their instruction for all students.</p>