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Unique study finds that two-way immersion education programs are effective for both English language learners and native English speakers.

Washington DC, June 18, 2004 -- Two-way immersion (TWI) education programs have experienced tremendous growth in the United States over the past decade. As these programs grow in number, it is important to gauge their effectiveness in helping students attain the language and literacy skills critical to success in an increasingly diverse U.S. society and competitive global economy.

TWI programs integrate language minority (usually native Spanish speaking) and language majority (native English speaking) students and provide grade-level content instruction to speakers of both languages in the same classroom. Both groups of students usually remain in these programs for five years or more.

A newly released report, *The Development of Bilingualism and Biliteracy from Grade 3 to 5: A Summary of Findings from the CAL/CREDE Study of Two-Way Immersion Education*, provides findings from a large-scale, longitudinal study of language and literacy development among TWI students. The research shows that, by the end of Grade 5, both groups had made steady progress in both languages. At the study's end, the language minority students and English learners scored nearly on par with native English speakers on English oral and reading measures and demonstrated more growth than native English speakers on each English measure. Native English speakers scored highly on both the Spanish oral and writing measures taken in Grade 5. This is good news for those committed to providing quality education for all students while closing persistent achievement gaps.

The project was funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, administered through the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE), and based at the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL). Researchers Elizabeth R. Howard and Donna Christian (CAL) and Fred Genesee (McGill University) conducted the study and prepared these findings on student outcomes for oral, reading, and writing development for both groups of students.

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According to Donna Christian, Ph.D., President, Center for Applied Linguistics, "As TWI programs become more popular, educators, policy makers, and parents are asking for information on student outcomes. This study provides a longitudinal look at both native Spanish speaking and native English speaking students within two-way immersion programs and charts patterns of language and literacy development by each group." Dr. Christian continued, "These important findings offer insights into key issues such as levels of language and literacy attainment and growth in language and literacy ability in two languages over time."

Co-author Elizabeth Howard, Ed.D. says, "The study demonstrated that both language majority and language minority students make excellent progress in the TWI classroom." Adds Dr. Howard, "As more and more schools and districts are looking for ways to strengthen and develop the language resources of all their students, the effectiveness of TWI programs make them an attractive and effective educational model."

Although the overarching research project included three main areas of investigation, this report focuses on the largest component of the study, student outcomes. This component spanned a 3-year period, following 474 students, in 11 TWI programs nationwide, from the beginning of third grade through the end of fifth grade. Students were tested in three language domains: oral, reading, and writing. Growth patterns were compared across language groups.

For more information about this study or two-way immersion, visit our Web site at www.cal.org/twi.

About CAL

For 45 years, the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) has been at the forefront of research on language and education. A private, non-profit company founded in 1959, CAL's experienced staff conducts research and applies the findings of linguistics to the development of practical solutions to a variety of language-related problems. CAL has earned a national and international reputation for its contributions to English as a second language (ESL), foreign language, and bilingual education and research; the education of linguistically and culturally diverse populations in the United States and around the world; cultural orientation for refugees; literacy development; development of language tests; design and development of instructional materials; technical assistance; language program evaluation and development; and policy analysis. For more information about CAL, visit www.cal.org.

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