

The Humanities in Our Lives

THE VALUE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

While data show general declines in higher education language enrollments, K-12 language programs have seen increases. To boost their effectiveness, both K-12 and higher education pedagogy have expanded their focus on real-world uses of languages, with innovations such as cross-disciplinary and project-based learning.

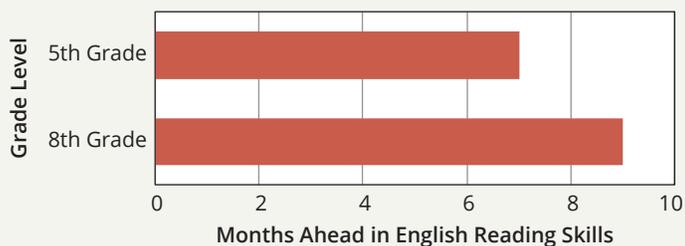
LANGUAGE LEARNING

Growing trends in education have placed new emphasis on building literacy among English Learners (ELs) and developing bilingualism in native English speakers, all in recognition of bilingualism's cognitive, social, and economic value. Public opinion about bilingualism is generally positive, with federal, state, and local governments and other entities all launching initiatives to encourage the study of languages in U.S. schools.

KEY FACTS

- According to U.S. Department of Education data, English Learners (ELs) are the fastest-growing student population in the U.S., representing nearly 10% of all K-12 public school enrollments.
- ELs are increasingly diverse. Nearly 80% are from a Spanish-speaking household, but the remaining 20%+ speaks over 400 languages.

Estimate of the Number of Months Students in Dual-Language Immersion Classes are Ahead of their Peers in Monolingual Classrooms in English Reading Skills, 2012-2015



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

There are an estimated 3,000-4,000 **dual-language immersion programs** nationwide, representing a sharp increase since 2000. Dual-language immersion programs teach core subjects in two languages, which research suggests is a cost-effective method for improving language proficiency. These programs achieve the highest rates of biliteracy, and data routinely show that students in dual-language immersion programs outperform their monolingual peers.

The exponential growth of these programs has outpaced the teacher workforce, with a majority of states reporting bilingual education teacher shortages. In anticipation of continued growth, many states and districts have undertaken initiatives to strengthen the bilingual teacher pipeline by recruiting from the local bilingual, often former-EL population. In Texas, California, and Minnesota, new programs develop an organic bilingual teacher pipeline by offering incentives like tuition reimbursement and guaranteed job placement.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

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For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

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