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addalingua language of instruction ONLY

policy and timeline



three-school/preschool

- Because preschool is most children's first introduction to a school environment, the addalingua preschool curriculum lays out very clearly how a teacher should introduce the second language, without eliciting fear in students. For example, during the first three weeks of school, teachers explain classroom routines and directions first in English, reserving Spanish for actual content instruction. After the first three weeks, when routines are firmly established, the immersion educator uses the immersion language exclusively.
- Experienced immersion preschool teachers created the addalingua curriculum to encompass all of the important immersion teaching strategies - visuals, realia, physical movement, songs, rhymes, stories, puppets, hands-on experiences - not only to meet National Head Start standards, but also to aid in the acquisition of the second language. Children who begin second language learning at a young age intuitively understand that language has a purpose and is used to negotiate meaning and to communicate effectively. By the end of the preschool year, therefore, students often associate the school experience with the immersion language and realize that language is a cognitive tool used to make meaning of the world around them.
- After the first three weeks of school, the teachers speak only in Spanish to their students but accept answers in either the immersion language or English. This stage of language acquisition emphasizes comprehension rather than production.

kindergarten through fifth grade

- The addalingua model takes advantage of every single opportunity to increase immersion students' vocabulary and structural knowledge of the target language. For this reason, educators speak to the children almost exclusively in the immersion language.
- Before children are able to understand every word in the target language, however, immersion teachers may need to revert to English when safety issues are involved. By asking a colleague from the traditional program to review safety rules or by making an extremely obvious transition from the immersion language to English (miming taking off their Spanish hats or brains and putting on their English ones for a short period of time), educators can protect the "Spanish only" environment without any risk to students.
- In cases when students require individual discipline or special comforting (illness or injury) in **kindergarten and first grade**, teachers may take them aside and speak in English without disrupting the "Spanish only" environment. However, addalingua suggests remaining in the immersion language during these times as well so that students perceive the minority language as one through which they can communicate regardless of emotional and psychological state and within a variety of social interactions.
- In order for immersion students to attain high levels of proficiency in the immersion language, educators must create an environment filled with comprehensible input (students connecting meaning with language through visuals, physical movements, context, etc...) and opportunities for "output" (social interaction) for extended periods of time. Because most students will hear only English upon leaving their classrooms, the addalingua model places a high value on protecting time within the school day in which students hear and respond only in the target language. Based upon our own action research, we suggest the following policy and timeline:

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policy and timeline



teacher and student communication

teacher to student – Beginning in preschool and continuing through kindergarten, immersion students start to associate specific environments and people with either the immersion language or English. It is important to establish school and immersion staff as the immersion language environment and people respectively.

student to teacher – Ultimately, immersion students have the language ability to speak exclusively in Spanish regarding content-related topics (see “*unit overview - proficiency expectations*”). However, this requires extended periods of time as mentioned above.

- **kindergarten** – At the beginning of the year, teachers will accept questions and answers from students in English. Many times, the teacher will then rephrase using the target language or prompt students to use the words in Spanish they have already internalized. After four weeks of instruction, teachers will introduce the “Circumlocution Game,” encouraging the students to use only Spanish when communicating, even if they only verbalize one or two vocabulary words to express meaning. Having introduced the circumlocution game, explained incentives, and practiced throughout two weeks of instruction, the teachers begin to hold students accountable to using only Spanish after six weeks of instruction. Teachers should also encourage students to accept help from others when negotiating meaning without reverting back to their more extensive English vocabulary. Using the immersion language consistently during authentic communication ensures students grow in their proficiency. In playing the “circumlocution game,” students begin communicating only in Spanish to the teacher after six weeks of instruction. Each time the class conveys meaning in the target language, the students gain confidence and feel able to speak more and more in the immersion language.
- **first grade** – Spanish from student to teacher expected after four weeks of instruction
- **second grade** – Spanish from student to teacher after the first day of school
- **third, fourth, and fifth grades** – Spanish from student to teacher on the first day of school

peer communication

student to student – If the dual language immersion staff does not create an environment in which the classroom is Spanish only, most students will use their most natural form of communication – English (native language). For most students, the classroom is the primary setting for acquiring the immersion language. For this reason, they need to become comfortable speaking with and in front of peers.

- **kindergarten** – Spanish amongst peers beginning after ten weeks of instruction
- **first grade** – Spanish amongst peers beginning after five weeks of instruction
- **second grade** – Spanish amongst peers beginning after the first day of school
- **third, fourth, and fifth grades** – Spanish amongst peers beginning the first day of class

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