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Promising Practices from the Field

Navigating Tensions Between Translanguaging and Separation of Languages in Dual Language Programs

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Navigating Tensions between Translanguaging and Separation of Languages

Historically, dual language education (DLE) programs have followed the practice of separation of languages: providing separate instructional blocks in English and the partner language in which the teacher provides monolingual instruction through one language at a time. Overall, this approach has produced compelling results, as studies going back decades have consistently found that students in DLE programs perform as well or better than their peers in other program models on measures of English literacy and academic achievement by the upper elementary or secondary grades, and that they develop oral and written proficiency in the partner language as well (Collier & Thomas, 2004, 2017; Howard et al., 2003; Howard & Zhao, 2024; Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2014; Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Steele et al., 2017; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). Moreover, this finding holds for students from various subgroups: those classified as English learners (ELs), those formerly classified as ELs, English home-language speakers from a variety of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, and students with special learning needs (Collier & Thomas, 2004, 2017; Howard et al., 2003; Howard & Zhao, 2024; Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2014; Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008). Additionally, there is evidence that the cognitive benefits of bilingualism, such as enhanced executive function, relate to a bilingual's ability to activate one language while suppressing the other, as is required when instruction is provided in separate language blocks (Bialystok et al., 2008; Freeman et al., 2016; Olulade et al., 2016). Together, these findings provide a strong argument for maintaining the practice of providing sustained, monolingual instructional blocks in each program language (Guerrero, 2021).

At the same time, however, equity concerns have always been present, particularly within two-way immersion programs since they have heterogeneous student populations (Amrein & Peña, 2000; Howard & Sugarman, 2007; Valdés, 1997). These concerns have become more pronounced in recent years due to the ongoing gentrification of DLE and related questions about whose needs are really being served in these programs (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017; Delavan et al., 2021; Dorner & Cervantes-Soon, 2020; Flores et al., 2020; Flores & García, 2017; Valdés, 2018). Specifically, there are concerns about students classified as ELs and other students from minoritized groups being discouraged from enrolling, about the limited use of culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy (CLSP) (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2014; Paris & Alim, 2017) to support learners in DLE programs, and about persistent opportunity gaps in literacy attainment and academic achievement.

To be clear, concerns regarding the lack of CLSP and persistent opportunity gaps have not been shown to be more pronounced in DLE than in any other educational model. On the contrary, many studies show that ELs in DLE programs are reclassified faster than those in other programs, and that reclassified ELs from DLE programs reach or exceed grade-level expectations or district averages on English achievement measures (Collier & Thomas, 2004, 2017; Lindholm-Leary & Hernández, 2011; Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008; Steele et al., 2017; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). Moreover, although partner-language outcomes are rarely included in accountability metrics, there is also evidence that DLE programs help students classified as ELs and others from multilingual households maintain and develop their oral and written proficiency in their home language (i.e., the partner language), and that the partner-language performance of these students is typically on par with or higher than that of comparable students in other programs,

as well as that of DLE students from English-speaking homes (Howard et al., 2003; Howard & Zhao, 2024; Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2014; Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008). However, it is precisely because this model has been shown to be the most effective for students classified as ELs that we must continue to work to ensure that these students have access to DLE, that the remaining opportunity gaps are closed, and that the instruction that all students receive is culturally and linguistically sustaining.

One widely embraced CLSP is pedagogical translanguaging, which grows out of holistic views of bilingualism (Escamilla, 2000; Grosjean, 1989; Heller, 1999; Otheguy et al., 2015). Pedagogical translanguaging has been characterized as transformative for students from minoritized groups in particular because, contrary to the established monolingual norms of mainstream educational environments (Babino & Stewart, 2020), it values the language varieties spoken by students and their families, welcomes these varieties into the classroom, and encourages multilingual learners to use all of their linguistic resources to carry out academic tasks (Celic & Seltzer, 2012; Cenoz, 2017; Cenoz & Gorter, 2017, 2020; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García et al., 2017; Garcia & Wei, 2014; Lewis et al., 2012, 2013; Osso Parra & Proctor, 2022; Palmer et al., 2014; Sánchez et al., 2018; Solorza et al., 2019). Pedagogical translanguaging originated in the 1980s through the Welsh revitalization work of educator Cen Williams, who sought to address unequal power dynamics between English and Welsh by incorporating teaching methods that would elevate the status of Welsh and enable students to use their dominant language (English) to develop their proficiency in Welsh. The approach involved concurrent use of the two languages, providing input through one language and requiring output through the other (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Lewis et al., 2012, 2013).

More recent pedagogical translanguaging initiatives based in the United States focus on

the concurrent use of the home language and the instructional language to support learning, affirm home-language use, and foster positive identity formation among multilinguals in a variety of educational contexts (Celic & Seltzer, 2012; García et al., 2017; García & Wei, 2014; Ossa Parra & Proctor, 2022; Palmer et al., 2014; Sánchez et al., 2018; Solorza et al., 2019; Tian, 2022). Within the context of DLE, the concurrent use of both program languages for instruction comes into tension with the established practice of separation of languages (Ballinger et al., 2017; Cummins, 2005, 2007; de Jong, 2016; Fortune & Tedick, 2019; Guerrero, 2021; Lyster, 2019; Palmer et al., 2014; Sánchez et al., 2018; Solorza et al., 2019).

To begin to navigate this tension, it is helpful to recognize that the recommendations for both approaches overlap in important ways. Specifically, pedagogical translanguaging guidance for DLE educators (García et al., 2017; Sánchez et al., 2018; Seltzer & García, n.d; Solorza et al., 2019) makes several key points:

1. It's still necessary to retain separate instructional blocks in English and the partner language while making space for translanguaging practices.

2. Pedagogical translanguaging is planned, intentional, and explicit. In this way, it contrasts with spontaneous translanguaging (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020), which is the natural, fluid language use of multilinguals that may incorporate elements of multiple languages—what is sometimes referred to as hybrid language use (Gutiérrez et al., 1999).

3. Pedagogical translanguaging does not consist of simply repeating yourself in the other program language if the students don't understand you when you say something in the language of instruction.

Likewise, the Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education, 3rd edition (GP3) (Howard et al., 2018) maintains the importance of separation of languages, but also asserts the need to thoughtfully and intentionally incorporate opportunities for the

concurrent use of both program languages to foster the attainment of program goals. The exemplary practice descriptor for Strand 3, Principle 1, Key Point B, "Instruction incorporates appropriate separation of languages to promote high levels of language acquisition," states,

> There is a consistent separation of languages for instruction, with high expectations for teachers and students to use the language of instruction and with scaffolds provided to encourage language production. However, in the classroom and throughout the school, opportunities exist for students and teachers to use both languages concurrently for clear academic, linguistic, or school purposes, either through brief teachable moments or through extended activities. Teachers and students regularly engage in self-reflection to identify when and why they are maintaining separation of languages vs. using both languages, and adjust language choices as needed to ensure that program goals and learning objectives are being met (Howard et al., 2018, p. 58).

In other words, as Hamman-Ortiz and Prasad (2022) similarly point out, the converging guidance from both perspectives conveys a both/and rather than either/or approach. There is a need for both sustained engagement with each program language within monolingual spaces and opportunities for concurrent use of both languages in bilingual spaces rather than either one practice or the other. Thus, consistent with the framing proposed by others (de Jong, 2016; Lewis et al., 2013; Lin, 2006), the question is not whether to incorporate pedagogical translanguaging in the context of DLE; but rather, when, why, where, how, how much, and by whom?

The key to answering these questions is to keep in mind that DLE programs are distinct from other educational programs in three important ways: 1) 50% or more of instructional time is provided through the partner language; 2) there is a clear expectation for coordination of instruction across English and the partner language; and 3) it is an explicit goal for students to develop high levels of language proficiency and literacy attainment in the partner language as well as in English. In other words, the instructional context

of and the expected outcomes for pedagogical translanguaging in DLE are not the same as they are in other educational programs that provide instruction solely or primarily through one language. Therefore, it is both possible and necessary to consider an expanded view of pedagogical translanguaging for DLE that can leverage the benefits of the context and also attain the expected outcomes.

To date, most research and practitioner guidelines for pedagogical translanguaging have focused on synchronous approaches, meaning that both languages are used at the same time within the same instructional block. This is typically done for one or more of the following reasons: 1) to enhance comprehension by enabling students to use their full linguistic repertoire to engage with academic content; 2) to foster language acquisition by encouraging students to use existing language knowledge to bootstrap new language development; 3) to affirm multilingual identity development and promote appreciation of language diversity; and 4) to more accurately assess what students know and can do (Celic & Seltzer, 2012; Cenoz & Gorter, 2017, 2020; García et al., 2017; Martínez-Álvarez, 2017; Martínez-Álvarez & Ghiso, 2017; Ossa Parra & Proctor, 2022; Palmer et al., 2014; Sánchez et al., 2018; Solorza et al., 2019; Tian, 2022). Within DLE in particular, the inclusion of synchronous translanguaging approaches has been conceptualized as a translanguaging allocation plan, which expands the language allocation plan beyond the two separate blocks for English and the partner language to make space for a dedicated bilingual block in which synchronous translanguaging is used (Sánchez et al., 2018; Solorza et al., 2019). Synchronous translanguaging approaches play an important role in DLE programs when implemented according to the pedagogical translanguaging guidelines that emphasize the importance of these practices taking place in a planned, intentional, and explicit way (Celic & Seltzer, 2012; Cenoz & Gorter, 2017, 2020; García et al., 2017; Sánchez et al., 2018; Solorza et al., 2019).

However, while general education contexts that provide monolingual English instruction are limited to the use of synchronous translanguaging approaches that use both languages at the

same time, DLE programs open the door to a whole array of asynchronous approaches to pedagogical translanguaging that use the two program languages in monolingual spaces but in a deliberate, coordinated way. Through careful co-planning that intentionally and explicitly coordinates curriculum, instruction, and assessment across the two program languages, asynchronous translanguaging approaches can likewise empower students to use all of their language resources to maximize content and language learning, affirm their multilingual identity development, and demonstrate what they know and can do while still reaping the benefits of sustained, monolingual instructional blocks. To be clear, this is not a parallel monolingual approach where the English and partner-language teachers (Tandem Teachers) divide up the curriculum, plan separately from one another, and close their doors and teach. It is the complete opposite of that—it is grounded in a commitment to work together as two parts of an integrated system. This is represented visually in Figure 1, below.

On the left is a representation of parallel monolingual approaches, in which the two languages are taught in isolation from one another and the Tandem Teachers do not engage in co-planning. (In this figure and in all others, English is represented by blue and Spanish is represented by red. The concurrent use of both program languages is represented by purple.) On the right is a representation for asynchronous pedagogical translanguaging, in which Tandem Teachers see themselves as part of a single instructional system and consistently engage in co-planning to intentionally and explicitly coordinate instruction between the two languages.

Figure 1: Parallel Monolingualism vs. Asynchronous Translanguaging

Howard & Simpson, 2023
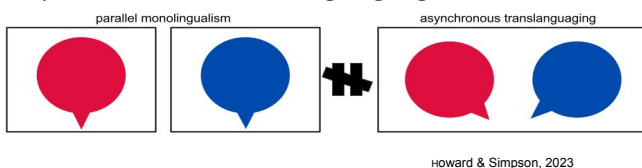
In our experience, successful DLE instruction requires the use of both synchronous and asynchronous pedagogical translanguaging approaches, as noted in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Combining Synchronous and Asynchronous Translanguaging for Successful DLE Outcomes

Howard & Simpson, 2023
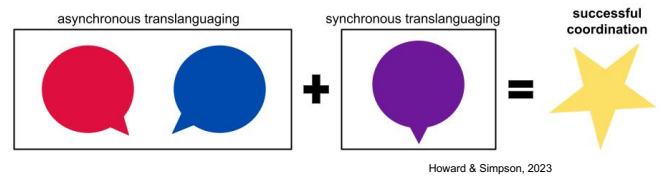
On the left is the asynchronous translanguaging image introduced in Figure 1, with instruction in each program language being provided in monolingual spaces in a coordinated way, as part of a single system. On the right is a purple speech bubble, denoting the use of both program languages at the same time during synchronous translanguaging activities. The combination of these two approaches promotes successful cross-linguistic coordination. However, two important questions remain: 1) What does this look like in practice? and 2) How much instruction should involve synchronous translanguaging and how much should involve asynchronous translanguaging, and how do we make these decisions?

In response to the first question regarding what this looks like in practice, we introduce seven cross-linguistic pedagogies that leverage the benefits of both synchronous and asynchronous approaches. The term cross-linguistic pedagogy has been used to describe asynchronous approaches that foster cross-linguistic connections across monolingual instructional blocks in each language (Ballinger et al., 2020; Lyster, 2019). It has also been used synonymously with pedagogical translanguaging to denote the concurrent or synchronous use of the two program languages (Ballinger et al., 2017; Woll, 2020). Here, we use it as an umbrella term that encompasses synchronous and asynchronous approaches to pedagogical translanguaging.

Specifically, two of the seven approaches are synchronous (requiring concurrent use of the two program languages within a given instructional block), and five of them are asynchronous (requiring coordinated use of the two program languages across monolingual instructional blocks in each program language). The asynchronous approaches also include Linking Moments, which are intentional opportunities to help students

connect what they have been working on in one language as instruction on the same topic or skill shifts to the other language. Both the synchronous and asynchronous approaches abide by the criteria discussed earlier—they are planned, intentional, and explicit, and do not consist of teachers simply repeating themselves in the other language when students do not understand what they say in the language of instruction.

The seven cross-linguistic pedagogies are introduced below in Table 1.

Table 1: Cross-Linguistic Pedagogies Overview

Approach	Purpose	Description	Language of Instruction	Examples
Synchronous Approaches				
Hybrid	To provide speakers of hybrid varieties an opportunity to process information in their home language, which is neither a monolingual variety of English nor a monolingual variety of the partner language; to raise awareness of and affirm the use of community language varieties. Can be used to address shared (ours) or unique (yours or mine) standards.	One or more standards is addressed through concurrent use of both program languages.	Both program languages are used concurrently, by one teacher alone or both Tandem Teachers working together.	Reading and writing texts that include examples of hybrid language use during a social studies unit on family histories; place-based learning projects.
Compare and Contrast	To promote the development of cross-linguistic awareness, particularly when noticing similarities in shared standards (ours) or pointing out language-specific features in unique standards (yours or mine).	Cross-linguistic similarities and differences related to one or more standars are noticed and discussed.	Both program languages are used concurrently, by one teacher alone or both Tandem Teachers working together.	Cognate charts; The Bridge (Beeman and Urow, 2013; Así se Dice (Escamilla et al, 2014)
Asynchronous Approaches ***All include Linking Moments**				
Switchback	To address shared standards (ours) efficiently and with increasing depth and complexity when instructional blocks for a given content area are provided through each program language on alternating days or weeks.	Standards for a given content area are addressed through a progression of non-repeating activities in alternating languages. The sequence for both the students and the Tandem Teachers is the same as it would be in a monolingual context, but for the students, instruction alternates between languages, and for the Tandem Teachers, instructional delivery alternates between the two groups of students.	Monolingual instruction is provided through both program languages in equal proportions, with students participating in alternating monolingual instructional blocks in English and the partner language on different days or weeks. Both the English teacher and the partner-language teacher address the same material at the same time, each with a different group of students. In other words, all students get alternating instruction in English and the partner language, and all students have access to all of the material, but the two groups don't engage with the same material in each language because they are with different teachers.	A math unit that alternates language of instruction day by day or week by week; a novel study in language arts that alternates instruction in English or the partner language chapter by chapter.

| Approach	Purpose	Description	Language of Instruction	Examples
Zipper	To address shared standards (ours) efficiently and with increasing depth and complexity when instructional blocks for a given content area are provided in both languages on the same day or on alternating days or weeks.	Each teacher takes alternating responsibility for different lesson components or skills that relate to shared standards within a given content area. In language arts, all components/skills are taught through both languages, but not on the same day, and possibly not in the same lesson. As a result, Tandem Teachers will need to work out a plan for alternating responsibility for different components/skills. For the students, the experience will be similar to the Switchback approach in that they will experience a continuous progression of the content that alternates between English and the partner language. For the Tandem Teachers, however, the experience is different, because they will only be teaching a given component or skill when it is allocated to them, and they will be repeating the same instructional activity for that component or skill with both groups of students. In other content areas, there may be more permanent division of components across languages, particularly when published curricular materials are only available in English.	Monolingual instruction is provided through both program languages in proportions that correspond to the lesson components that are taught through each language. The English and the partner-language teacher each take responsibility for different components or skills and teach those components or skills to both groups of students. In other words, both groups engage with the same material in the same language because one teacher takes responsibility for it and repeats the same activity with the second group.	Math lessons in which the focal lesson is taught in one language, and calendar time or number talks take place in the other language; language arts instruction in a half-day/half-day program in which different skills are taught in each language on any given day (e.g., reading groups in one language and writing mini-lesson in the other, and then the reverse on a different day).
Foreground Background	To extend content and language knowledge to the other program language for standards that are unique to each language (yours or mine), and/or to address a less complex shared standard (ours) in a more efficient way.	One or more standards is addressed explicitly in one language (foreground) and then reinforced formally or informally through instruction in the other language (background). Reinforcement may occur on one or more occasions and may take place across different content areas or during 'swing spaces' such as transitions or brain breaks.	Monolingual instruction is provided through both program languages, but in unequal proportions. Instruction is primarily carried out in one program language (foreground) with reinforcement in the other language on separate occasions (background).	Playing a freeze-dancing game in Spanish during a brain-break to reinforce math concepts (shapes) taught in English; doing a read-aloud in English language arts about feelings during a Spanish social studies unit on emotions.
Complementary	To extend content and language knowledge to the other program language for standards that are unique to each language (yours or mine) but conceptually related.	Unique but related standards in different content areas are addressed in one language or the other in a complementary way, often in the context of thematic instruction.	Monolingual instruction is provided through both program languages in proportions that correspond to the amount of instruction in each content area.	During a thematic unit titled 'Land and Sea,' students investigate weather in social studies in Spanish and the water cycle in science in English, thereby learning complementary concepts (such as precipitation), as well as core vocabulary such as rain, snow, and clouds.
Mirror	To ensure mastery of complex or particularly important shared standards (ours), and to facilitate the use of similar instructional routines across languages to address shared (ours) or unique (yours or mine) but related standards and skills, such as those connected to foundational reading skills and language-specific features.	A standard is addressed explicitly in one language, and the lesson or instructional routine is repeated in the other language, either in the same or a different content area. This approach should be reserved for particularly essential or complex standards or skills for which students in monolingual classrooms would also be likely to receive repeated exposure. In addition, while the focal standard or skill may be identical, the curricular materials should not be.	Monolingual instruction is provided through both program languages in equal proportions.	Using different books in English and the partner language to teach a repeated mini-lesson on distinguishing fiction from non-fiction texts; providing comparable literacy centers in English and the partner language to practice shared or unique but related skills (e.g., tracing letters, syllables, or high-frequency words in sand, rice, or shaving cream).

Having provided an overview of what the synchronous and asynchronous pedagogies can look like in practice, it is now important to consider the second question - what proportion of instruction do we allocate to each approach, and how do we make those decisions?

Reframing Instructional Language as a Continuum

Because the synchronous and asynchronous aproaches may be used in combination with one another, the cumulative effect is to create a learning environment in which instructional language falls along a continuum between sustained, monolingual language use in English on one end, and sustained, monolingual language use in the partner language on the other, with varying amounts of concurrent language use in between (Figure 3). On either end of the continuum, monolingual instruction is provided through English or the partner language through the use of an asynchronous cross-linguistic pedagogy. Starting from either side, as the continuum progresses from monolingual instruction in the other, increasing amounts of concurrent language use are incorporated by combining one or more synchronous pedagogies with the asynchronous pedagogy. Tandem Teachers' decisions about how, why, and when to make these intentional shifts along the continuum should be made jointly and be guided by consideration of the five factors that are introduced in the the next section.

Figure 3: The Continuum of Instructional Language Use
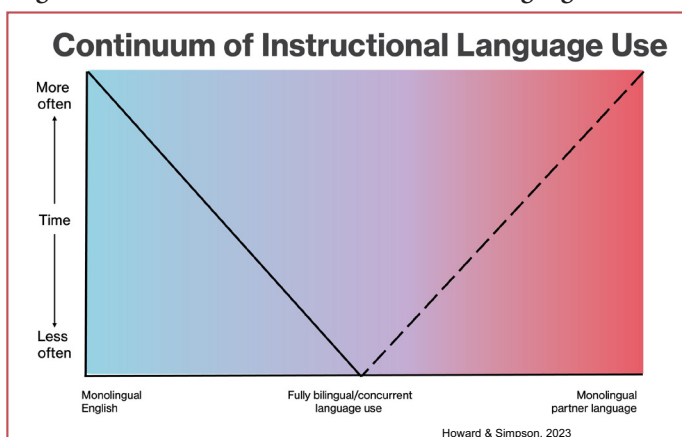
One of these factors is the distinction between English and the partner language, which is made clear in Figure 3. A solid line represents the English side of the continuum, while a dotted line signifies the partner language side of the continuum. This distinction implies that there

should be more caution when incoporating English into instructional time allocated for the partner language than when incorporating the partner language into instructional time allocated for English. The reason for these varying levels of caution are discussed in the following section. The English side of the continuum comprises the English language allocation block, and the Spanish side of the continuum comprises the Spanish allocation block.

The middle of the continuum represents a fully bilingual instructional block where only synchronous pedagogies are employed. This middle, fully bilingual space of the continuum aligns with the translanguaging instructional block included in the translanguaging allocation plan (Sánchez et al., 2018; Solorza et al., 2019). As indicated by the time designations on the vertical axis on the left, the proportions of instructional time allocated for monolingual instruction in each language versus increasing amounts of concurrent use of both program languages are not equal. To adhere to the language allocation guidelines associated with successful outcomes, a larger percentage of instruction needs to occur within sustained, monolingual instructional blocks.

Drawing a parallel to the full linguistic repertoire available to multilingual individuals (Otheguy et al., 2015), this continuum can be envisioned as the full instructional language repertoire available to Tandem Teachers and their students. Similar to how multilingual individuals always draw on their full linguistic repertoire, yet perform linguistically in ways that range from monolingual to fully hybrid language use, Tandem Teachers also continuously draw from this full instructional language repertoire. They make collective decisions about classroom language use to maintain fidelity to the language allocation plan and aid students in achieving the goals of DLE. In doing so, Tandem Teachers shift from a parallel monolingual orientation—where two individuals make independent instructional language decisions in English or the partner language—to a holistic bilingual orientation. In this orientation, they see themselves as part of a single system responsible for making informed choices about instructional language use in both English and the partner language together (Gort & Pontier, 2013; Pontier & Gort, 2016).

Whether the instructional block entails sustained, monolingual use of one program language or the other through asynchronous cross-linguistic pedagogies, fully concurrent use of both program languages together through synchronous cross-linguistic pedagogies, or something in between through asynchronous and synchronous cross-linguistic together, the aim is to aid students in making connections among their languages and the content they are learning through those languages, while affirming their identities as multilingual individuals.

Because of this, it may be helpful for the field to move away from the term 'separation of languages.' This term can lend itself to overly rigid interpretation, particularly when it comes to students' spontaneous translanguaging, and can result in an emphasis on language compartmentalization instead of connection. However, it's important to clarify that the suggestion to retire the term 'separation of languages' does NOT imply that programs should abandon language allocation plans or sustained, monolingual instructional blocks in both program languages. On the contrary, it's essential to maintain such blocks while also incorporating deliberate opportunities for the concurrent use of both program languages. Furthermore, as we mentioned briefly before and discuss more in the following section, it's necessary to ensure that a larger percentage of instructional time is delivered through monolingual instructional blocks to promote high levels of language and literacy development in both program languages.

Framing it as 'sustained, monolingual' instructional time in English and the partner language rather than 'separation of languages' helps to clarify that these instructional blocks represent two ends of a continuum rather than an absolute state. Even when instructional time is monolingual, it still acknowledges students' multilingual identities and seeks (asynchronously) to help students make instructional connections through all of their linguistic resources.

For instance, using the Zipper approach introduced in Table 1, English and Spanish Tandem Teachers may jointly teach a science unit on simple machines, with each taking responsibility for half of the simple machines and alternating instruction across languages. The English teacher might teach about the lever, the inclined plane, and the wheel & axle, while the Spanish teacher takes responsibility for the wedge, the pulley, and the screw. Although responsibility for the six simple machines is distributed between teachers to help manage their teaching loads, they still plan together to ensure that they're addressing the same standards, using the same scaffolds, and helping students make connections between what they're learning in English and Spanish. As students transition from one language to another, the teachers use Linking Moments to help them make cross-linguistic connections. In this case, the English teacher might say,

> *I heard you were talking last week with Sra. Silva about simple machines and you all learned about this one. [Hold up the wedge.] What's the word for this in Spanish? [Elicit responses.] 'Cuña'—did I say that correctly? In English, the word is 'wedge.' Say it with me, 'wedge.' Great job! Today we are going to continue our exploration of simple machines, and we're going to learn about another one called an inclined plane.*

Because this vignette is fully asynchronous, it corresponds to the outermost edges of the continuum for instructional language use and involves coordinated instructional blocks in English and the partner language (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Fully Asynchronous Cross-Linguistic Pedagogy — Sustained, Monolingual Instruction
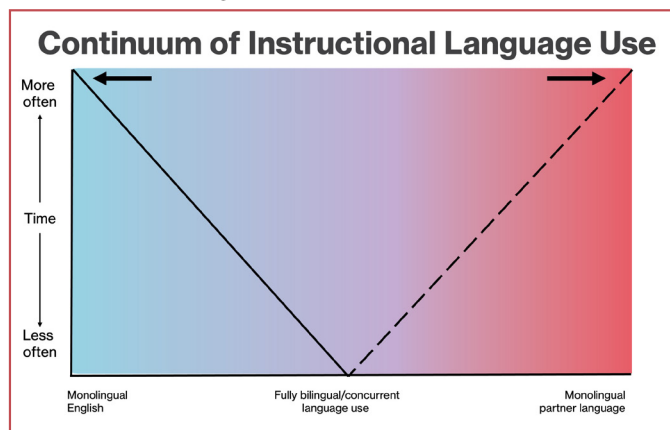
Shifting from a 'separation of languages' orientation to an instructional language continuum also makes it clear that there are times in which it is desirable to use both program languages concurrently, for varying percentages of instructional time and for a variety of reasons.

Most of the time, this is accomplished by using one or more synchronous approaches in combination with an asynchrous approach. For example, during a read-aloud in English, the teacher may pause and encourage students to briefly turn and talk with their bilingual buddies to predict what the main character in the story will do next. The teacher and students may agree that the turn-and-talk with conversations may take place in any language, but the final responses will be in English, supported by a language frame like, "I think [the name of the main character] will…." This vignette would fall a short distance from the edge of the continuum, indicating a very small amount of concurrent language use (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Combined Use of Asynchronous and Synchronous Cross-Linguistic Pedagogies (Brief)
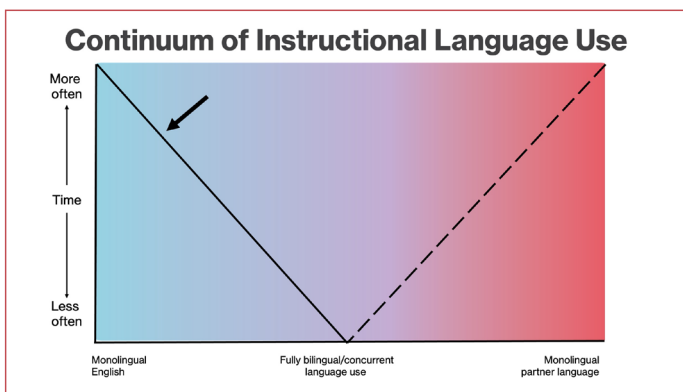

Another example of this combined approach requires more concurrent use of both program languages and therefore falls closer to the center of the continuum (Figure 6). Here, the English teacher may share an anchor chart from a math unit that the students have been working on during alternating instructional blocks in English and the partner language, and draw students' attention to language features that are the same or different across languages to help promote their metalinguistic and cross-linguistic awareness.

Figure 6: Combined Use of Asynchronous and Synchronous Cross-Linguistic Pedagogies (Moderate)
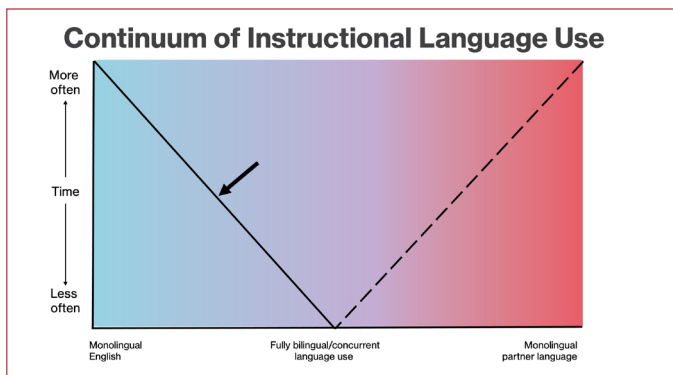
A final example of the combined approach incorporates even more concurrent use of both program languages, and therefore falls very close to the center of the continuum (Figure 7). In this example, a Spanish teacher may invite family members to the classroom to share stories of their childhood as part of a social studies unit. In order to support broad participation from numerous families, she can include family members from English-speaking homes in a way that is welcoming yet still holds the space for Spanish. For example, students can act as language brokers with the guest, providing translations of interview questions and responses. The teacher can also consistently use the same Spanish graphic organizer for note-taking that has been used with all guests. With both of these supports, the larger discussion can still take place in Spanish, rather than switching the entire activity to English.

Figure 7: Combined Use of Asynchronous and Synchronous Cross-Linguistic Pedagogies (Extensive)
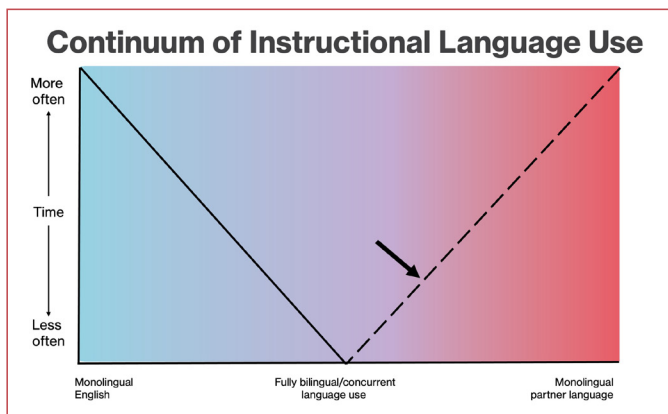
All three of these examples of the combined approach correspond to a classic language allocation plan with dedicated instructional blocks in each program language, and are not inconsistent with the previously named practice of separation of languages when the decisions are made jointly and are informed by the five factors discussed in the following section. Additionally, the descriptors 'brief,' 'moderate,' and 'extensive' are only used to designate where each vignette falls along the continuum, and do not connote a value associated with any given degree of concurrent language use. Moreover, any of these examples could have been associated with instructional time in English or the partner language—they are not intended to associate a specific situation with instruction in one language or the other. What matters is the reasoning behind the use and the extent to which those decisions are

made jointly and are aligned with the program model and language allocation plan.

Finally, the center of the instructional language continuum indicates fully bilingual instructional blocks in which only synchronous cross-linguistic pedagogies are used and the concurrent use of both languages is required to achieve instructional objectives (Figure 8). Consistent with recommendations for a translanguaging allocation plan (Sánchez et al., 2018; Solorza et al., 2019), these fully bilingual instructional blocks are factored into the overall language allocation plan and do not take place during instructional blocks designated for English or the partner language. For example, a community-based project that is co-led by both the English and partner-language teacher could be carried out during this time.

Figure 8: Fully Synchronous Cross-Linguistic Pedagogy—Concurrent Language Use
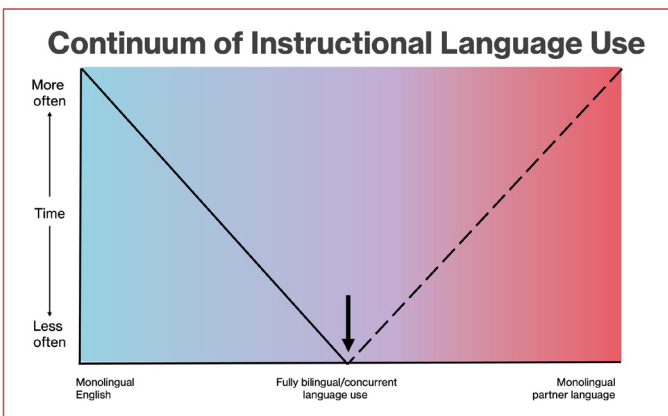
This shift in framing from separation of languages to a continuum of instructional language use is consistent with calls in the field to align DLE policies and practices with theories of bilingualism and biliteracy that more accurately capture the dynamic language use of bilinguals in society (García & Wei, 2014; Hornberger & Link, 2012; Otheguy et al., 2015; Palmer et al., 2014). In particular, it is inspired by Hornberger's (1989) continua of biliteracy:

> Although scholars, practitioners, and policy-makers often characterize dimensions of bilingualism and literacy in terms of oppositional pairs such as first versus second languages (L1 vs. L2), monolingual versus bilingual individuals, or oral versus literate societies, in each case those opposites represent theoretical

endpoints on what is in reality a continuum of features. Furthermore, when we consider biliteracy, the conjunction of literacy and bilingualism, it becomes clear that these multiple continua are interrelated dimensions of highly complex and fluid systems; and that it is in the dynamic, rapidly changing and sometimes contested spaces along and across multiple and intersecting continua that most biliteracy use and learning occur (Hornberger & Link, 2012, p. 264).

In summary, selecting and combining cross-linguistic pedagogies from across an array of synchronous and asynchronous approaches enables Tandem Teachers to create a continuum for instructional language that incorporates both monolingual language use and concurrent language use in different ratios at different times for different purposes and different populations. Decisions as to how to do this can be guided by the five factors discussed in the following section. Ideally, in this way, the cross-linguistic pedagogies can contribute to an ongoing evolution in the field to promote equitable student outcomes in DLE.

Factors That Influence Instructional Language Choices

There are five factors to consider when making decisions about instructional language use. Before getting into the five factors, it's important to stress that this section only addresses instructional time. Language use during non-structured moments (e.g., lunch, recess, before or after school) should be up to each individual, and students and family members as well as teachers, and staff should be free to speak in the language varieties of their choice. Additionally, school-wide events, whether during the school day or after school (e.g., family–teacher organization meetings, social gatherings, assemblies, etc.) should be multilingual spaces where all individuals feel welcome and are able to participate. In many schools, these spaces have traditionally been English monolingual spaces, so opening them up as multilingual spaces elevates the use and status of the partner language, promotes a more holistic bilingual atmosphere throughout the whole school, and fosters an affirming and welcoming environment for all family members.

These are the five factors to think about as you make language policy decisions for your school and classroom:

1. **Teacher talk vs. student talk:** Student talk is generally more fluid across instructional languages than teacher talk, and while there is variation across schools and classrooms depending on the language policy, student talk during partner or small-group work time in particular (e.g., buddy reading, peer editing, centers, cooperative groups) is likely to be driven more by communicative need than by the language of instruction. Especially during instructional time in the partner language, students are likely to use English when speaking with one another about academic or social topics (de Jong & Howard, 2009; Hamman, 2018). This reality could be a good motivation to invite students into the discussion about classroom language policy: to talk about when it makes sense to use only the instructional language and what kinds of supports are needed to do that, and when it makes sense to open up classroom language use to both program languages concurrently (Howard et al., 2018; Solorza et al., 2019). Further, it can be helpful to promote critical consciousness through that discussion by asking students to reflect on how their language use compares across English and partner-language instructional time. Having this kind of conversation with the students can go a long way towards creating clear, equitable expectations for and scaffolding of student language use (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). This is important, because without sufficient, sustained opportunities for language use in each program language, it can be difficult to develop high levels of academic language

proficiency, particularly in the partner language. This point is discussed further in the following segment on English vs. partner-language instruction.

Traditionally, teacher talk has adhered more consistently to the language of instruction than student talk, because together with the curricular materials, teacher talk is what determines the number of instructional minutes in each language, and that is what corresponds to a given program model (50/50, 90/10, etc.). Therefore, efforts to introduce synchronous cross-linguistic approaches (i.e., concurrent use of both program languages) into DLE programs need to consider their potential impact on the overall instructional minutes in each language, and in turn, the program model. Like the discussion about student language choices, this also relates to the following point about English vs. partner-language instruction.

2. **English vs. the partner language:** As Cenoz and Gorter (2017) point out, there has been considerable discussion in the translanguaging literature about the potential effects of translanguaging on language development in minoritized languages, with some expressing concerns that it could diminish overall proficiency in the minoritized language (Ballinger et al., 2017; Fortune & Tedick, 2019; Lyster, 2019), and others proposing that it can support minoritized language use by legitimizing community varieties and bringing them into public spaces (Otheguy et al., 2015). Both perspectives shed light on important social justice considerations for DLE. Namely, there is a need to: 1) affirm community language varieties and make space for multiple

varieties of both program languages in classrooms and in the school community as a whole; 2) help students, families, teachers, and staff develop the sociopolitical consciousness (Freire, 2020) to advocate for more expansive views and use of community language varieties; and 3) enable students to have the linguistic flexibility and sociopolitical awareness to make informed choices about their language use in any given context. For a number of reasons, particular attention needs to be paid to the partner language in order for students' linguistic flexibility to include monolingual varieties of that language.

First, as noted in the previous segment about teacher vs. student language use, research has demonstrated that spontaneous translanguaging among students is much more likely to happen during instructional time in the partner language than in English (de Jong & Howard, 2009; Hamman, 2018). As also stated above, in the case of teacher language, the program model is tied to the amount of instructional minutes in each language. Guidance holds that the percentage of instruction in the partner language should not dip below 50% at any grade level, given the difficulty of promoting sufficient proficiency in that language to engage in complex academic tasks otherwise (Howard et al., 2018). Likewise, advocates of both synchronous (Sánchez et al., 2018) and asynchronous (Ballinger et al., 2017) cross-linguistic pedagogies in DLE programs have articulated the need to protect instructional time in the partner language. Further, several studies have documented that while higher percentages of English instruction are not associated with greater English language and literacy attainment by the upper elementary grades, higher percentages

of partner-language instruction are in fact associated with greater language and literacy attainment in that language (Lindholm-Leary, 2016; Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008). Finally, across program models, language and literacy attainment in the partner language by the upper elementary grades consistently lags behind that of English (Howard et al., 2003; Howard & Zhao, 2024; Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2014; Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008). Thus, since one of the three goals of DLE is bilingualism and biliteracy development, it is important to bolster partner-language instruction by more frequently allocating the use of synchronous cross-linguistic pedagogies during English instructional blocks or fully bilingual instructional blocks that are factored into the language allocation plan and do not reduce the overall ratio of partner-language instruction to below 50% (see Figure 3).

Prioritizing English instructional time for the use of synchronous cross-linguistic pedagogies presents some logistical challenges, as all partner-language teachers, including international hires, are more likely than their English counterparts to be bilingual. However, it is certainly possible to do so, as is made clear in the guidance on pedagogical translanguaging in monolingual English educational contexts in the U.S. (Celic & Seltzer, 2012) as well as guidance for using pedagogical translanguaging to sustain minoritized languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). For example, an English teacher could bring over an anchor chart that the students had created in the partner language, ask them to tell her about it and teach her how to pronounce the key vocabulary words in the partner language, and then engage in shared writing with the students to write the corresponding English words on the chart, noticing which ones are cognates and which

ones are not. In other words, with careful co-planning by the Tandem Teachers, it is possible to create opportunities for synchronous pedagogical translanguaging that do not require a given teacher to have any proficiency in the other program language.

3. Content focus vs. language focus:

All instructional frameworks used in DLE programs have the same three aims: to help students learn language, learn about language, and learn through language (Gibbons, 2015; Halliday, 1993). Given these three aims, it may make sense for instructional language use to fluctuate depending on the focus. Specifically, efforts to promote learning through language (i.e., content learning) and learning about language (i.e., promoting metalinguistic and cross-linguistic awareness) may be enhanced by providing opportunities for students to process material concurrently through both program languages and to compare specific language features in a side-by-side approach; whereas learning language requires sustained engagement with one program language or the other to provide sufficient language input and opportunities for output in that language alone. For example, the Translanguaging Unit Plan (García et al., 2017) provides opportunities for students to engage in research and discussion using their multiple languages concurrently, while still maintaining language-specific learning targets that are demonstrated through the final project. Using greater percentages of language-specific instruction, the Biliteracy Unit Framework (Beeman & Urow, 2013) provides core instruction through one program language, but then promotes side-by-side language comparisons during The Bridge, followed by
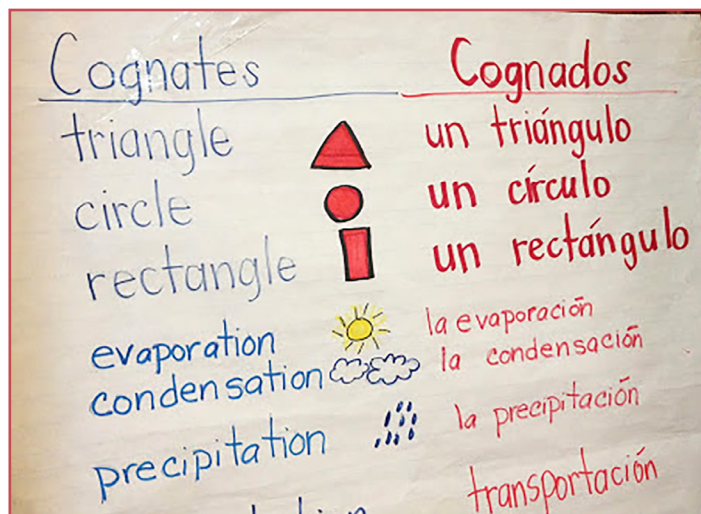
a brief extension lesson in the other program language to process content and to extend language development to that language. Similarly, bilingual read-alouds (of the same book in both languages on separate occasions) provide opportunities to promote cross-linguistic connections through monolingual but coordinated instructional blocks in each program language (Lyster et al., 2009; Lyster et al., 2013). This use of coordinated monolingual instruction in each program language is designed to promote both cross-linguistic connections and depth of processing, resulting in greater language acquisition (Lyster, 2019). Thus, while there are agreements about the need for opportunities to develop cross-linguistic awareness and process content across languages, there is debate about the extent to which this should be done synchronously or asynchronously.

4. Student characteristics and program contexts:

Part of the debate about content processing in one program language alone vs. in both languages concurrently relates to the intersection of learning goals with student home-language profiles and program contexts. Researchers whose work focuses on students classified as ELs and other students from multilingual households assert that it is an equity issue for these students to be given the opportunity to process academic content bilingually, using both program languages concurrently, as this approach is consistent with language practices in their homes and communities, and is likely to enhance processing of academic content (Baker & Wright, 2017; Sánchez et al., 2018). A similar perspective is shared among researchers whose work is grounded in contexts in which there are regional languages, and which include majority-language speakers as well as those who speak

regional languages at home (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; Lewis et al., 2013). However, there are differences of opinion among those whose work focuses solely on majority-language speakers, with some arguing that it is beneficial (Williams, 1994 in Lewis et al., 2013). More recently, others have argued that it is counterproductive, as greater depth of processing occurs when students engage with academic content through a second language (Lyster, 2019).

Additionally, there are conflicting ideas about how proficiency levels in the two languages of instruction factor into decision-making about the use of synchronous pedagogical translanguaging. The original call for synchronous pedagogical translanguaging emphasized its utility for students from majority-language homes who had already developed considerable proficiency in both languages (Williams, 1994 in Lewis et al., 2013). More recently, this line of reasoning has been extended to U.S. students from multilingual households, with the rationale that it is essential to enable simultaneous bilingual children to process content concurrently through both program languages, since their home variety comprises both of these languages (Baker & Wright, 2017; Lewis et al., 2013; Sánchez et al., 2018).

On the other side of the language proficiency spectrum, Sánchez et al. (2018) and Solorza et al. (2019) suggest the use of translanguaging rings to provide individualized support to students with emerging proficiency in the language of instruction, to be used as temporary scaffolds until sufficient proficiency is attained in that language. The goals of differentiation and equity associated with these rings are undeniably essential, yet it's important to consider whether there may also be some unintended consequences with their use, such as: 1) reinforcing deficit perspectives for historically marginalized students (e.g., students classified as ELs, racially minoritized students, or students with IEPs) as unable to participate in instructional activities without home-language supports, and potentially limiting their ultimate attainment of both program languages as a result; 2) encouraging DLE teachers to provide home-language supports as a first step towards promoting comprehension rather than starting with the common roots and soil of asset-based sheltered instruction and considering ways to help students access their full linguistic repertoire through asynchronous cross-linguistic pedagogies; or 3) compromising the language allocation plan, since each student's language experience is individually tailored and may result in considerably larger blocks of concurrent bilingual instruction—thus circling back to the first point. For these reasons, it may be the case that the use of translanguaging rings is most relevant for two subgroups of students: 1) newcomers in the upper elementary grades who are required to engage with abstract academic content and its related language demands without the benefit of having received DLE instruction from pre-K or kindergarten, and who therefore may benefit from supplementary support during English instructional blocks; and 2) third-language speakers, who never receive instruction in their home language, and who therefore may benefit from supports in that language during instructional blocks in both program languages. Given the diversity in home-language profiles among DLE students, it is crucial for this topic to be explored in more detail. This issue is particularly pressing for teachers in two-

way programs since they enroll students with varying home-language profiles who may benefit from different approaches.

5. **Purpose and audience:** The purpose and audience for the activity and the final product will have a strong influence over the language and language varieties that should be used (Celic & Seltzer, 2012; García et al., 2017; Gottlieb, 2021). Many final products for school will require academic language use in one program language or the other, such as an informational report about habitats or a lab report about a science experiment. Other final products, particularly those produced as part of a place-based learning activity, may use both program languages, including community varieties of those languages. For example, a class cookbook incorporating recipes from students' families could be written, with each recipe in the language variety of the respective family. Likewise, at the culmination of a community helpers unit, brochures designed to make residents aware of local services could be created bilingually in the language varieties of the community to have maximum impact.

Clearly, DLE teachers have a lot to consider as they strive to make informed, intentional choices about language use in their classrooms. As previously highlighted, it's essential for Tandem Teachers to collaborate in creating a unified language policy. This policy should take into account the full span of instructional time in English and the partner language and draw from the full instructional language repertoire exemplified in the continuum of instructional language use. Instructional language decisions must be aligned with the program model and language allocation plan to avoid undesired outcomes.

For instance, if both teachers choose to incorporate large amounts of concurrent bilingual instruction, fidelity to the language allocation plan could be compromised. This could limit opportunities for high-level language development in either program language. Conversely, if they incorporate very little or no concurrent bilingual instruction, opportunities for simultaneous bilinguals to process information in their home variety could be limited. This lack of concurrent bilingual instruction could also hinder all students from developing an appreciation for language variation and deep metalinguistic and cross-linguistic awareness.

It's crucial that these discussions and decisions occur on a school-wide level to encourage vertical and horizontal articulation and fidelity to the program model. Without this, the program may struggle to ensure that its language policies and practices foster the anticipated learning outcomes and language development. These elements are vital for students to engage meaningfully with instruction at every grade level. Take, for example, a situation where partner language teachers in the primary grades provide more concurrent bilingual instruction than indicated by the program model and language allocation plan because they are worried that young English-dominant learners will find it too stressful to receive monolingual instruction through their second language. Not only does this raise equity concerns for the students who are dominant in the partner language since they are not receiving high-quality instruction that continues to develop their skills in their dominant language, it also creates considerable challenges

for the partner language teachers in the upper grades to carry out monolingual instruction when the content is increasingly abstract and complex. Ultimately, this could decrease the likelihood of children exiting the program with the desired language and literacy proficiency in both program languages, as expected by parents, community members, and the students themselves.

Conclusion

This paper has addressed tensions between translanguaging and separation of languages in the context of DLE programs, and proposed moving away from a dichotomous framing towards one that views instructional language use along a continuum. Seven proposed cross-linguistic pedagogies support the enactment of this continuum in an informed, purposeful way that corresponds to the unique learning context and goals of DLE. Two of the cross-linguistic pedagogies are synchronous and use both languages concurrently. Five are asynchronous, and use the two program languages monolingually through coordinated instruction that also

includes Linking Moments to explicitly connect instruction in one language to instruction through the other. Both synchronous and asynchronous cross-linguistic pedagogies aim to support students in making connections among their languages and the content they are learning through those languages, while affirming their identities as multilingual individuals. Decisions about when and how often to use asynchronous approaches, synchronous approaches, or a combination of the two are made jointly by the two Tandem Teachers who work together as part of a unified instructional system. These decisions take account of the five factors discussed in this paper, and ultimately, need to align with the program model and language allocation plan to ensure fidelity to the model and student attainment of all intended program outcomes.

A summary of key points in this paper is provided in Table 2, below.

Table 2: The Gist

The Gist: Navigating Tensions between Translanguaging and Separation of Languages
Historically, DLE programs have used separation of languages to provide instruction in each of the two program languages. There is a large, robust research base indicating that DLE students from a variety of backgrounds do as well as or better than their peers in other program models on English achievement measures, as well as developing proficiency in the partner language. This supports the continued use of the approach.
There have always been equity concerns in two-way immersion programs because of the heterogeneous population and the historical lack of equity in programs serving students classified as ELs, and these concerns have increased over the past several years with the ongoing gentrification of DLE. These concerns relate to program access, the lack of culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy, and persistent opportunity gaps.

The research indicates that equity concerns are present in DLE programs but are not more pronounced than in other program models. On the contrary, there is evidence that ELs in DLE programs are reclassified more quickly than their peers in other program models, and that the academic performance of reclassified students meets or exceeds district and state expectations. However, because equity is integral to DLE implementation, and because DLE programs have been shown to be the most effective for students classified as ELs, we need to continue to work to make sure that they have access to these programs, that culturally and linguistically sustaining approaches are used, and that opportunity gaps are closed.

Pedagogical translanguaging is a culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy that aligns with a holistic view of bilingualism and supports the equitable attainment of the three goals of DLE. Pedagogical translanguaging is distinct from spontaneous translanguaging, which is the natural, fluid language use of multilinguals that may incorporate elements of multiple languages or language varieties.

Pedagogical translanguaging and separation of languages have often been framed as being contrary to one another, but the guidance actually overlaps in crucial ways. First, both perspectives articulate the need for sustained, monolingual blocks of instruction in each program language as well as planned use of both languages concurrently to affirm students' multilingual identities, help them to make cross-linguistic connections, and enable them to use all of their linguistic resources to fully engage in academic activities. Second, both emphasize that pedagogical translanguaging is planned, intentional, and explicit, in contrast to spontaneous translanguaging, which is the natural, fluid language use of multilinguals. Finally, both perspectives assert that pedagogical translanguaging does not consist of simply repeating yourself in the other language when students do not understand you. Given this agreement, the question is not *whether* to incorporate pedagogical translanguaging practices in DLE classrooms; but rather, *why, when*, *where*, *how, how much*, and *by whom*?

To move beyond the dichotomous framing of separation of languages or translanguaging, it would be helpful to reframe instructional language as a continuum that is created through seven cross-linguistic pedagogies, two of which are synchronous and use both program languages concurrently, and five of which are asynchronous and use the two program languages in sustained, monolingual blocks that are carefully coordinated with one another. By using these cross-linguistic pedagogies in combination with one another, Tandem Teachers create a continuum for instructional language use that incorporates both sustained monolingual language use and concurrent bilingual language use in different ratios at different times for different purposes and different populations. This continuum can be viewed as a full instructional language repertoire, analogous to the full linguistic repertoire of multilingual individuals.

Factors to consider when making decisions about instructional language use include the following: 1) teacher talk vs. student talk; 2) English vs. the partner language; 3) content focus vs. language focus; 4) student characteristics and program contexts; and 5) purpose and audience. It's important for Tandem Teachers to make these decisions jointly, in alignment with the program model and language allocation plan. It's also essential for the whole DLE staff to discuss these decisions with one another to promote vertical articulation and program model fidelity.

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When and why do you promote sustained, monolingual language use?	
When	Why

When and why do you promote concurrent use of both program languages?	
When	Why

1. What benefits have you seen with the approach you've been using?

2. What challenges, if any, have emerged? What might you do to address those challenges?

3. How could you involve the students in the decision-making about instructional language use?

4. Where are there similarities in approach between instructional time in English and the partner language? Where are there differences? Are the similarities and differences intentional and useful, or are there areas where you may want to coordinate more effectively?

5. How would shifting the framing to a continuum of instructional language use impact your practice?

About the Authors:

Elizabeth Howard is an associate professor of bilingual education in the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut, where she teaches graduate courses on linguistic and cultural diversity and recently launched an online graduate certificate in educating bilingual learners. Her research focuses on dual language education, biliteracy development, and the preparation of teachers to work with multilingual learners, and she is currently the principal investigator of a federally funded grant investigating the development of sociocultural competence in dual language programs and its role in equitable bilingualism and biliteracy attainment. She has also served as a principal investigator or co-PI of several large-scale, federally funded research projects exploring various aspects of the literacy development of bilingual learners, often in the context of dual language programs. Her books include *Realizing the vision of two-way immersion: Fostering effective programs and classrooms; Preparing classroom teachers to succeed with second language learners: Lessons from a faculty learning community;* and *Culturally and linguistically responsive education: Designing networks that transform schools.* She is also the lead author of a number of professional resources for dual language educators, including *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education, the Dual Language Program Planner, the Two-Way Immersion Toolkit,* and the *Two-Way Immersion Observation Protocol (the Dual Language SIOP).* Her most recent publication is *Dual language tandem teaching: Coordinating instruction across languages through cross-linguistic pedagogies* (Velázquez Press), and together with co-author Shera Simpson, she co-founded Dual Language Connections, LLC, a small business that provides technical assistance to dual language educators to support the successful coordination of instruction across languages. Previously, she has worked as a senior research associate at the Center for Applied Linguistics and as a bilingual teacher in California and Costa Rica.

Shera Simpson is a dynamic educator, administrator, coach, and entrepreneur deeply committed to advancing the field of dual language education. She is the co-author of the groundbreaking book, *Dual language tandem teaching: Coordinating instruction across languages through cross-linguistic pedagogies*, the first installment of a transformative three-part series reshaping the landscape of bilingual instruction.

A respected presence at prestigious dual language conferences nationwide, including La Cosecha, CABE, and the Southern New England Regional Dual Language Conference, Shera delivers compelling presentations that motivate educators to explore innovation and cultivate cross-linguistic collaboration in their classrooms.

As the co-founder of Dual Language Connections, LLC, a woman-owned consulting firm, Shera is on a mission to empower teachers and schools, equipping them with the essential tools and strategies needed to enhance relationships and elevate instruction across languages.

Beyond her influential consulting work, Shera is a co-founder of "Outside The Box (OTB) Learning Laboratory," an innovative dual language, community-based alternative educational center situated in Brasilito, Costa Rica. Her visionary leadership has created a nurturing space where students thrive, immersing themselves in the richness of bilingualism and community engagement.

Originally from South Carolina, Shera has called Costa Rica home for over a decade, residing there with her partner and daughter. When not immersed in her professional pursuits, she finds joy in learning more about the world through travel, embarking on adventurous hikes, and savoring the serenity of the beach.