

Overview of Transitional Bilingual Education Programs Script

Welcome to our program implementation video series for emergent bilingual students. This video will focus on transitional bilingual education programs.

Remember, the term emergent bilingual student is interchangeable with the term of English learner, which is used to describe a student who is in the process of acquiring English and has another language as the student's primary or home language.

This video is intended to help our stakeholders in Texas understand the expectations for the implementation of transitional bilingual education programs.

We learned in the overview video that Texas has 6 state approved program models to serve emergent bilingual students. In this video we will focus on both Transitional Early Exit and Transitional Late Exit models.

When a district identifies 20 students with the same primary language in the same grade level district-wide, Texas Education Code 29.053 requires the district to provide one of the four state-approved bilingual program models in the elementary grades. The goal of traditional transitional bilingual programs is academic proficiency in English. The philosophy of these programs is that students who first establish foundational language and literacy skills in their primary language can then leverage these skills as a resource to develop English literacy within a program that addresses their affective, linguistic, and cognitive needs. For this reason, all students participating in a traditional transitional bilingual education program learn to read in their primary language first. In Texas, 90% of identified emergent bilinguals list Spanish as their home language, so Spanish is usually the primary language of transitional programs. The stronger the language and literacy skills in the primary language, the smoother the transition to English, although explicit instruction is required to ensure a complete transition.

One of the most common misconceptions about early exit and late exit program models is that an early exit program is shorter and therefore easier to implement than a late exit program. In fact, both program models are subject to Texas Administrative Code 89.1205(a) which states that a district meeting the bilingual

requirement must offer a bilingual program for emergent bilinguals in prekindergarten through grade 5 or 6 if it is clustered with elementary grades. Both program models require bilingual certified teachers, and students are only eligible to exit once they have met reclassification criteria.

The terms early exit and late exit actually refer to the rate at which primary language instructional minutes decrease and English instructional minutes increase through the grades. In the early exit graph, the red line representing primary language literacy instruction decreases during second grade, while a late exit model decreases primary language and increases English instruction at a more gradual rate. Students participate in either program model until they meet reclassification criteria and are recommended for exit by the district's Language Proficiency Assessment Committee, or LPAC. After meeting reclassification criteria, a student may only be exited from a program with signed parental permission. Districts implementing a transitional program have the flexibility to determine English and primary language instructional minutes at each grade level and the responsibility to ensure that teachers have appropriate resources for authentic primary language literacy instruction as well as training on the strategic use of cross-language connections.

Professors Wayne Thomas and Virginia Collier are internationally known for their research on long-term school effectiveness for linguistically and culturally diverse students. They have conducted longitudinal research on the long term effectiveness of a variety of program models for emergent bilinguals, and their findings have been replicated in subsequent studies. They found that the factor most strongly correlated with high levels of English academic achievement for English learners is the quality and duration of native language instruction. On the surface, this may seem counterintuitive, but in fact MORE English instruction SOONER does not lead to better long term academic outcomes in English. For this reason, when districts are starting a bilingual program for the first time, TEA recommends a one-way dual language program as a first choice.

For detailed guidance on transitional bilingual models, including authentic primary language literacy instruction and strategic use of cross-language connections visit txel.org/programimplementation. If you would like more information on strengthening your existing transitional bilingual education program or are considering changing to a dual language model, please reach out to the

Bilingual/ESL contact at your Education Service Center or email us directly at englishlearnersupport@tea.texas.gov.